



*The Artist
Proof Studio
comes of age
beautifully
page 12*

• south african • jewish report

www.sajewishreport.co.za

Sinai Indaba – Jewish spirituality with an African flavour



In its second year of existence, Sinai Indaba, the brainchild of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, has already established itself as a force in the Jewish community to be reckoned with. In Johannesburg a packed-out audience of 3 000 and in Cape Town 1 100, listened to a top-range of Jewish speakers on subjects Jewish or of Jewish interest. The huge crowds who attended, attested to the Jews' innate thirst for knowledge and spirituality. Even more encouraging was the many young faces in the audience; it was much, much more than a boring highfalutin talk shop for middle-aged men and women. The topics were stimulating; the speakers lived up to their reputations. Pictured on the big screen is filmmaker David Weiss – of Shrek fame - keeping the audience enthralled. (PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDYVER)

SEE PAGES 6, 14-16

SAKS: Comparing the cigar with the dumb-bell

"Jews who were strongly wedded to their religion and those disaffiliated from it – the 'hot' and 'cold' ends of the cigar – used to be a minority. In the dumb-bell, the two extremes increase at the expense of the ever-shrinking middle-of-the-roaders."

7

DAVIS: Our moral independence places our tradition in best light

"When we carefully examine a rule and discover that it is far more nuanced than claimed by a particular rabbi, ours is not to simply acquiesce without demur and then claim that we are not responsible for any hurt caused."

6

Building SA: Martin Sweet opens up horizons for cash-strapped kids

"Two generations ago, we were where these children are now. Holocaust survivors' children fought hard for their kids to be educated; the ultimate was to have them become doctors and lawyers."

10

ACDP to march against discriminatory relabelling decision

"This is our opportunity to join with the local Christian Zionist communities that are so supportive of Israel, and together with them present a united front to the government in protest against this ill-considered and divisive move," says the SAZF.

3

SPORTS: Former Manchester United soccer great Eric Cantona joins in call to block u-21 soccer event in Israel

Nevertheless, the Israel Football Association is confident the tournament will go ahead as planned. "We are certain that Ifa and Uefa will not mix politics with soccer."

20

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Shabbat Times

June 22/ 2 Tammuz
June 23 / 3 Tammuz

Parshat Korach

17:07	17:59	Johannesburg
17:27	18:22	Cape Town
16:47	17:40	Durban
17:08	18:01	Bloemfontein
16:59	17:53	Port Elizabeth
16:52	17:46	East London

Community Briefs

ISRAEL ENCOUNTER ART FUNDRAISER

The Israel Centre with Hagshama, hosted an art auction at Beyachad at the end of last month. The auction featured artworks by four well-known Israeli artists: Naama Nothmann, Baruch Nachson, Rinat Goldstuck and Eli Levy. The evening was opened by director of the Israel Centre, Shimon Shamila, who explained that one of the main goals of the evening was to raise funds for Jewish grade 11s, to participate in the Israel Encounter Tour, which allows individuals to immerse themselves in Israeli culture, while learning about short- and long-term options in Israel. For further information: (011) 645-2560 or www.jewishagency.org/sa



Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag admiring the art works at the Israel Centre/Hagshama auction. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

Inside/Outside

Some arguments are petty affairs between insecure individuals, while others are classic differences of opinion between people of stature, where each opinion is worthy of consideration.

This week’s parsha tells the story of the mutiny of Korach, a cousin of Moses who challenged his authority. In the end, Korach and his henchmen were swallowed by the earth in a Divine display of rather unearthly justice.

The Midrash reveals some of the behind-the-scenes dialogue and debate between these men. Remember, Korach was no pushover. Besides being of noble lineage, he was clever, wealthy and quite charismatic.

One of the questions Korach put to Moshe was this: Does a house full of holy books still require a mezuzah? Moshe answered that it did. Korach scoffed at the idea, ridiculing Moshe.

The little mezuzah contains but two chapters of Torah, the Shema Yisrael. A whole houseful of books with the entire Torah won’t do the trick and a little mezuzah will? It doesn’t make any sense, argued Korach.

Why was Moshe’s answer correct? What indeed is the significance of a small parchment on the doorpost in relation to a library inside? The Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose



PARSHAT KORACH
Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Sydenham Highlands
North Shul

Yahrtzeit is this week, explained that it all depends on location.

The books are inside. The mezuzah is outside. When there are Jewish texts inside our study and living rooms, this indicates that the home is a Jewish home. This is good and as it should be. But what happens when we leave the comfortable confines of our home? Do we cease to be Jewish?

The mezuzah is at the threshold of our homes, at the juncture and crossover between our inner lives and outer lives. As we make the transition from private person to public citizen, we desperately need to be reminded of whom we are and that we take our identity with us wherever we may go.

There is only One G-d, says the little scroll, whether in our private domain or in

the big, wide world.
One of the many works by well-known author Herman Wouk, is an autobiographical novel called Inside, Outside in which he portrays his own inner struggles straddling these two worlds.

His pious Talmudist zayde had a profound influence on him, but so did Hollywood and Broadway. It took him a long time to find his way and settle into an observant Jewish lifestyle while still writing bestsellers.

Being Jewish “Inside” is relatively easy. It’s when we hit the “Outside” that we encounter temptation and turmoil. The challenge every Jew must face is to remain proudly Jewish even in the face of conflicting cultures, curious looks and often hostile attitudes.

Moshe rejected Korach’s argument with good reason. The mezuzah does not replace the need for Jewish libraries, but it serves as a perennial reminder on our doorways. As we step out of our home to enter the outside world, it beckons us to take our G-d and our Torah, our values and our traditions, along with us.

‘Tribe Kili’ set to test SA women’s ‘inner mountains’

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBYN SASSEN

“Kol Hakavod to them!” was one response, at last week’s media conference for the 20 women summiting Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for ORT. “They’re not brave, they’re insane!” was another. A third whispered about how many are “princesses” and how climbing Africa’s highest mountain will reveal their inner core. “Courage” is the initiative’s byword.

The fact that these women, from Jewish, Muslim and Christian cultures, at different ages and stages in life, are all getting up at 04:30 in the morning to train each day in the lead-up to the climb, attests to their commitment to this cause.

“Many have lost upwards of 20kg in the process,” says Nicci Raz ORT’s fundraising manager.

“This challenge’s benefit to ORT will be huge,” adds ORT SA’s CEO, Yehuda Kay.

Last September, a new branch of ORT, Women’s Empowerment Division, was started under Robyn Smookler, Tribe Kili’s team leader. It focuses on teaching women financial independence.

“I joined ORT when Nicci was training for the New York marathon,

with an ORT team. I was inspired to start a similarly exciting project, and in the process, realised women shouldn’t receive welfare parcels, they should be able to empower themselves.”

Amanda Porter, one of the climbers, has six children and is married to a serial marathon runner. She explained that the decision to do the Kili challenge bypassed her brain and went straight to her heart.

“I thank G-d for my physical capability and the support of my family, but I also believe in the force of good.”

Another climber, executive leadership coach Daphna Horowitz said: “We will help each other through this,” speaking of different mountains different women have to face. “It is beyond our comfort zones. We must conquer the fear.”

A very moved Rahima Ismael, the one Muslim woman on the project, added that it’s imperative the project cross many bridges in our society.

The women, guided by Tribe Safari’s Lance de Villiers – who has taught them that mental strength is as crucial as physical fitness – arrive in Tanzania on August 9, Women’s Day. The climb is seven days. Like www.facebook.com/ortkiliclimb for updates.



Top row: Andy Kopelowitz; Daphna Horowitz; Shira Zadikov; and Heidi Feldman; Middle row: Amanda Porter; Estelle Smit; Yochaved Bacher; Kiki Marx; and Siobhan Wilson; Front row: Kate Gershuni; Sharon Wilensky; Robyn Smookler; Rahima Ismael; and Tali Frankel.



The peak in question: Mount Kilimanjaro.



JEWISH ACHIEVERS - JUNE 20, 2012

The SA Jewish Report of June 29 will feature coverage of the event and the winners.
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ANC Centenary Flame road show celebrates ‘white democrats’



The ANC delegation arrives at the Great Park Shul with its Centenary Flame.

DAVID SAKS
PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

Since the beginning of the year, the Centenary Flame of the African National Congress has been travelling from one location to another in the course of a countrywide road show celebrating the party’s centenary year.

At various stages of the journey, specific aspects of the ANC’s history have been commemorated. Last Thursday in Johannesburg, the theme was “Celebrating the contribution of white democrats”.

The day culminated in a short ceremony at the Great Park Synagogue, in which SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn accepted the Centenary Flame on behalf of the Jewish community and Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of Great Park delivered a stirring address that paid tribute to the central role played by the ANC in bringing nonracial democracy to South Africa.

The event was hosted by the SAJBD, which received an approach to do so just a few days beforehand through veteran Jewish ANC Councillor Joy Coplan.

In her introductory remarks, Kahn said

that in hosting the function, the Board, in addition to celebrating South Africa’s dramatic transition, was also taking the opportunity of honouring the Jewish members of the South African freedom struggle.

She observed that both the ANC and the SAJBD were marking their centenaries in 2012, since it was in 1912 that the various branches of the Board had come together to form a national body.

Pointing out that the 18 years since South Africa’s transition to democracy corresponded to the Hebrew word for life - Chai - Rabbi Hazdan said that what being alive meant, was always to be looking to grow further.

Relating this to recent South African history, he observed that the transition to multiracial democracy was followed by putting into place the building blocks of a democratic culture, specifically through the Bill of Rights, through which the principles of the ANC’s famous Freedom Charter were realised, the establishment of an independent judiciary and in such constitutionally guaranteed rights to freedom of expression, thought and information, as reflected in the media, academia, civil society and arts and culture.

ACDP to march against ‘relabelling’

The decision by Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies, to have goods coming from the West Bank relabelled as “Produced in the Occupied Palestinian Territories”, will have far-reaching and very negative implications for trade relations between South Africa and Israel, says a media release from the SA Zionist Federation.

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) under its leader Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, has come out strongly against this move, criticising the Minister for singling out Israel for censure - “a country that has remained committed to partnering and sharing the expertise in which it excels with South Africa”.

The ACDP has organised a protest march, from the Union Buildings in Pretoria to the offices of the Department of Trade and Industry, to take place on Thursday morning,

June 28.

Those participating, as well as a large contingent of ACDP supporters, will include IFP President Mangosuthu Buthelezi and many of his followers; bishops and clerics of the Shembe Church; and members of other African communities.

“We are inviting you to join this march and give voice to your concerns about this government action,” the SAZF says. “Under the auspices of the SAZF, transport will be provided for protesters to and from Pretoria. Buses will be leaving from Beyachad at 08:45 on the morning of June 28 and returning at 15:00. Each participant will be given a T-shirt and refreshments will be provided.

- Booking on the buses is essential; and there will be no charge for the event. Please call (011) 645-2531/2510 or e-mail lisa@beyachad.co.za

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Relabelling goods from Israel as coming from the “Occupied Palestinian Territories” is discriminatory, indefensible, and part of the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign to isolate and delegitimise Israel.

The ACDP is strongly opposed to this decision taken by Minister Rob Davies of the Department of Trade and Industry and has arranged a PROTEST MARCH together with many other supporting groups.

Join us and show YOUR support for Israel and YOUR condemnation of this move.

Date:

Thursday, June 28

Time:

From 08:45 till 15:00

Venue:

From the Union Buildings to the Department of Trade and Industry in Pretoria (1,5 km)

Cost:

Free

Bookings:

Essential - transport by buses there and back
(Leaving from Beyachad at 08:45)
(RSVP BY NO LATER THAN MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2012)

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lisa@beyachad.co.za (011) 645-2531/ (011) 645-2510

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In honour of The Rebbe, please add another mitzvah, or enhance the way you are already doing a mitzvah. It will bring honour to The Rebbe, and more importantly help complete his life’s ambition – **to bring Moshiach now!**

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‘Dr Rod’ - the Angel of Healing



Dr Rodney Unterslak with his grandson Mendy in 2009. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WWW.FACEBOOK.COM

ROBYN SASSEN

“He loved people. People loved him,” so said a heart-felt tribute by a former patient to Johannesburg-based family physician and homoeopath Dr Rodney Unterslak who last Tuesday succumbed to the cancer, from which he had suffered since 2005.

A household name in the local community for over 25 years, Dr Unterslak was born on March 18, 1953. Affiliated to the Lubavitch community, he studied medicine at Wits University and some years later homoeopathy in Johannesburg and London, initially setting up his practice in Yeoville in Johannesburg and then, with the demographic shift of the community, moving north to Cheltondale. He married Jennifer Orelowitz in 1975, and they had two daughters and three sons.

“He was an amazing, unbelievably generous member of our community,” said a colleague. “He was an extensively qualified, immensely loving human being, a stalwart - a hero - of Chabad, one for whom nothing was too much when it came to doing for others.”

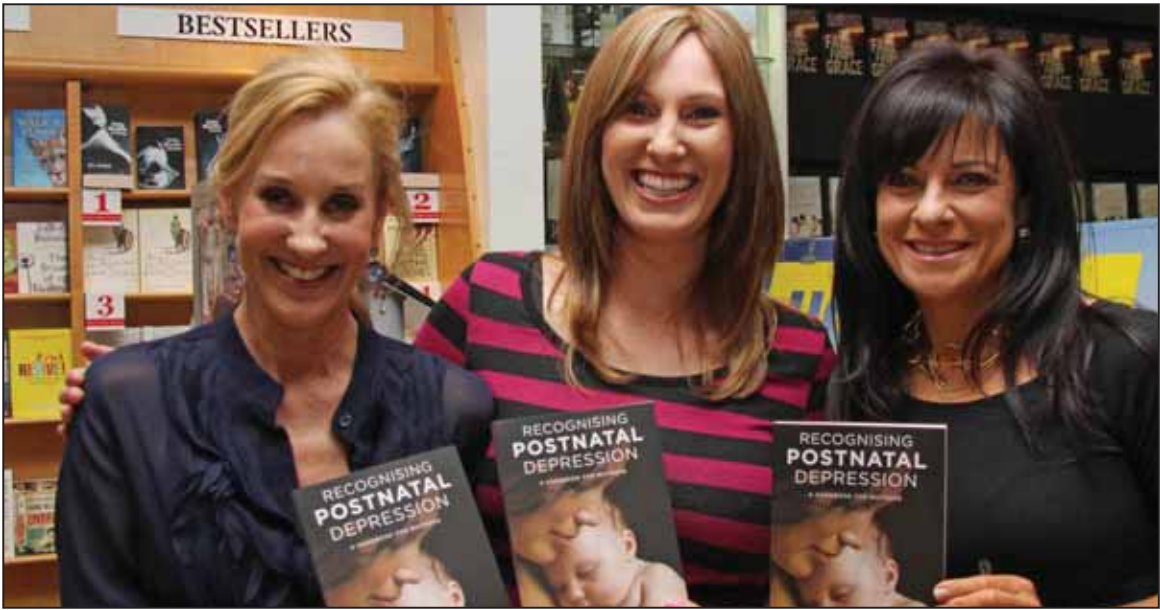
People affiliated with Chabad have commented on the close-knit nature of the community in Johannesburg, reflecting on “Dr Rod”, as he was affectionately known, as “a beacon of Ahavas Yisroel”.

Another former patient commented on how Dr Rod “was my direct source of inspiration, drawing directly from the Rebbe’s energy.” Yet another commented on how Dr Rod had helped her deal with monumental obstacles, “through gentleness”.

Many people commented on Unterslak’s intimate memory of them and their children, and recounted incidents of calling him late at night from across the world, and he was there to commiserate, to advise, to diagnose, to listen.

Said Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul: “He was an incredible human being who saved countless lives, not only medically but spiritually and emotionally. How prophetic that his parents named him Refoel, the Angel of Healing. And what an angel he truly was. He was a true ‘rofeh yedid’ - a healer and friend to all.”

Unterslak was nominated for this year’s Helen Suzman Lifetime Achiever Award, at the annual Jewish Achievers event. He is survived by his wife, Jenny and children, Chani Zwick, Dov-Ber, Yossi, Eli and Mushky Denburg, their spouses and children.



Zahava Aarons; Paula Levin; and Dr Andy Taub-Da Costa, authors of the book.

Book makes a valuable contribution in explaining PND affliction

Postnatal depression (PND) affects up to 40 per cent of women, a startlingly high number. PND is a hellish illness that imposes on women’s lives and their ability to function as mothers, wives and contributing members of society, and carries a stigma that is associated with shame and blame, a plight that is in many ways more devastating to have to deal with than the illness itself.

SHIRA DRUION
PHOTOGRAPH:
ILAN OSSENDRYVER

In response to the growing needs of countless mothers and their families, Exclusive Books in Hyde Park, in conjunction with Penguin Publishing, recently launched a much awaited handbook on the subject, which sold out at its opening launch. The book, “Recognising Postnatal Depression A Handbook for Mothers”, is an informative read intended to help educate and ultimately prevent the overwhelming effects of postnatal depression on women.

The book which was authored by three women - Jewish Life Editor Paula Levin; postnatal medical maven, Dr Andy Taub-Da Costa; and well known psychologist, Zahava Aarons, is a moving account of pain and suffering that has been triumphed by the resilience of the human spirit.

Each story is profoundly stirring

as it uncovers the complexities that motherhood brings, from the perspective of several courageous and spirited mothers. The stories are told with rare honesty and a deep humility, paying tribute to women and their ability to find light in the depths of their darkness.

The original idea for the book stemmed from Da Costa’s desire to educate the masses about the traumas and complications associated with postnatal depression. Later it was combined with co-author, Paula Levin’s own battle with PND.

Da Costa admits: “The real catalyst for the book was Paula’s astounding desire to share her experience with other women. She felt that by sharing her own story, she could empower both men and women with vital information about the illness. Our intention is to protect women and to save lives.”

Levin, in an interview with Jewish Report, explains: “PND has this awful

conspiracy of silence; I wanted to break that stigma. PND is so prevalent, it affects thousands of women, and after my harrowing journey, I would do anything to help other women who are suffering too.”

Aarons is quiet in her strength, but she is a reservoir of love and empathy. “Andy and I are not conventional professionals who adhere to strict therapeutic boundaries, unlike many other therapists.

“We are fully aware that our treatment modus operandi is very unusual and that it is not easy to find therapists who treat the way we do. I would classify myself as more of a fringe therapist and it is therefore both mine, Andy’s and Paula’s sincere prayer and hope that the book will be a springboard for other counsellors to start support groups that will offer women this genuine care and empathy in their time of need.

“The aim of the book is to be an ambassador for openness.”

New ‘revolutionary service’ for olim

The Israeli Ministry of Absorption together with the Jewish Agency, has launched a new “revolutionary service” for olim. This new offering will allow olim from South Africa and the rest of the world to receive their new Israeli ID documents upon arrival in Israel (at the airport), the Israel Centre in Johannesburg said in a media release.

Until today, olim who have arrived in Israel on a Red Carpet Aliyah flight, have received their ID documents

within one or two days of their arrival in Israel, at a special ceremony held at the Kotel. In the past, olim who made aliyah on their own would have to go to the Ministry of Absorption offices to have their ID document issued.

From Sunday June 17, all olim have received their ID document at the airport - within two hours after landing in Israel. This new service is part of an ongoing effort to improve the services that the State of Israel provides to olim.

Over and above this, olim will also receive the following benefits at the airport; their special government allowance (Sal Klita), they can meet with representatives of medical aid systems and can sign up immediately, and they will also receive a free AIM card with 200 shekels.

These amazing new services will ensure that the first steps in Israel are that much easier for the new olim.

• For more information, contact the Israel Centre on (011) 645-2560.

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The Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem:
www.jpost.com

“Hamas claims responsibility for rocket fire into Israel”

Gaza-based terror group claims responsibility for at least three mortars fired into Israel on Monday night, says responding to recent killings of Palestinians.

Canadian Jewish News, Toronto:
www.cjnews.com

“Jewish groups welcome curbing of Nazi salute”

Quebec student leaders say they will try to curb demonstrators from using the Nazi salute again, after B’nai Brith Canada and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs denounced the gesture as unacceptable and insensitive to Jews and others, whatever the intention of those who do it.

World Jewish Daily, international:
www.worldjewishdaily.com

“Knesset committee: 80 per cent of Haredim will be drafted”

Minister Mofaz reveals some recommendations by committee tasked with finding alternative to Tal Law; thousands of ultra-Orthodox will be recruited to police, Prison Service, while 20 per cent will be exempt as part of “torato emunato” deal.

Israel news:
www.ynetnews.com

“Hebrew slogans spray- painted on mosque near Ramallah”

Unknown assailants spray-painted Hebrew slogans on a mosque in the village of Jaba southeast of Ramallah. IDF and police forces are canvassing the area. It is suspected the vandalism is a “price tag” act.

The Jewish Chronicle, London:
www.thejc.com

“Chief Rabbi will oppose gay marriage”

The Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks has finally broken his silence on gay and lesbian marriages and opposed government plans to introduce it.

Jewish Telegraph, Manchester, Leeds, England:
www.jewishtelegraph.com

“Government will look into shechita again in January”

MP Jim Paice said that the implementation of an EU regulation on ritual slaughter of animals according to religious laws, in January 2013 provided an opportunity for government to look at how to improve the welfare of these animals.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, international:
www.jta.org

“Walker refuses to authorise Hebrew version of ‘The Color Purple’”

Alice Walker, author of “The Color Purple”, refused to authorise a Hebrew translation of her prize-winning work because “Israel is guilty of apartheid and persecution of the Palestinian people, both inside Israel and also in the Occupied Territories.”

News in Brief

Romney says he will do the ‘opposite’ of Obama on Israel

WASHINGTON - Mitt Romney has told an audience of Christian conservatives that he would do the “opposite” of what President Barack Obama has done when it comes to Israel.

“I think, by and large, you can just look at the things the president has done and do the opposite,” Romney said last week Saturday in an address by video to a conference of the Faith and Freedom Coalition.

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor and the Republican presidential nominee, was campaigning in Pennsylvania when the conference took place in Washington.

Romney faulted Obama for asking Israel to hold back while the West exhausts possibilities short of war to get Iran to end its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

“He’s almost sounded like he’s more frightened that Israel might take military action than he’s concerned that Iran might become nuclear,” Romney said of Obama. “I would make it very clear that for us, as well as for them, it is unacceptable for Iran to become a nuclear nation and that we’re prepared to take any and all action to keep that from happening.”

The Romney campaign has said that Obama should do more to make clear that a military option is available should Iran forge ahead with its nuclear enrichment, which the Islamic Republic insists is for peaceful purposes.

Romney said his “overarching” message was that “I would not want to show a dime’s worth of

distance between ourselves and our allies like Israel. If we have disagreements, you know, we can talk about them behind closed doors. But to the world, you show that we’re locked arm in arm.”

Obama in the first two years of his administration strongly criticised Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem. In May 2011 he called for Israel to negotiate on the basis of the 1967 lines, albeit with land swaps and a number of security guarantees for Israel.

The Obama campaign accused Romney of “playing politics with the US-Israel relationship” and released a sheet of Obama’s pro-Israel actions, including funding for Israel’s anti-missile programmes and expanding security cooperation, as well as blocking anti-Israel moves at the United Nations.

Referring to Romney’s “do the opposite” pledge, Ben LaBolt, Obama’s campaign press secretary, asked: “Does that mean he would reverse President Obama’s policies of sending Israel the largest security assistance packages in history?

“Does it mean he would let Israel stand alone at the United Nations, or that he would stop funding the Iron Dome system? Does it mean he would abandon the coalition working together to confront Iran’s nuclear ambitions?

“Mitt Romney is yet again trying to score cheap political points by distorting President Obama’s record of support for Israel,” LaBolt said. “Our relationship with Israel is too important for Gov Romney to play politics with it.” (JTA)

Billboard warns Jewish commuters against Manhattan’s ills

NEW YORK - A bright red billboard posted on a New York highway is warning Jewish commuters of the perils of Manhattan.

The sign on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway reads in Hebrew: “Dear Jew: You are entering a dangerous place. Shield your eyes.” The words “Shield your eyes” are repeated in English.

The billboard says it is sponsored by the Congregation of Yad Moshe, which according to reports is associated with Dov Hikind, an Orthodox state assemblyman whose district is in Brooklyn.

Reportedly the billboard has been up for several weeks. (JTA)

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Sinai Indaba: A statement of values

South African Jewry has two contrasting faces. One is its outstanding vitality and success in business, the arts, professions and so on, its fine community institutions and its contributions to broader society. The other is its anxiety about itself and its place here.

Recent years have been unsettling for South African Jews. The dramatic shrinking of their numbers due to emigration, the predicament of elderly parents and others left behind, an uncertain South African society struggling to define its post-apartheid identity amidst corruption and crime, questions about the role of minority groups like Jews, growing antagonism towards Israel and other factors, have taken their toll.

After the passing away of several long-standing, great community leaders such as Mendel Kaplan, Cyril Harris, etc, younger leaders are facing the challenge of forging a new cohesiveness. A significant boost to this was given last weekend by the second Sinai Indaba, which was attended by some 3 000 (see stories on pages 14-16).

It may seem strange to begin a comment on a Jewish community event by talking about the logistics rather than content. But the care given to organising an event such as this, says something about the respect with which the content and participants are viewed.

Sinai Indaba 11 was held in the Sandton Convention Centre. It ran like a finely-tuned engine, from the strict adherence to the schedule, the technology, lunch, ushers, and media facilities (Anyone who has put together something like this knows the stress that lies behind the calm exterior).

It was a tribute to the top-grade speakers from around the world, as well as the multitude of local people, on diverse Jewish topics. Speakers ranged from political analysts to filmmakers, rabbis, professors, historians, musicians and ordinary people with a special story to tell.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, a member of the younger generation of leaders mentioned above - he was 32 when he became chief rabbi - in his introductory address spoke about the huge effort in putting the convention together, stressing that Sinai Indaba was about “values”. The dignity of this Jewish gathering was itself a statement of values.

It was apparent to any observer that there were many young people there - at times they seemed to almost outnumber older participants. Given the “weightiness” of many of the speakers’ topics, their attendance there throughout the day attested to the compelling quality of the talks.

There was also a noticeable presence of people - both speakers and audience - who would feel just as much at home in another fast-growing contemporary movement in the international Jewish world - Limmud. Which shows that the different approaches to exploring what it is to be Jewish, are not mutually exclusive and can comfortably overlap in some areas, contrary to what various people may say.

Looking to future “Indabas”, consideration might be given to expanding the structure of the sessions, which were all in the tight format of “speaker on a stage, and large audience”, with little time for questions. Challenging the presenters and putting different views was difficult. Besides the formal talks in the main auditoriums - which were very successful - perhaps there could also be smaller breakaway rooms where participants could engage directly with the speakers.

Warm and well deserved tributes were paid to the chief rabbi, who really came into his own publically in this event. He was very much the master of the house and full credit is due to him.

Sinai Indaba is not something he inherited from previous leaders, but is his own creation - which will gather momentum in future, if the positive response to this second one is any indication. He has started something new and vibrant among South African Jewry, and it was a boost to the spirit.

We are looking forward to Sinai Indaba 111.

Moral independence places our tradition in the best possible light

It is not my custom to reply to the barrage of hate mail that I received, prompted by a column in this newspaper, but a recent exposition of defamation by someone claiming to know exactly what and when I had not studied any Torah or Talmud, elicited a surprising amount of e-mail correspondence by those who took offence at this standard form of establishment argument - defame, but never address the merits of the targeted person.

I mention this reaction because it appears that many had grasped the more significant problem raised in this line of insult (argument would surely be a misnomer). The problem is that within the community, there is both a culture of authority which refuses to question any decision or argument which flows from someone in charge - in this case, any rabbi, and a denial that, even within Orthodoxy, the tradition is highly contested.

Hartman refers to two paradigmatic approaches to Jewish consciousness.

The point can be illustrated by way of a reference to a recent article, penned by a distinguished Orthodox rabbi, David Hartman. Hartman refers to two paradigmatic approaches to Jewish consciousness which in turn illuminate the covenantal relationship with the divine.

The first one is the Akedah where Abraham does not utter a single syllable of protest against G-d’s instruction to sacrifice Isaac. Obedience rather than questioning of authority, lies at the centre of this narrative.

The second approach, which also involves Abraham, concerns Sodom. Here Abraham refuses to accept G-d’s decision to destroy the city without attempting to change the outcome.

Now Abraham repeatedly confronts G-d, eventually uttering the astounding phrase: “Will the judge of all the earth not act justly?” And the upshot is that G-d says: “Can I hide from Abraham that which I am about to do”,



THE JURY IS OUT
Dennis Davis

thereby accepting a principle of accountability for His decisions and being compelled by Abraham to respond to the latter’s pleas.

Rich lines of commentary have been spawned by these two narratives.

This is not the place to traverse the rich lines of commentary that have been spawned by these two narratives, but rather it is appropriate to note that Rabbi Hartman derives the flowing insight from these texts, One approach says: “I am nothing - only in my relationship to G-d am I something”, while in terms of the other approach, an individual’s relationship to G-d makes him or her enhanced, enriched and empowered.

From these distinctions, Rabbi Hartman observes that within the Jewish world of today, the latter line is not considered to be Jewish. The language of personal moral agency, so central to the Sodom narrative has been well and truly abdicated.

By contrast, the language of the Akedah which Hartman considers is not constitutive of Judaism, now dominates, hence the discourse of beresheit that prevails to disempower any scintilla of moral agency.

Hartman suggests that the foundational meaning of the covenant is that human beings, by entering into the reality of G-d, gain the ability to discover both themselves and their abilities.

Expressed differently, a divine empowerment of human beings to take responsibility for all facets of their lives, lies at the heart of the covenantal relationship. On this line of argument which a number of very learned rabbinical teachers taught me was central to our tradition, human beings are not to be pas-

sive along the lines of Abraham in the Akedah, but rather enjoined to use our empowerment derived from G-d to shape the world and concomitantly to take responsibility therefor.

Viewed within terms of the discourse that prevails in much of our community, it seems to me that we, all too often, follow the paradigm of the Akedah - passive uncritical acceptance of the world, the tradition as conveyed to us by those who claim authority and the belief that human agency is trumped by the idea that ultimately everything that happens to us is beresheit.

But, as Hartman shows, that is not the only option offered within our tradition. And the covenantal relationship which, as Rav Soleivitchik has shown so compellingly, is so central to the core of being Jewish, appears to dictate that we take responsibility for our actions.

Put in blunt terms, when we carefully examine a rule like Kol Isha and find that it is far more nuanced than claimed by a particular rabbi, ours is not to simply acquiesce without demur and then claim that we are not responsible for any hurt caused.

Similarly, we can adopt a monastic approach to our belief system and refuse to develop moral responses based upon our tradition to all manner of human problems or we can formulate our conduct in terms of values based upon G-d’s justice and compassion and take responsibility for all our actions.

That is not the only option offered within our tradition.

To follow the moral independence, as shown by Abraham at Sodom, is to place our tradition in the best possible light and to ensure that even when we hate, defame and refuse to engage, it is not beresheit, but rather it is a product of our own actions.

Am I simply a pessimist to think that within Orthodoxy in this country, this paradigm is almost dead?

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The cigar and the dumb-bell

I once heard a rabbi compare the Jewish world of the recent past to a lit cigar, with one end hot, the other cold and the majority located in the temperate middle.

The Jewish world now emerging, by contrast, was beginning to represent a barbell, heavily weighted at both ends with just a narrow bar in between.

The meaning of this was that until fairly recently, Jews who were strongly wedded to their religion and those completely disaffiliated from it – the “hot” and “cold” ends of the cigar - were a small minority. The majority were somewhere in between, generally committed to their Judaism, but in a partial, rather half-hearted way.

The barbell image showed how increasingly, the two extremes were now rapidly increasingly at the expense of the ever-shrinking middle-of-the-roads.

The truth of this metaphor is borne out by numerous studies, notably by the findings of a new survey of New York Jewry (which comprises close to 10 per cent of the entire Jewish world).

Jacob Ukeles, one of the survey’s authors, virtually paraphrased the cigar-barbell comparison when he commented: “There are more deeply engaged Jews and there are more unengaged Jews. These two wings are growing at the expense of the middle.”

In the UK, the Diaspora’s fourth-largest Jewish community after the US, France and Canada, very similar trends are emerging. Elsewhere, there seems to be a tendency to go in one direction or another.

On the European mainland, the tendency would seem to be towards greater assimilation, whereas in South Africa and Mexico, it is towards increased religiosity.

Another common thread in the various surveys that have been conducted is that the non-Orthodox versions of Judaism, whether going under the names Reform, Conservative, Liberal or Reconstructionist, have not benefited from the return to religiosity.

In the New York survey, Reform and Conservative Jews each declined by some 40 000 in the period 2002 - 2011 whereas the Orthodox and completely unaffiliated grew by 100 000.

Since 2006, one out of two New York marriages in which one partner was a non-Orthodox Jew was to a non-Jew, without any conversion. Even where there was a non-Orthodox conversion, in the case of a woman converting, neither she nor the children would be considered Jewish by the Orthodox.

The latter will therefore consider themselves to constitute an even larger proportion of New York Jewry than the 40 per cent estimated by the survey since that count included non-Orthodox converts and “patrilineal” Jews. In turn, this points to how the Orthodox and non-Orthodox/secular Jews are well on their way to becoming de facto separate communities altogether, not just different in terms of their religious beliefs, but in terms of their attitudes towards such sociopolitical issues as abortion, pornography, Middle East policy, homosexuality and the separation of church and state.

There is a pronounced economic dimension as well, with the Orthodox comprising a far higher proportion of the Jewish poor than their counterparts.

Much larger families and lower levels of secular education play their part here, as do the costs of Jewish education itself.



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Just six per cent of Conservative Jewish children and one per cent of Reform ones attend Jewish day schools, as opposed to 93 per cent of Orthodox ones.

Perhaps the biggest kicker in the survey is in the comparative number of children who are Orthodox compared to those in non-Orthodox and secular families.

Even when counting those only with a Jewish father, the non-Orthodox proportion has dropped to barely one in four. Not just intermarriage is the reason for this; non-Orthodox Jews tend to marry much later, if they marry at all, and even when they do, seldom have more than one or two children.

In the UK, incidentally, the number of Jewish children from strictly Orthodox families exceeded the rest (including those who attend Orthodox synagogues but are otherwise largely non-observant) a good while ago. South African Jewry must be close to that level by now.

For non-Orthodox Jews who care about ensuring Jewish continuity, these figures are nothing short of catastrophic. No amount of spin-doctoring (some now seek to claim that intermarried households actually enrich the community through making it more pluralistic and inclusive) can hide the fact that in the most crucial area of all, that of passing on a love of and commitment to Judaism to the next generation, their movements are failing utterly.

Given the current rate of attrition, the day cannot be far away when there will no longer be a next generation to receive whatever they have to give.

Israel, with that special subtlety and tact for which Israelis are justly famous, recently infuriated mainstream American Jewry by placing adverts in the New York Times and elsewhere, urging Jews to make aliyah to avoid having Christian grandchildren.

While the message could have been delivered more sensitively, the underlying truth could hardly be denied. Outside of Israel, it is increasingly looking like there is no future for non-Orthodox Jewry.

For Israel itself, which now has so pressing a need for a strong Diaspora to promote its case in a progressively more hostile world, the long-term implications of this are alarming.

News in Brief

JOURNALISTS ASK ISRAELI AG TO RECONSIDER BLAU INDICTMENT

BRUSSELS - The International Press Institute has called on Israel’s attorney general to reconsider an indictment against an Israeli investigative reporter for acquiring classified documents.

Uri Blau, a reporter for the Israeli daily Haaretz, published an article in 2008 using classified documents given to him by Anat Kamm, who copied them from a superior’s computer during her service in the Israeli military.

Kamm is serving a 4 1/2-year prison term for her role in obtaining the documents and turning them over to Blau.

The institute in a letter to Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein, said that prosecuting Blau, who faces a seven-year prison sentence for possession of the documents, would “undermine press freedom in general and investigative journalism in particular”, and would “set a grave precedent for the future of Israeli journalism, especially investigative reporting”.

“It is our understanding that Uri Blau handled the leaked information with care, using it only to write stories that were in the public interest,” the institute wrote. “The documents in Mr Blau’s possession were not republished far and wide.

“Even if, as you suggest, the ‘potential for damage in the unprotected possession of the documents was enormous’, it remained just that - potential damage. Mr Blau did not share or transfer the documents, and has not been accused of having done so.

“Moreover,” the letter said, “the articles he wrote using the information, were even cleared by the military censor prior to publication.”

The institute wrote that in Blau’s case, the documents were used solely to serve a strong public interest. (JTA)

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A GOOD NEW KOSHER RESTAURANT IN CAPE TOWN

In the June 15 issue of the Jewish Report, Julian Richfield makes valid comments regarding kosher restaurants.

However, there is a restaurant which has opened in Sea Point in Cape Town,

READY-MADE KOSHER FOOD IN CT EMINENTLY AFFORDABLE

I have just returned from Cape Town and was astonished at how cheap ready-made kosher food is there.

I salute Goldees and Checkers Sea Point. For R100 at Goldees I can feed four people with a choice of a three-course meal consisting of minestrone soup, a meat dish, veggies and a mousse or pudding that is delicious.

At Checkers I can buy Perogan at R3,99, not like here (in Johannesburg). Many wonderful dishes including a gefilte fish pie for

which has a menu to suit the most discerning palate. Tucked away from the busy Main Road is Evergreen, a kosher restaurant which is well worth a visit.

I Sacks, Cape Town

R35.

There are many people in Johannesburg who would love these specials; instead we pay hundreds of rands on a Shabbos.

Just to mention: Goldees has reduced prices during the week on herring and meals.

One can feel despondent in Johannesburg when people are being overpriced for food. Come on someone, do something to make us happy when we shop!

Lorraine Katzen, Johannesburg

HERBER HOUSE TO HAVE THEIR REUNION IN ISRAEL

Some Herber House alumni have decided to have a reunion in Israel on Wednesday, October 17. The venue will be finalised, once we know the number of participants.

Yes, the years have passed by and we have had no contact, some of us in the past 60 years, but it would be good to get together and to hear about everyone’s experiences.

I am aware, that to some, Herber House

does not hold good memories, but perhaps the then friendships do.

Please contact Ben Bar-Yehuda (aka Ben-nie Croock) in Israel at benbary@netvision.net.il or phone Israel 03-635-8640; also available on Skype, or Bernard Lapidus at snblap@rogers.com or phone Toronto 1-905-886-0429.

Bernard Lapidus, Toronto

BOXING FANS SUFFERED A TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT IN THIS TOURNAMENT

The long anticipated boxing tournament - Last Man Standing - which took place at Emperors Palace last Saturday night and should have been a great success, turned out in the final rounds to be a damp squib.

The one contest featuring the well-known Israeli boxer was non-existent. Nobody in the crowd knew about his non-appearance, for whatever reason and the authorities-that-be didn’t even have the foresight and decency to announce from the ringside his

absence as such.

Surely then another boxer could have been roped in to fill Ran Nakash’s non-participation? Indeed a very unprofessional and unsatisfactory state of affairs and it saddens me to think that Golden Gloves Promotions have ”tkd” the boxing fans.

In the final count-down, a sad and sorry night with all the setbacks and incidents that marred and irritated the boxing faithful.

Barney Segal, Johannesburg

SA JEWISH COMMUNITY SUFFERS FROM SEVERE INTOLERANCE

Tolerance has never been a widely spread human virtue. It is in extremely short supply in this country and unfortunately in our Jewish community.

Most South African Progressive and Orthodox Jews come from the same families; some of these have been shattered by the movement of their brethren away from their original roots, either towards Reform or towards Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox.

Many families however do manage to tolerate these movements and still remain close to one another.

Jews are in a minority worldwide. In South Africa our numbers have actually shrunk. One would think that the remnant left here would do all in its power to retain some form of cohesion.

However, we read bigoted letters, for example decrying the amount of space in your letters columns given to Progressive opinion and we have shrill opposition to the sound of the female voice in prayer or even in secular songs, as well as ugly discrimination in our Jewish day schools against Progressive learners and against

the appearance of our rabbis on public platforms with Orthodox rabbis.

Why do the Orthodox behave this way when they have shown they are capable of making the absolutely wonderful gesture of choosing Professor Jonathan Jansen to head the Holocaust Museum? Is it easier for them to show tolerance towards a righteous Gentile than towards fellow Jews?

We do not dictate to our cousins or children or friends who have chosen to worship in a more Orthodox environment. Tolerance is the watchword in our spiritual outlook. We love them and understand them and most of them feel the same towards us and we feel that their leaders are creating unnecessary animosity in order to score petty political points.

We should try to set an example of true brotherhood by starting with ourselves. Thereafter we should turn to the devastating lack of tolerance and unity in the greater South African community and of course in Israel and the world.

Susan Tucker, Dunkeld West, Jhb

DELIGHTED BY RECOGNITION OF BERNIE FANAROFF’S ACHIEVEMENTS

I was delighted with your front page and page five splash on Bernie Fanaroff. (SAJR June 1).

As the person who organised an honorary doctorate for Fanaroff from the University of the Western Cape, I discovered there is another - ethics - reason to celebrate him.

Uniquely among South African astronomers, he sacrificed his scientific career for two decades to build up the trade union today called the National Union of Metalworkers of

SA (Numsa).

He did this because he cared about persons who were paid less than himself, and often laboured in authoritarian or racist workplaces.

Bernie Fanaroff’s life testifies to an ethical drive that is all too rare today.

Thank goodness that the SKA project rescued him for astronomy, to which he now returns.

Keith Gottschalk, Cape Town

OUR INDISPUTABLE MIDDLE EASTERN ORIGINS

We should all be concerned about growing denials that we Jews have any connection with Biblical Israel, but there is scientific proof that such a connection exists and is far from tenuous.

In the early 1990s, Uzi Ritte, a population biologist at the Hebrew University, found a distinct correspondence between the mitochondrial DNA of North African Jews and the mitochondrial DNA of European Jews, despite a thousand years or more of geographical separation.

Ritte went further in his researches and confirmed that all contemporary Jewish groups, other than the Falashas (whose ancestors were almost all converts to Judaism), are all genetically connected to one another.

In the year 2000, Michael Hammer, a biologist at the University of Arizona, confirmed the findings of Ritte and then discovered that the genetic make-up of the average modern Jew is almost identical to that of the average Palestinian Arab.

Almut Nebel and Marina Faerman of the Hebrew University and Dvora Filon of Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem, carried out further DNA testing and also concluded that:

All modern Jews are genetically connected to one another.

Modern Jews and Palestinian Arabs have almost an identical genetic make-up.

Jews and Palestinian Arabs are largely descended from the indigenous inhabitants of ancient Canaan (Israel-Palestine) although Palestinian Arabs also have Arab ancestry from Arabia.

Our claim to be descendents of the Biblical Hebrews or Israelites therefore seems to be beyond dispute.

GORDIN SHOULD RATHER FOCUS ON HIS OWN MOVEMENT’S FAULTS

I read Jeremy Gordin’s article (commenting on David Saks’ “Yodelling yentas” article in his Barbaric Yawp column) with pitying amusement. Gordin’s desperate titling of the majority of South African Jews as being members of a “fundamentalist sect” has to be the most pathetic line in the paper to date, though. I think it is fantastic that a representative of a group whose members have a less than one per cent chance of their grandchildren being Jewish, whose siddur (or “egalitarian” hymn book) is ”modernised” whenever it gets too “Jewish” for the times and whose religious conversion entails a complimentary signature, should be pointing fingers at us all.

How interesting it is that he bemoans the lack of Orthodox participation in the creation and defence of Israel. The 800 of our South African boys who fought for Israel’s Independ-

ence in 1948 (my uncle among them) were almost exclusively traditionally Orthodox.

His own Reform leaders of the time, who were fearing an adverse reaction by their host countries to Zionism, remained completely opposed to the movement until the late 20th century and today only constitute a small minority of Israel’s population.

No doubt his anguish at watching a Reform self-inflicted Holocaust in America made him come up with this satire, but could he limit his assimilationist anti-Torah, and hence anti-Jewish rantings to his own congregants or limited followers?

Perhaps he should focus on his own movement’s faults instead of preaching hatred and instead focus on trying to bring his congregants closer to the ultimate truth of Hashem.

Ariel Sher, Johannesburg

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Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

ANC Centenary Flame road show

Last week Thursday, the Board had the honour of hosting one of the stages on the journey of the Centenary Flame of the African National Congress, a celebratory road show travelling “the length and breadth of South Africa to celebrate 100 years of the ANC, touching all facets of society as it makes its way through the different provinces”.

The theme for that day was “celebrating the contribution of white democrats” and it culminated in a short ceremony at the Great Park Synagogue.

Messages were delivered by the ANC, our national director, Wendy Kahn and Rabbi Dovid Hazdan. Wendy formally accepted the symbolic handover of the torch on behalf of the Jewish community.

The ceremony was a very poignant and moving one. It was not about expressing support for the ANC as a political party – the SAJBD is and always will be strictly apolitical in that regard – but to acknowledge and pay tribute to everything the organisation has achieved over the past hundred years.

Today, we live in a nonracial democracy that strenuously upholds basic human rights and freedoms, and a huge share of the credit for bringing this about undeniably belongs to the ruling party.

Holocaust education a perennial duty
At the time of writing, I am about to leave for Israel to attend the triennial Yad Vashem conference on Holocaust education. Some 350 educators from near and far, are expected to attend the event, sharing their experiences and discussing ways of communicating the lessons of the Holocaust that will have the most relevance and impact in today’s world.



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

The Shoah was one of the greatest catastrophes to befall any people throughout history. Ever since, Jews have struggled to come to terms with its legacy. It is surely testimony to our resilience as a people that this has not taken the form of despair and defeatism, but has instead inspired us to rebuild and look to ways in which we can use that tragedy to build a better future.

One way we have done so is through Holocaust education. Through museums, resource centres and specialised educational programmes, we strive to convey the lessons not just about what happened but, even more importantly, how it happened.

The Holocaust culminated in mass murder, but it began with words of hatred that in turn

fanned the flames of prejudice and intolerance. If we are to ensure that the six million Jewish victims of Nazism, as well as the victims of similar crimes against humanity, did not die in vain, then we need to use the lessons of what happened to them and why to ensure that such horrors are never again allowed to occur.

A few weeks ago, one of Johannesburg’s leading private schools was embarrassed by a grossly inappropriate demonstration identifying with Nazism by some of its pupils. While intended as a joke, this display was crass and insensitive in the extreme, and deeply offended many of those present.

This incident only underlines the need for education about the Holocaust. Once they are made aware of what Nazism actually meant and what its proponents wrought in the world, very few will wish to regard with anything other than horror and disgust.

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Community Briefs

UJW DEVELOPS ‘VOLUNTEERS’ PROGRAMME’ TO HELP SELWYN SEGAL

For many years, the Union of Jewish Women have been providing birthday cakes and arranging teas for the residents at Selwyn Segal. They have now developed a Volunteers’ Programme, which will enable more UJW volunteers to enable the Selwyn Segal residents to feel that much more loved. They are requesting volunteer input for any of the following: singing, pet therapy or outings on Monday afternoons; baking, gardening, movement/dancing, walking or arts and crafts on Tuesday afternoons; outdoor and indoor sports on Wednesday afternoons; or nail painting sessions on Friday afternoons. To volunteer, please contact Estelle on 083-297-6560.

A GRAND MISSION TO FIGHT SCOURGE OF RHINO POACHING

Brandon Katz, Russel Lenhoff, Saul Cohen and Lawrence Segall, have collectively called themselves Team Wasted Potential, joining 61 other teams from Johannesburg and Cape Town on a mission to make a difference. This Wednesday, June 20, they’re collectively embarking on the Put Foot Rally, traversing 7 000km, across six countries in 17 days. The rally is in aid of raising funds to help the fight against rhino poaching and also to hand out shoes to underprivileged children. Visit <http://wastedpotential.wozaonline.co.za> or www.putfootrally.com for further information; they’ll give regular updates of their progress through Africa via twitter and facebook: @WastedP_PFR or www.facebook.com/TeamWastedPotential

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BUILDING SOUTH AFRICA - PEOPLE DOING REMARKABLE THINGS

Sweet opens up horizons for financially-strapped youngsters

ROBYN SASSEN

Vusumuzi Nhlapo (18) from Alafang High School, Kathlehong will do an Accountancy-focused MBA at the University of Cape Town. His 19-year-old classmate, Lerato Motumi says she will do an accounting degree specialising in investment at Pretoria University.

If you had asked teenagers of this age, from these financially distressed backgrounds, about their aspirations for the future, five years ago, the answers would have been considerably different. Vusumuzi and Lerato had attended a screening of Martin Sweet’s My Future, My Career project.

Sweet originated My Future, My Career, among other initiatives.

MD of Primestars Marketing, Sweet originated and facilitates My Future, My Career, among other initiatives, focused on opening up the horizons of kids in financially difficult circumstances.

“We realised the value of cinemas for education,” he said, explaining how he’d become aware of the urgency of this project after the tragic stampede that killed a parent at the University of Johannesburg in January, when she tried to register her child.

“Education experts cite a lack of career guidance and a misunderstanding of faculty entry requirements as major contributing factors to that chaos.

“The children this project addresses,



Martin Sweet with jubilant high school learners at one of the screenings of My Future My Career. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

come from peri-urban environments. They’re poor. They get bussed to these movies, which are paid for. They get free popcorn and Coke and they get to understand that their lives needn’t echo that of their parents.

“Knowing what you want to do, who you want to be and what you want to achieve in your life, can be difficult,” Sweet said. “But with the right information, guidance and role models, the journey can be exciting.”

My Future, My Career, comprising 14 separate in-depth career education films, ran between February and April, at Ster-Kinekor cinemas nationally. “The results have been phenomenal.” Over 48 000 learners

saw the movies.

“Realising what good marks can mean for a career, has resulted in the granting of many bursaries. Children are working harder to do better because their goals are now meaningful to them.”

A lawyer by training, Sweet was born in Klerksdorp, studied at Wits University, and moved through the corporate world while he developed his career in local politics.

“I always wanted to do something of value to the broader community. Our objective is about skills development,” but it’s also about planting seeds. “Many of these kids just need motivation for something within them to be ignited.

“There are all kinds of opportunities

for investors or potential investors to play a role in this project, which serves to strengthen the fabric of our society. The reverse can happen so quickly. I believe we are growing opportunity to improve society.

“I was inspired to start something of this nature by the matric results of Jewish kids. Two generations ago, we were where children like Vusumuzi and Lerato are, now. Holocaust survivors’ children had scant opportunities to grow. They fought hard for their kids to be educated; the ultimate was to have them become doctors and lawyers.

“When we look at the SA we’re in today,” he cites Thomas Paine: “We have it in our power ‘to begin the world all over again.’”

News in Brief

CHIEF RABBI WILL FIGHT NON-ORTHODOX RABBIS’ SALARIES

JERUSALEM - Israel’s Sephardic chief rabbi has said he will fight the state’s agreement to pay the salaries of some non-Orthodox rabbis who lead their communities.

Rabbi Shlomo Amar said in an interview with the haredi Kol Berama radio station last Sunday night that he would convene the Chief Rabbinate Council, made up of Orthodox rabbis throughout Israel, to discuss ways to reverse the decision. The meeting reportedly will take place next week.

“The greatest danger for our generation is the danger of assimilation, and we need to be strong and steadfast in our fight,” Amar said. “It is forbidden to remain silent because there is nothing more serious than this measure.”

He added that the decision to recognise non-Orthodox rabbis could “uproot all the foundations of the Torah”.

Amar also objected to the fact that the attorney general, who brokered the agreement, did not consult with the Chief Rabbinate.

The agreement announced last month came three weeks after a panel of Supreme Court judges called on the attorney general to intervene during a hearing on a petition filed more than seven years ago calling for the state to recognise and pay the salaries of rabbis of all streams of Judaism.

The Israel Religious Action Centre of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, the Reform movement in Israel, had filed the petition. The attorney general’s office had opposed the request; the settlement was negotiated out of court.

Some 4 000 Orthodox rabbis serve as rabbis of their communities and draw a salary from the government’s Religious Services Ministry.

The non-Orthodox rabbis would have the moniker “rabbi of a non-Orthodox community”, and financing for the positions would come from the Culture and Sports Ministry.

The decision is limited to regional councils and farming communities and is not intended for large cities. (JTA)

ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS DROP IN NETHERLANDS, REPORT FINDS

AMSTERDAM - The number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the Netherlands, dropped by nine per cent last year, but vandalism and assaults rose sharply, according to the annual report by the country’s watchdog on anti-Semitism.

The Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel, or CIDI, attributed the overall drop in recorded incidents to a decrease in the amount of hate mail reported.

However, the Hague-based organisation registered a sharp rise in real-life anti-Semitic incidents - such as vandalism, assaults or abuse - to 55 last year from 31 in 2010.

In total, CIDI registered 113 anti-Semitic incidents in 2011, compared to 124 the previous year. CIDI found 18 cases of hate mail in 2011, compared to 47 in 2010.

The organisation’s records for 2011 show 28 victims of anti-Semitic, non-physical abuse on the street or in the public sphere. In 2009, CIDI listed 20 such incidents. That year saw anti-Semitism incidents of all categories skyrocketing worldwide in connection with Israel’s attack on Hamas in Gaza.

“There was no comparable external cause in 2011,” according to the CIDI report, which was compiled by researcher Elise Friedmann. The Netherlands has a Jewish population of some 40 000.

In 2010, CIDI recorded nine cases of in-person anti-Semitic confrontations. The threefold increase in 2011 is attributable to greater awareness to the need to report such incidents, according to a news release by CIDI.

“The Dutch government has been promising since 2008 to apply an improved and more uniform system for the registration of anti-Semitic and xenophobic incidents. To date, there are no signs of this,” CIDI said.

Dutch police do not register or flag reports of xenophobic incidents at the time of deposition. Police compile their annual hate crimes report by applying a search engine to the texts of all complaints.

CIDI has called the procedure “inadequate” and urged the Dutch police to implement an immediate flag system like the one used in Britain and elsewhere. (JTA)



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Arts in Brief

‘OFFENCE AND SEDUCTION’ ON SHOW AT RESOLUTION GALLERY

Currently on show at Resolution Gallery in Rosebank, Johannesburg is “Offence and Seduction”, an exhibition by Carol Nathan Levin and Frederick Clarke, about how women’s sexuality is often tainted with ideas of shame, dirtiness and secrecy. Clarke’s work uses what has become considered “Mother Earth” associations, and Levin confronts the physical and emotional pain in the aftermath of the removal of her ovaries because of the threat of cancer. Each aims to demystify the imbalance in which we all live, by making beautiful objects dealing with ostensibly controversial subject matter. The exhibition closes on July 28, (011)880-4052 or visit www.resolutiongallery.com

‘THE LINE’ MOVES TO MARKET THEATRE FOR NEW SEASON

Following the sold-out premiere season of ‘The Line’, a play directed and written by award-winning theatre personality, Gina Shmukler, earlier this year at Wits University’s WALE festival, the Market Theatre has invited the work for a new season. The Line is a culmination of Shmukler’s masters research on trauma and theatre-making, and is constructed from a series of interviews with South Africans involved in or affected by the xenophobic attacks in May 2008. It is written and directed by Shmukler, with music by Charl-John Lingenfelder and design by Niall Griffin; Khutjo Green and Gabi Harris perform. July 28-August 12, (011)832-1341.

GILAN GORK BRINGS BACK ‘BEYOND THE MIND’

SA-born mentalist, Gilan Gork, who enjoys a healthy international reputation, brings back his interactive show “Beyond the Mind”, by popular demand. It’s directed by Renos Spanoudes, and will be staged at Old Mutual Theatre on the Square in Sandton, July 3-14. Gork promises to silence his biggest skeptics; audiences will get to not only observe Gork’s developed mental and intuitive skills, as well as feats they never thought possible; they will also unlock their own abilities. “I believe it is important to help my audiences recognise their own potential,” said Gork in a media statement. Call (011)883-8606 or visit www.gilangork.com/promo

Putting spotlight back on sculptor Herman Wald

Sculptor Herman Wald died 42 years ago, his smaller works largely ignored by mainstream art historians. Now, his son, Louis, is attempting to set the record straight with an exhibition at the South African Jewish Museum which runs until July 15.

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED**

Herman’s most iconic work as far as the Jewish community is concerned, is his Monument to Martyred European Jewry at Johannesburg’s West Park Jewish Cemetery. The work is the site of the annual Holocaust memorial service and the sculptor and his wife, Vera, are buried close to it.

Another Holocaust monument, Kria - referencing the custom for mourners to rend their garments - stood in the grounds of Sandringham Gardens for 50 years and is destined to grace the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre on the centre’s completion.

“This notion of human suffering in relation to bigotry is central to my Dad’s work,” says Louis in a telephone interview from his base in London.

Wald also created significant works for synagogues, among them Wings of the Shechinah – from which the exhibition takes its name – that adorned the Holy Ark at the now-defunct Berea Shul in Johannesburg. That work will be housed from December in a glass foyer at the new Yeshiva Maharsha Shul under construction in Fairmount Extension and will be visible from outside.

Another was The Sanctum, an arch-shaped wooden screen that separated the choir from the congregation at the former Springs Synagogue. Both works are on display at the exhibition.

“My Dad tried to make sculpture on a



Louis Wald with Wings of the Shechinah, a work of his father's. Inset: Sculptor Herman Wald.



grand scale for synagogues in much the same way as the famous Christian sculptors had done in big churches. He saw the power of sculpture to deliver the message of religion,” Louis comments.

About 15 per cent of Wald’s work was Jewish-themed. The most iconic work to the non-Jewish South African is the Impala Fountain in Johannesburg’s Main Street, commissioned by Harry Oppenheimer in memory of his late father, Sir Ernest Op-

penheimer, as was The Diamond Diggers in Kimberley.

Descended from seven generations of rabbis, Herman initially had a battle for acceptance of his career by his rabbi-father, in relation to the prohibition of the Second Commandment against making graven images.

The Hungarian-born Wald escaped from Nazi persecution, arriving in this country in 1937. In 1928, his father had been fatally wounded in a pogrom in his hometown of Kluj and 15 years later, his mother and her family perished at the hands of the Nazis.

Wald was traumatised by these events and it is no surprise that he was “very much” pre-occupied with these themes.

Louis, a computer software engineer, publicised the website he has created for his father’s work two years ago. As a result, the University of the Witwatersrand commissioned two large works by the sculptor which were erected five months ago.

“Perfectly coincidentally, the two works have become the focal points of the university’s 90th birthday celebrations,” he says. “They are also asking for maquettes - preliminary models - of the works to be used as trophies.”

Louis is considering Wits as a Johannesburg location for mounting the “massive” exhibition. And further afield, his next target is the New York Jewish Museum.

• See www.hermanwaldexhibition.com

This retrospective is about grown-up printmaking

Exhibition: “Coming of Age: 21 Years of Artist Proof Studio”, Johannesburg Art Gallery
Until: July 5

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

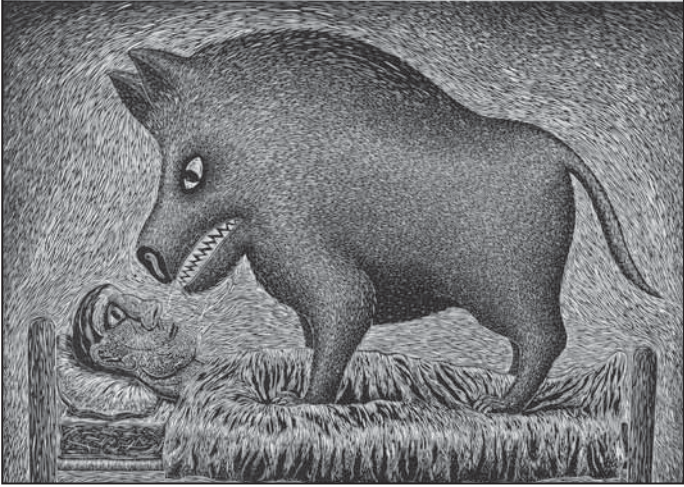
You might think community printmaking and imagine clichéd, poorly printed work, celebrated because they’re about empowerment. You won’t find that here: this major Artist Proof Studio retrospective is about grown-up printmaking. This is a 10 out of 10 show of arguably the best hand-pulled prints you will find anywhere. This exhibition will sweep you off your feet, for several reasons.

Firstly, the exhibition fills the Johannesburg Art Gallery’s entire exhibition arena, divided into separately curated spaces, so it’s not one long bombastic outlook.

Secondly, it’s not about egos, it’s about community. Begun by Kim Berman and the late Nhlanhla Xaba in 1991, APS has given birth to new, opinionated, skilled generations.

And thirdly, the work speaks for itself. Yes, there are pieces by the art world’s “usual suspects”: William Kentridge, Brett Murray, Kudzanai Chiurai, Diane Victor, who have collaborated with APS, but, as significantly, there are new names.

Johannesburg Art Gallery is not this city’s most genteel place. The area is replete with taxi ranks and street barbers. It’s neglected: parquet flooring goes click-



“Untitled” by Norman Catherine (2012)

ety-clack under your feet. The exhibition’s curatorial acuity, celebrating one of the bigger jewels in the crown of contemporary local art, overrides all that.

APS, based on an eponymous studio in Boston, was destroyed by fire in March 2003, which tragically killed its co-founder, Xaba. Much of the exhibition is a celebration of Xaba’s contribution to APS; there’s a tribute to him in one space, and another about healing, curated by Hayley Berman and Stompie Selibe. They’re rooms of mourning and celebration, leaving one emotionally bruised, yet jubilant.

Upon entering the exhibition you are confronted with the community that’s made APS the robust entity it is, in an



“Zoey” by Leroye Malaton (2012)

installation of portraits. Not only is this eye- and heart-catching, it reveals the relief printing process. These are not snapshots. They’re not drawings. They’re cut into the surface of linoleum and printed on a press.

The lino itself is on display in this installation; later in the show, you will see the prints pulled from these blocks of lino, in a poetic linking gesture.

The exhibition spills through JAG’s halls, with exuberance and a focus on excellence. Here, a pointy-toothed boar stands over a terrified man in bed, made by Norman Catherine; there a Wim Botha dragon writhes poisonously in the air.

APS’s Aids initiative, Paper Prayers,

enjoys focus, with portraits of people lost to Aids and the felt toys made by women associated with this project. There’s a focus on international collaborations, another on portfolios... one room leads to another; when your feet tire, your heart takes over.

Each corner holds a new surprise: Lebhang Sithole’s jazz drypoints are so rich you dance to them; Dzunisani Maluleke’s lino landscapes make you weep at their sophisticated simplicity; Sizwe Khoza’s work is deliciously painterly. This is the next generation of “usual suspects”.

There’s another APS show at Gallery 2, Parkwood, June 23-July 7: (011)447-0155.

Sinai Indaba

‘A community dedicated to Heaven will endure forever’

ROBYN SASSEN

It was a who’s who in Johannesburg’s Orthodox Jewry, in the capacity audience of over 3 000 at the opening of Sinai Indaba II at the Sandton Convention Centre, last weekend. The opening session, led by an upbeat Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, focused on the future of the Jewish world.

“In our thousands, we celebrate and experience Sinai, today. We aren’t predicting the future, we’re creating it: a community dedicated to Heaven will endure forever.”

Acclaimed historian and storyteller, Rabbi Berel Wein, discovered that looking in your rearview mirror when you drive in Israel is unusual. “That’s the problem in the Jewish world. The rearview mirror of the Jewish people is important, but oft neglected. Our past governs our future.

“But this is not a passive situation. We have to educate, publicise, believe and answer. The future is never easy. It is lonely for us; we are a small people in a large world with enemies.”

Rebbetzen Eva Sandler, in Hebrew and with the aid of a translator, told her story. Born and raised in Toulouse, France to a religious family, she met and married her husband while studying at a seminary in Israel.

They lived in Israel for six years before returning to France. “When we returned there, it was not for our livelihood or our honour; it



David Weiss; Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; Rabbi David Aaron; Rabbi Berel Wein. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDYVER)

was for G-d.”

And then the worse thing imaginable happened, on March 19. She witnessed the killing of her husband and two sons. “My heart broke.

“Afterwards I knew I had two choices. I could get under the blankets and cry or I could get out in the world and continue my husband’s work. I felt that if I do not do something, all the good he had done during his life would have been in vain.”

A veteran of IDF military intelligence, Dr Morchedai Kedar, who directs the Centre for the Study of the Middle East and Islam, said. “Zionism started 114 years ago, at the first Zionist Congress in Basel. It aimed to take millions of Jews out of exile. The bigger challenge is to take exile out of the Jews.

“It takes years to change a mindset. Israel became a bastion of human rights and knowl-

edge, culture and art. The universities are respected internationally. Israel’s Jewry is the biggest community in the world, but we continually face immense challenges: security; social equality; and the media delegitimising us.”

Eminent Baltimore-based rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yissocher Frand added. “The Jewish people’s mission statement is Kiddush Hashem.” This is manifest in integrity, honesty and civility.

“Be a mensch!” he added. “We are ambassadors of the Rabbeinu Shel Olam. This must be the mantra of our households, and it starts with us.”

Coming from five distinct directions, the message is clear: Our future is challenging but it is in our own hands; it’s a proactive challenge, there for the taking.

Embrace the present rather than wallowing in the past

SHIRA DRUION

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s magnanimous Sinai Indaba 11 efforts, drew Jews from a kaleidoscope of backgrounds and beliefs together for hours of shared wisdom and inspiration from the elite of the global Jewish world.

The list of these international greats was the heartbeat of the day, ensuring that the Sinai experience was as moving as it was stimulating and informative.

The thread running through the programme was the relevance of eternal Jewish values in the relationships that form the fabric of our lives.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand, rosh yeshiva of Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, was emphatic in his message that our relationship with G-d had become one of mechanical performances of mitzvot which had been reduced to the motions and was devoid of sincerity and passion.

He said a constructive solution to this problem would be to keep a journal of divine providence stories which would assist in the nurturing of a loving relationship with G-d.

“Recording the stories will enable every one of us to acknowledge G-d’s daily intervention in every aspect of our lives.”

The view on building a relationship with G-d was also shared by world-renowned speaker Lori Palatnik, who highlighted the importance of an internal GPS in our relationship with G-d.

“If you don’t know where you are going, G-d can’t get you there! Our ability to achieve our potential is far more promising if we embrace the present instead of wallowing in the past or being paralysed with fear by what the future may hold.

“If we begin to live in the present, we will live more fulfilling and happy lives.”

The notion of relationships was also challenged by famous Chabadnik, Rabbi Manis Friedman, with his mystical wisdom and wry humour on marriage and intimacy. He explained: “G-d created us as one being that was both female and male, and then separated us into two separate entities.

“The journey to a successful marriage is recognising that we are ultimately one and are therefore always striving to reassemble the

fragmented male and female halves in order to achieve wholeness, because separation is really an artificial state of being for a Jew.”

He posited that through the holiness of marriage, indestructible Jewish families, with solid values could be produced.

Dr David Pelcovitz, Yeshiva University psychology professor, pointed out how vital a healthy relationship with a significant other was, particularly when dealing with stress and suffering.

He said: “Speaking about pain and finding words to express trauma, not only impact emotionally on a person, but also carry powerful physiological ramifications”. He added that talking about issues was not everyone’s elected form of dealing with stress, but that different people would have different preferences for dealing with pain, which would include talking, as well as art, music, prayer and writing.

He encouraged an active approach to suffering, saying that passivity was not the primary choice of a modus operandi to evoke change in a relationship with ourselves or with a significant other.

Rabbi Goldstein makes a passionate plea for family values

SHIRA DRUION

Sinai Indaba 11 came to a high-note close with an inspirational address from Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, followed by five of the world experts brought to SA, who stood at the podium, facing the more than 3 000 people who had come to be part of this stimulating experience which this year in its second year, has already established itself as a highlight on the Jewish calendar.

Rabbi Goldstein said: “The future of the Jewish world begins with family. The chapters of our history are written in the homes of Jewish families. We are all members of families, and for the future of the SA community and the international Jewish community, it is imperative that we do our utmost to retain the family nucleus as the guarantee for the next generation.”

He said the importance of family was evident in the emphasis the Torah allocated to the chronicles of our biblical texts. The Torah was essentially

a conglomeration of stories about families, and the pivotal role that the family continued to play “in the narrative of our historical people”.

The idea was embellished by Rabbi Leib Keleman, who emphasised the importance of the parental role for the insurance of the continuation of the Jewish family. In his approach to parenting, he encouraged the investment of parents’ time and care in the lives of their children.

He told parents: “Your role as parents in the educative process of your children, is indispensable and is one that cannot be assumed by any other with as much impact or competency.”

These sentiments were echoed by Rabbi David Aaron, an authority on mysticism, who spoke of the profound impact his mother had made on him with and ability to be present as a mother for him throughout his life.

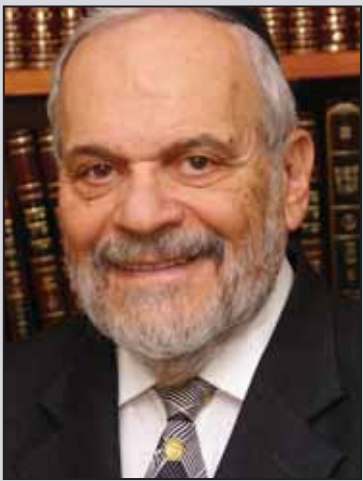
He stressed to parents the gravity of imbuing children with self-belief and self-worth to empower them to become successful and solid

human beings, who would ultimately grow up to enrich the Jewish nation as proud and strong Jews.

Lori Palatnik, expert on relationships, gave the concept of Jewish continuity a different spin, inspiring the audience with information about her Renaissance Women’s project which aims to afford 1 000 women this year the chance to go to Israel to be inspired and enriched.

“When you inspire women, you inspire families; when you inspire families you inspire communities and communities can evoke change in the world.”

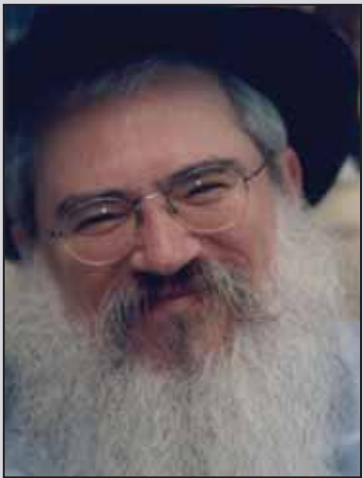
Rabbi Berel Wein gave a panoramic view on the continuity of the Jewish people. “The Jews are a miraculous people who continue to intrigue the world over with their mesmerising display of national resilience. Despite the many tragedies that have befallen us, we continue to prevail. I am not sure of many things, but what I am sure of is that the Jewish people will be here tomorrow.”



Rabbi Berel Wein



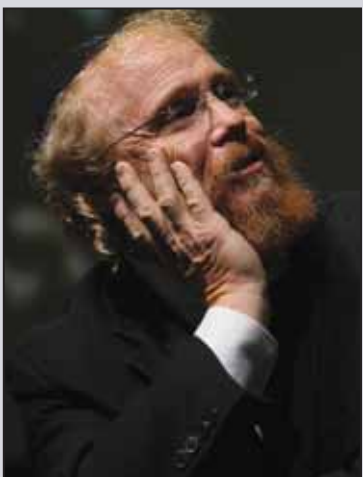
Rabbi Yissocher Frand



Rabbi Manis Friedman



Rebbetzen Eva Sandler



Rabbi David Aaron

Sinai Indaba

Sinai Indaba: Where values can be dissected, argued about and explained

ROBYN SASSEN

Choosing talks from the rich bouquet of 24 sessions of Sinai Indaba II was not easy for any of this year's thousands of attendees. One thing you were guaranteed of, no matter the choice, was an exceptional experience.

From the organisational aspects of the indaba, to the fact that each of the 12 speakers are superstars not only to us in South Africa, but to the whole world, to the fact that unlike any other conference marketed for a lay audience, there was an implicit promise that you would leave an auditorium with not just awe for the clever speaker, but a kernel of wisdom that could impact your life for good.

This meaty programme represented various indaba inroads. One approach was a combination of Canadian-born Rabbi David Aaron explaining the secret life of G-d; Rabbi Berel Wein taking us on a terrifying rollercoaster ride through anti-Semitic history; Professor William Kolbrener splaying faith and fundamentalism, and creativity autonomy and independence in a 21st century Torah understanding; Rabbi Manis Friedman looking at the soul and the after-life; and Rabbi Yissocher Frand confronting narcissism.

The secret of everything in your life seemed a rather pop kabbalah way of opening the day, but Rabbi Aaron skipped beyond popular hyperbole and delivered, demonstrating ideas about understanding oneself, simultaneously digestible and immense. "The soul is a manifestation of G-d. Your character is the role your soul plays. Don't confuse your self-worth with your

character."

Similarly, Rabbi Friedman examined how body and soul part at death, and how the soul never dies, but how our customs of mourning are there to give solace to both the departed soul and the bereaved.


But, argued Rabbi Frand, citing Hillel with respect to the demon of narcissism so prevalent in Western society it was no longer considered a mental illness; "If I am not for myself who will be for me," but conversely, "if I am only for myself, what am I?"

Professor Kolbrener approached the issue of selfhood at a different tack, considering his own transition into frum life.

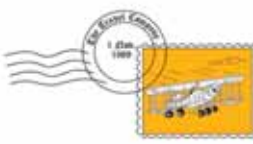
"I was termed by the worst 'f' word someone in my position could be called: a fundamentalist," he unpicked how an observant Jew straddles the concepts of free-thinking or pleasure principles without slipping into the quagmire of oxymoron, but retaining a discursive engagement with how ancient Greek culture simultaneously cleaves to and pummels Jewish values.

The directional pointers were clear. We might be finding out where in the bigger picture we fit, but a glance through the stories and scholarship of the inimitable Rabbi Berel Wein reflected how anti-Semitism has effectively shaped us from the outside, from its religious, national and racial expressions to something which, ironically legitimised by Zionist ideology, fostered anti-Israel sentiment, simply anti-Semitism in another get-up.

A place where values can be dissected, explained and argued over, Sinai Indaba's made its mark in South Africa, and whet community appetite for Sinai Indaba III.




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Other Feeder Schools	85-90%

Wits Pass Rates 2011
* Source: WITS Annual Report 2011



Jordan Bortz and Jonty Pincus, winners of the 2011 KDHSVP Dux Award, were two of eight recipients of the prestigious 2012 Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship Awards at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Supporting Educational Excellence for Tomorrow's Leaders

Cultural Excellence



Two Grade 7 learners from King David Sandton have taken up executive positions on the Johannesburg Mini City Council for 2012.



King David Senior Primary Linksfield winners of the National Geographic Kids' Young Artists 2011/2012 competition.



King David High School Linksfield recent winners of the National Shakespeare Challenge.

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 <p>Brett Levy CEO Blue Label Telecoms KDHS 1993</p>	 <p>Gina Shmukler Actress and Director KDHS 1988</p>	 <p>Gary Barber Co-MGM Studios KDHS 1974</p>	 <p>Lance Metz Acclaimed Adventurer & Mountaineer - KDHSVP 2000</p>
 <p>Joanne Jowell Acclaimed Author KDHS 1992</p>	 <p>Prof Jonathan Lewis CEO and Chief Medical Officer of Ziegmann Oncology KDHSVP 1975</p>	 <p>Prof Sandra Fredman Rhodes Professor of Law Oxford University & QC KDHS 1974</p>	 <p>Jonathan Kaplan International Rugby Referee KDHS 1984</p>

These and many other alumni have made a remarkable contribution to society.

Technological Advancement



The advent of technology is creating a "learning revolution," in educational institutions worldwide. King David is no exception. Technology is providing us with the tools for more effective learning spaces. At King David High School Linksfield, the teaching staff are in the process of embracing exciting educational innovations, specifically tablet technology which has put learning in the hands of pupils and given an entirely new role to teachers.

KD Linksfield began a iPad pilot project at the beginning of 2012. The implementation of this project has created stimulating and exciting learning environment that are able to engage students and make them responsible for their own learning.

KD is embracing technology as we believe that there has never been a more stimulating and exciting time to be at school.

Sporting Excellence

KD High School Victory Park's sporting achievement reached a new level when the 1st XI won the B section of the Johnny Waite Cricket Tournament, beating St David's Marist Inanda in the finals. KDHSVP is the first co-educational school to win this competition, which has up to now been dominated by the large boys' schools. Five KDHSVP boys have been selected for provincial and national cricket teams.



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Sinai Indaba

Iran: Global community shouldn't wait for Israel to do its dirty work

GEOFF SIFRIN

“The West is sleepwalking” in relation to Iran, Mordechai Kedar, a former Lieutenant Colonel in the IDF Military Intelligence, and a world authority on the political discourse in Arabic countries, terrorism, the Arab Spring and Palestinian statehood, told Sinai Indaba 11 at the weekend.

He has taught at Bar Ilan and Tel Aviv Universities, published academic articles, and is a member of several research centres in Israel.

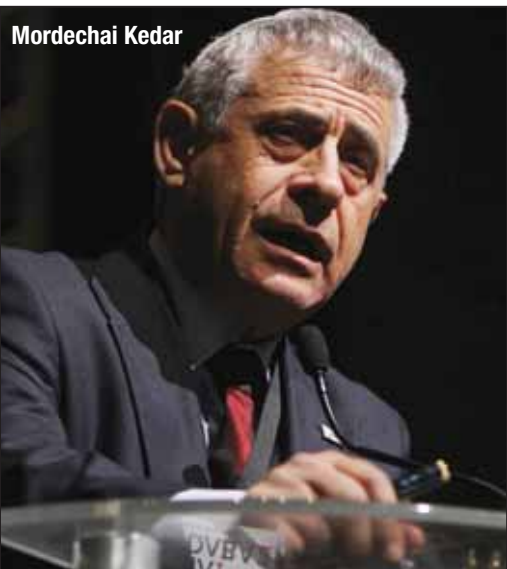
“Iran has already got its missiles which can carry warheads,” he says, “and its submarines can potentially do the same. If Iran acquires a nuclear weapon, and if it puts these three things together, the world may wake up one day and find that the entire geopolitical power situation has shifted.” A nuclear Iran guided by a radical Islamist hand is a real danger.

Contrary to expectations in some quarters that Israel will soon launch an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, Kedar believes Israel “will not do the dirty work for the world” and be blamed for starting a war. The global community needs to take its own action; the situation is urgent and dangerous.

Viral attacks like Stuxnet launched on Iranian computers, might slow the Iranians' progress to achieving a nuclear bomb, but would not stop it. Nor would assassinating nuclear scientists. There were, however, two possible approaches to Iran which might work.

Firstly, he says, “the world needs to give Iran a ‘credible’ threat. It must say to it: ‘You have one week to load all your nuclear material onto a ship and send it to us. If you don't, in a week we will begin to flatten you’.

“Only a credible threat will work. The Iranians are rational, there is logic to their actions and if they believe the threat is serious, they will act accordingly. This is shown by their behaviour after the diplomats were taken hostage in the American embassy in Tehran in 1979.



Mordechai Kedar

“Then US president Jimmy Carter demanded their release but did nothing. Then Ronald Reagan was voted president and he said that when he assumes his position, the first thing he will do is to flatten Tehran if the hostages are not returned. He was serious and they believed him. So they released the hostages.”

The other way is for the world to support an insurrection by the Iranian people against the regime. About 90 per cent of Iranians are secular and don't support it. When Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gives his Friday broadcast of prayers, he does not do it from a mosque – the mosques are empty – but from the university, so there will be students seen in the public broadcasts to give the impression he has the support of the young people. Possibly with help from the outside world the regime might be toppled.

If it achieves nuclear status, Iran will not attack Israel in the first stage of its conquests, he says. It will go initially for the Gulf States and for Saudi Arabia, which is totally vulnerable and lives in fear. Saudi Arabia is thus an ally in a possible action against Iran.

Why are the Iranians behaving this way? Kedar says Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad belongs to a Muslim group which believes that salvation of the world will come by two possible means – either by its entire population becoming Shiite Muslims, or by it being plunged into total mayhem and then being re-established in a new way.

Converting the entire world is not seen as likely, so a conflagration provoked by a nuclear attack against various countries might achieve the latter aim of “mayhem”.

Regional developments are not encouraging. The Arab Spring started with great hopes, but now those countries are in a worse state. Egypt is in chaos. In Syria about 15 000 people have been killed recently and there is mass abuse of human rights. It is possible that Syria as a country might actually break up.

Kedar is cynical about the United Nations. “There are so many serious global problems, such as Iran, Syria and Egypt and yet the UN is obsessed with whether a Palestinian has to go through a checkpoint” in the West Bank.

He spoke with pride about Israel itself. It is 114 years since the first Zionist conference, he says, and Zionism has been a great success on almost every level. Israel is today the biggest Jewish community in the world and a democratic country where human rights are taken seriously. It is a place for taking the Jews out of exile, but its biggest success is to take the exile out of the Jews.

Israel has problems, of course. Social inequality is a big issue, and the economy is not great. And there is the question of inequity in army service, since the Haredim do not serve. Internationally, the growing campaign of delegitimisation of Israel is dangerous – the move towards the relabelling in South Africa of Israeli goods produced in the West Bank, is but one recent example.

But Israelis are optimistic, he says. “And Israel belongs to all of us.”

Anti-Semitism is an issue that still consumes Jewish thought

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

The main issue that consumed Jews was anti-Semitism and how to avoid it, eminent historian Rabbi Berel Wein told a packed Cape Town audience at Sinai Indaba 11.

The Cape Town leg of the Indaba attracted 1 100 participants, proportionately the highest attendance in the country, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, noted.

Mentioning the alternatives of acculturation and assimilation, Rabbi Wein said all Jewish societies throughout history had acculturated and taken on at least the superficial trappings of the societies in which they lived.

Speaking on “Patterns in Jewish History: What Have We Learned so Far?” Rabbi Wein said assimilation had proven to be a failure in the Jewish world as a cure for anti-Semitism, he said. Mentioning three apostates who had affected the world in the 19th century - Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and Heinrich Heine - Rabbi Wein said: “They preached assimilation, otherwise Jews would never find refuge in Western society.”

It was painfully ironic that Hitler had cured us of that notion. “Assimilation has not proven to be an answer – not for Jews and not for the non-Jews.”

Dealing with the relationship of the Jews to the Land of Israel, he said: “In theory they loved it, in practice it's always been a problem. We became accustomed to living wherever we lived.”

In the 19th century, however, before the advent of Zionism, for some reason Jews from Eastern Europe started going back to the Land of Israel. “If you lived in the Land of Israel, it was a given that you were entitled to be supported by Jews in the Diaspora.

“That mentality hasn't disappeared - it's al-

most an entitlement,” he said.

Hollywood screenwriter David Weiss (Shrek 2, The Smurfs and the Rugrats Movie) spoke of his conversion to Christianity as a youngster and his later adoption of Orthodox Judaism through the insistence of his non-Jewish wife. He now has “two beautiful children who say the Shema at night.

“I would never have dreamt in a million years I'd be talking in South Africa about keeping kosher. Any of us can become anything if you take one step at a time.”

Mentioning the “wonderful opportunities” available here, including Sinai Indaba, he said: “Each of you knows you can take one more step that will bring you closer to eternity.”

Israel would not attack Iran on its own, in the view of Dr Mordechai Kedar, world expert on the geo-political and military situation in the Middle East, The Arabic-speaking Kedar who has made several appearances on broadcaster Al Jazeera, was addressing the topic “Nuclear Iran”.

“I think Israel won't sacrifice herself to rescue the world from the Iranian problem,” Kedar predicted. “Israel will not attack Iran, in my view, as one state. Maybe if there is some form of coalition, Israel might take part.”

The problem in Iran was not the nuclear one, he stated. “It is the regime which is more than convinced that Allah lights the path and keeps them from any mistake. What should be done in Iran is to change the regime.”

A sect of Iranians – of which Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a member - believe that their messiah, Mahdi, would be sent by Allah to save mankind when the whole world sinks into total chaos.

“It is easier to push the world into total chaos than to convert everybody to Shi'ite Islam,” Kedar explained of the Iranian rationale of using

the nuclear programme to “force Mahdi to come down”.

Kedar also noted that Ahmadinejad “does not control the state, especially not the nuclear programme,” but was instead subject to three unelected religious authorities who told him what to do.

As history has shown, Iran would take notice of a credible threat, he said, “but unfortunately the world has not yet shown them this resolve. This is why they continue in their plan.”

Iran was a threat to the world, to the world order, the economy, Israel definitely and a threat to whoever believes in a world that can be led by logic. “The West knows how to do things in spite of objections from Russia and China,” he said, citing the example of Libya.

Speaking of the Iranian mindset which made it “hard to deal with them”, Kedar said the world had had 16 years in which to discontinue the nuclear programme there. “Instead there's another round of talks which end in an agreement which they'll not honour.

“This is how they bought 16 very precious years to continue with the programme. The world hasn't told them: ‘Guys, it's the end of the game, we're going to attack you next week.’ This is the only way to bring the matter to a conclusion,” he maintained.

The “first row of targets” for Iran would be the Gulf States, which were very attractive because of their oil. “Iran would control 56 per cent of the world's oil – just imagine what a super-power it would be!”

Describing Israel as “a thorn in their eyes”, he said the country would, along with North Africa and Turkey, be in “the second row”. Although Israel was a threat because of its “rumoured” nuclear weapons, Iran wanted to see the country “wiped off the map”.



Professor William Kolbrener



Professor David Pelcovitz



Lori Palatanik



Rabbi Lawrence Kelerman



Yonatan Razel

The number of black students dropping out of UCT – 41 per cent – need to get more attention and should not be overshadowed by the emphasis on a race-based admissions policy.

The Peer Mentorship Programme

Shaping the future. Today

As the debate rages on over the University of Cape Town's race-based redress admission policy, far too little attention is paid to the 41 per cent of admitted black students who drop out of the university due to a lack of institutional and social support. (UCT's most recent data indicates that only 36 per cent of black undergraduate science students completed their degree.)

Many of these students come from rural parts of the country and are the first in their family to attend university. We as Jews are nurtured by immediate relatives who are university graduates and guide us through the transition from secondary to tertiary education. For those who come from less privileged backgrounds, the demands of university can be so difficult that one drops out due to poor academic performance, external family pressures, or the inability to manage one's time and money as a fulltime student.

Recognising this problem and wanting to grow a more educated and diverse generation of "born free" South Africans, the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies partnered with the HCI Foundation and the Black Management Forum (BMF) to launch a pilot Peer Mentorship Programme at UCT. After an application and interview process, 16 extremely capable mentors (predominantly from SAUJS and the BMF Student Chapter) were selected to mentor 16 first and second-year recipients of the HCI Foundation's National Bursary Programme.

Some of the mentors themselves come from underprivileged backgrounds and endured hardships in order to make it through their first year at UCT, and now want to give back to those who are facing a similar uphill battle.

The aim of the programme is to provide critical one-on-one peer social support throughout the mentee's first year at university. Mentors and mentees meet at least once a month to discuss the mentee's obstacles and goals, and mentors gain leadership experience through building a relationship with and advising their mentee.

The programme's success is tracked through feedback from the mentors and mentees, as well as by looking at the mentees' academic performance before and after the programme. Every four months, all 32 participants meet for facilitated development workshops and social bonding activities.



Some of the mentors interact at the first workshop.

Community Briefs

REMEMBERING THROUGH THE 'THEN' AND 'NOW'



Sixty four years separate these two photographs. The black and white "then" photograph was taken during Israel's War of Independence during the Liberation of the Galilee in October 1948. The "now" photograph was taken this month when these brave heroes were honoured in a special exhibition "By Land, by Air and by



Sea" at Israel's Museum of the Jewish People, which opened on June 1, instigated by Stanley Medicks (pictured kneeling in both photographs). The exhibition, which will be permanently housed in the museum, tells the story of these volunteers who were instrumental in helping Israel win that crucial war.



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FINE WINE AND LIQUORS

The road to freedom’s not an easy one...

MARGARET SOLOMONS
PHOTOGRAPH: YAEL GORDON

The Civic and Social Awareness Committee of the SRC of King David High School Victory Park, led the school in a novel commemoration of two significant South African holidays.

Saul Musker, head of the committee and also the junior mayor of Johannesburg, addressed the school:

“We find ourselves today in the twilight zone between two very special days in SA history. A few weeks ago, on April 27, we celebrated Freedom Day and, on June 16, we marked Youth Day. On that day in 1976, a group of students marched through Soweto in protest against the Apartheid government’s system of Bantu education.

“The police opened fire on these young activists, killing innocent children. This day proved to be the beginning of the end for the National Party and apartheid. Miraculously, on April 27, 1994, millions of South Africans of every race, lined up in queues stretching for kilometres to vote



in our first-ever democratic elections.

“Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world,” said former President Nelson Mandela after this historic milestone.

“Since then, SA has made enormous strides in undoing the damage of decades of oppression. But as Madiba again stated: “There is no easy road to freedom.”

“As young South Africans, it is our duty to remember the events of our past, and to remind ourselves of what came before. But more importantly, it is our duty

to look forward, and contribute to achieving true equality and freedom in South Africa.

“We didn’t want to mark these holidays in the usual way, with slideshows and history lessons. Instead we have inflated 400 helium balloons in the colours of the SA flag, one for each learner and teacher at the school.

“We will now all walk up to the field together, and release the balloons into the air at once, making a wish as we do so for the next 17 years in South Africa - a wish for our people, for our country - about the education system, the Springboks, Nelson Mandela, or simply a wish for our people or our future.”

An opportunity we’ll savour our whole life

BY IDAN HOROWITZ AND MATHEW DISLER

The annual Bible Quiz that takes place in Israel, is an event to which we had been looking forward to for years. This is the 49th time that Israel has hosted this competition and we could never have imagined the incredible experience we were about to have.

The competition turned out to be about a lot more than just an event in which we answered questions on Torah and Tanach. We met Jews from all over the world and together we explored our beautiful homeland with kids from 22 countries.



Poles apart in language and culture, we celebrated together the privilege of getting to know kids our age and kids who shared the same love that we have for Eretz Yisrael. It was a lifetime experience and one that we will promote to our juniors coming from the lower grades.

A very big thank you to Rabbi Laurence Perez (MD of Yeshiva College) and Rabbi Ilan Raanan (Rosh Kodesh Boys’ High School and dean of Girls’ High) and Yeshiva College for giving us this wonderful opportunity.

Carnations of different hues, intrigue TA youngsters



OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNE BELLING

The grade 3 learners at Torah Academy Primary School, were amazed when they achieved the desired results of their science experiment - colouring white carnations in different shades.

Teacher Jenny Lichtenstein (pictured with her class) explained that the carnations were put in bottles of food colouring and the various shades of liquid were sucked up through their stems, changing the plain flowers into those of varying hues.

Butterflies symbolise spirits of 1,5m Jewish kids killed in Holocaust



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY VIVIENNE WEINER

The Holocaust Museum in Houston in the US, is planning an exhibition of handmade butterflies in memory of the 1,5 million Jewish children who died in the Holocaust. King David Sandton’s grade 5, 6 and 7 art learners joined the effort to create meaningful and beautiful butterflies. Pavel Friedman’s poem, “The Butterfly”, written in 1942, gave the learners a glimpse of life during the war and inspired them to participate in this project. Pavel was born 1921 in Prague and deported to Terezin in 1942. He died in Auschwitz in 1944. KDS displayed all the butterflies in a special exhibit in the foyer of the hall.

Art exhibition in the foyer.

KDL Primary’s under-10 netball teams shine

YONIT WEIL
PHOTOGRAPH: NIKI TAUROG

The netball season at King David Linksfield Primary has come to an end. All teams had a great time. The under-10s season started with a victory and gold medals at the Jewish Sports Festival against all the Jewish day school and the under-10s continued to be unbeaten until the last match where they lost by two points to Marion College in a nail biting final.

The under-10 B team took their revenge by being undefeated the entire season and winning their last match 10-0.



The under 10-A netball team: Back: coach Yonit Weil. Dani Shafer; Montana Goldberg; Mila Davidowitz; and Kelsey Levine. Front: Maya Katzen; Savanah Hodes; Jenna Marcus; and Dani Dozetos.



The under 10-B netball team. Back: Coach Yonit Weil. Demi Gruskin; Erin Atie; Eden Cohen; Gila Taurog; Meagan Pearlman; Gabi Gordon; and Michal Sacke.

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NOTICES

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Heartfelt sympathy to Jennifer
and family on their tragic loss.
Beloved Rodney, we will miss
you so very much. You were
much more than our doctor
and lifelong friend; you were
an inspiration, guiding light
and mentor - a man above all
others.

Rest in peace. love, Mau-
reen and Lana Jacobson

COHEN GERTIE
Heartfelt condolences to Aimee
and Evelyn on loss of their
beloved mother. We will miss
our sister-in law and aunt so
very much.

Love, Maureen, Lana,
Alan, Steven and families.

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What's On

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

Today, Friday (June 22)

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

Sunday (June 24)

• RCHCC hosts a photographic
print exhibition (opening to-
day, until July 28), "Sanctity
Soul and Wilderness", by Clive
Evian. Time: 18:00. The exhi-
bition includes on the open-
ing night a ceramic exhibit by
Sara Evian. Hours: Monday
to Thursday 09:00 - 16:00,
Friday 09:00 - 12:00, Sunday
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• RCHCC screens the documen-
tary, "The Art of the Steal. Art
for Whose Sake?", directed by
Don Argott. Venue: Clive M
Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30.
Donation: R60 (incl refresh-
ments). Booking: Hazel or
René (011) 728-8088/8378,
after hours: (011) 728-8378,
e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or
rene.s@telkomsa.net

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

Monday (June 25)

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

Tuesday (June 26)

• WIZO Women Inspired hosts
a talk by Nicky Neufeld on
"Managing Money". Time:
09:30 for 10:00. Cost R80.
Contact: Lorraine 083-268-
8016, Leslie 083-456-3911 or
Maureen 082-445-1515.

Wednesday (June 27)

• WIZO Etgar branch screens
the movie, "Sarah's Key" at
Beyachad at 09:30. Cost R50
(incl refreshments) Contact:
Lee 082-441-2953 or Zee 083-
377-5644.

• Balfour Park Parkinson's Dis-
ease Support Group meets at
10:00 in the Boardroom of
Randjes Estate, Randjeslaagte
Road, Highlands North. Hay-
ley Norval, an occupational
therapist, will speak on "The
Idiot's Guide to OT". People
with Parkinson's Disease, their
families, friends and caregiv-

ers, are welcome. Information:
Contact Rosemary Burke on
(011) 640-3919.

• UJW CT adult education divi-
sion hosts Dan Brotman on
"Why Does the Board of Depu-
ties Need a Media and Diplo-
matic Liaison?" Venue: Stone
haven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30.
Enquiries: (021) 434-9555
(mornings only).

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

Thursday (June 28)

• UJW Histadrut Ivrit hosts a
talk by Shulamit Kagan on "40
Years of Jewish Settlement
in Gaza Continued". Hebrew
speakers welcome. Venue: 1
Oak Street, Houghton. Time:
10:30 for 11:00. Contact (011)
648-1053.

Monday (July 2)

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

Wednesday (July 4)

• UJW, adult education divi-
sion hosts July Patrick Vee,
presenting "A Photographic
History of Cape Town" Venue:
Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for
10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl re-
freshments). Enquiries: (021)
434-9555 (mornings only).

Monday (July 23)

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

Wednesday (July 25)

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

Tuesday (July 31)

• Morris Rutstein - SAZF Hebrew
Ulpan Course starts today and
terminates on Tuesday, No-
vember 27. Times: Every Tues-
day night from 19:00 - 21:15.
Venue: Yeshiva College (in the
classrooms). Registration will
take place on Monday July
30, at 18:30. Secure parking.
Enquiries: SAZF, tel (011) 645-
2531 (office hours)

Cantona joins in call to block u-21 soccer event in Israel

Former Manchester United and French national soccer great, Eric Cantona, has come out in support of a call by the Palestine Football Association that Uefa should bar Israel from hosting the championships over their “detention without trial” of Palestinian players.

The Israeli Football Association was over the moon at the news they won the right to host the 2013 European Under-21 Soccer Championships. The games are scheduled to take place in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and in several cities around Tel Aviv, with the top eight under-21 national teams in Europe.

Five stadiums were chosen to host the games: the National Stadium in Ramat-Gan, Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem, Blumfield Stadium in Tel Aviv and two new stadiums that will be built - one in Natanya and the other in Petah Tikva. Israel competed with Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England and Wales for the honour of hosting the championships.

However, according to AFP, in a letter addressed to Uefa President Michel Platini, PFA President Jibril Rajoub expressed concern over the fate of three players, Palestine midfielder Mahmud Sarsak, Olympic squad goalkeeper Omar Abu Rois and Ramallah player Mohammed Nimr, all of whom are being held by Israel without charge.

“We are deeply concerned about the situation of our footballers,” Rajoub wrote in the letter, dated June 12. “We ask your excellency not to give Israel the honour of hosting the next Uefa U21 Championship in 2013.”

Sarsak, 25, is currently on a hunger strike which has lasted more than 80 days, sparking a growing international outcry. He was arrested in July 2009 after setting out from Gaza to sign on with a West Bank football team. In late March, he began refusing food in a protest which has continued until the present, despite a brief pause in mid-April.

Now Cantona has co-signed a letter with other international figures to call for the release of Sarsak. In a letter sent to Platini, Cantona said Israel should be subjected to the same scrutiny faced by Euro 2012 hosts Poland and Ukraine.

“Why are these same groups silent when Israel is to host the Uefa under-21 competition in 2013? Racism, human rights abuses and gross violations of international law are daily occurrences in that country.

“It is time to end Israel’s impunity and to insist on the same standards of equality, justice and respect for international law that we demand of other states,” Cantona added.

Also joining the campaign to release Sarsak is former Seville striker Frédéric Kanouté. The player has called to grant Sarsak “the right to a fair and independent trial”.

It is noteworthy that Cantona mentions the current European Championships in Ukraine and Poland; despite those countries’ history of racism and anti-Semitism,



Former Manchester United soccer great Eric Cantona, has supported a Palestinian call to bar Israel from hosting the 2013 European Under-21 Soccer Championships.

Uefa and Fifa did nothing to move the event. Should they react differently to Israel, it would be another case of out-and-out hypocrisy.

Earlier this week, Fifa President Sepp Blatter wrote to IFA Chairman Avi Luzon, asking him to draw the attention of Israeli authorities to the matter. “Fifa President Joseph Blatter expressed grave concern about the alleged illegal detention of Palestine football players,” a Fifa statement said.

“The reports Fifa received, state that in apparent violation of their integrity and human rights and without the right of a trial, several Palestine football players have allegedly been illegally detained by Israeli authorities.

“In particular, the mentioned reports refer to the Palestine player Mahmoud Sarsak, whose health is in a very delicate state due to the fact that he has been undergoing a hunger strike for approximately 90 days in protest of his alleged illegal detention.”

Fifa said it had heard about the situation through correspondence with the Palestine Football Association, media reports and the world players’ union FIFPro.

Nevertheless, the IFA is confident the tournament will go ahead as planned. “We are certain that ifa and Uefa will not mix politics with soccer and are certain that the under-21 European Championships will take place, as decided, in Israel next summer.”

Soccer strain for Bibi

JACK MILNER

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (62) learned that soccer is not for the faint-hearted, even if you’re playing against kids.

Netanyahu tore a ligament in his left leg last week Monday while participating in a joint Arab-Jewish soccer game for children at the capital’s Kraft Stadium.

Five minutes into the match, Netanyahu fell when he twisted his ankle while kicking the ball. At first, the prime minister continued playing and even scored a goal, but when he showed signs of pain his security guards

brought him to Hadassah University Medical Centre on Mount Scopus where his leg was put in a cast. The Likud party cancelled its faction meeting in light of the injury.

“I participated in a youth soccer match intended to advance tourism in Israel, to present the truce face of the State of Israel,” the prime minister was quoted as saying in the Jerusalem Post.

“This was not exactly like the Euro soccer games, which I’ll be watching along with many Israelis. But tomorrow I’ll be back at the Prime Minister’s Office, and I’ll continue playing on other fields for Israel.”

News in Brief

AMSTERDAM CHIEF RABBI DECRIES SHECHITAH DEAL

AMSTERDAM - The chief rabbi of Amsterdam has warned that an agreement allowing kosher slaughter in the Netherlands ultimately could eliminate the practice.

Rabbi Aryeh Ralbag called the agreement “flawed” in a letter dated June 13 - the day after he approved the deal by declaring it did not violate principles of Jewish law, or halachah.

The agreement, which the Dutch Jewish community and the Dutch government signed on June 5, adapts kosher slaughter to state norms without restricting religious freedoms. The Dutch Senate ratified the deal on June 13.

Representing the Jewish community at the signing was the Organisation of the Jewish Communities in the Netherlands, or NIK, which is Ralbag’s employer in Holland.

“To our regret and surprise, a week ago the community signed an agreement with the government without showing it in advance,” Ralbag wrote in a letter. The letter was co-signed by two dayanim, or judges, of the Amsterdam rabbinical court headed by Ralbag.

The deal, the dayanim wrote, “is not in accordance with our wishes, views and liking”. Still, they approved the deal to avoid an immediate ban on kosher slaughter, the letter explains.

Last year the Dutch parliament passed a law banning ritual slaughter. The Dutch Senate

blocked it pending the signing of an agreement with the Jewish and Muslim communities.

Ralbag says the agreement allows interference by scientific advisers as well as with the size of the knife used for slaughter, among other issues. Nonetheless, it does not contradict halachah, the letter notes.

In January, NIK briefly suspended Ralbag for describing homosexuality as a curable condition.

Ron Eisenmann, president of the Amsterdam Orthodox Jewish community, which belongs to NIK, told JTA that Ralbag had been informed in advance of all halachic matters in the agreement.

“Without his consent, there would have been no agreement,” Eisenmann said, adding that Ralbag had been consulted only on matters within that scope.

In their letter, Ralbag and the dayanim mention “a rabbi who, in our stead, went forth and said he favoured the deal”.

Rabbi Binyomin Jacobs, chief rabbi of the inter-Provincial Chief Rabbinate in Holland, helped NIK broker the deal with government officials with his “enormous network of contacts”, Eisenmann said.

Jacobs did not rule on kashrut and halachic issues connected to the deal, Eisenmann said, as they were Ralbag’s responsibility.

Contacted by JTA, Jacobs declined to be interviewed for this article. (JTA)

CAMERA SHOWS VANDALS IN ORTHODOX BROOKLYN NEIGHBOURHOOD

NEW YORK - The vandals who spray-painted swastikas on buildings in an Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn neighbourhood, were caught on a surveillance camera.

The images indicate that the vandals in Borough Park were older teenagers or young adults, who looked directly into the camera, The New York Jewish Week reported. None of the vandals has been identified as yet.

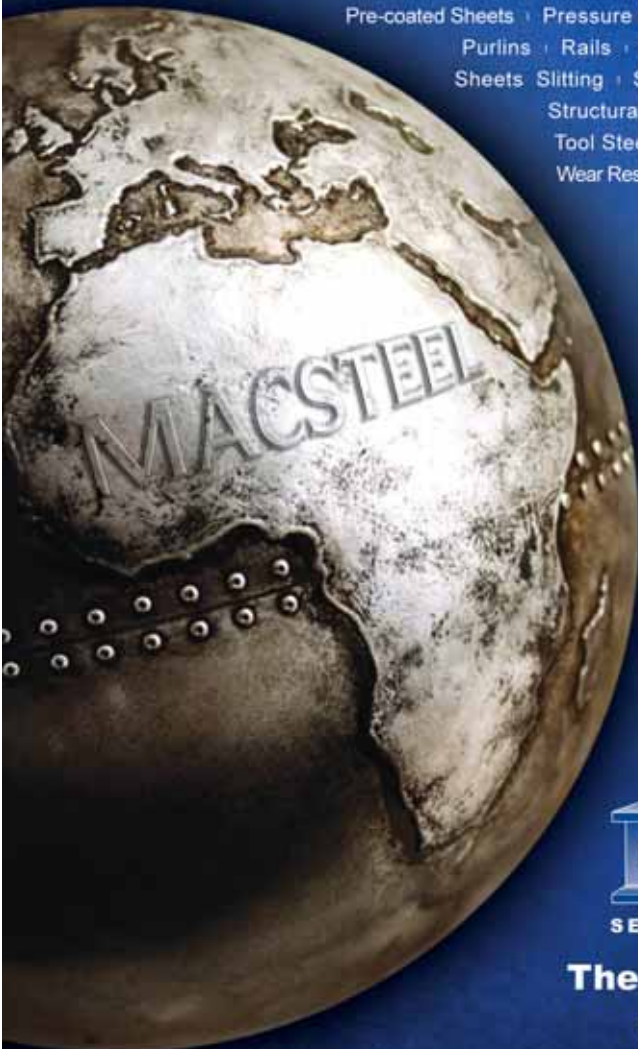
The six swastikas were spray-painted early on June 15 on a synagogue and a mikvah, as well as on a school and several shops, including a kosher take-away restaurant.


The New York Police Department’s Hate Crimes Task Force is investigating the incident, according to reports. (JTA)

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