



Aviva Pelham
sings her
mother's
story.
(page 10)

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Likud leads, but bumpy road ahead for Netanyahu

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His party shrunk, his opponents grew and his challengers multiplied.

But with the results in, it seems Benjamin Netanyahu survived the Knesset elections on Tuesday to serve another term as prime minister.

Netanyahu faces a bumpy road ahead. His Likud party, together with the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu, fell to 31 seats in the voting from its current representation of 42.

The biggest surprise of the election was the ascendance of former TV personality Yair Lapid's centrist Yesh Atid party. Founded just a year ago, Yesh Atid won 18 seats on a platform of national service and pro-middle class economic reform. Likud's traditional rival, the centre-left Labour, grew to 17 from eight seats, promoting progressive economic policy.

And another political newcomer, Naftali Bennett, is likely to push Netanyahu to the right on security issues. His Jewish Home party, a successor to the National Religious Party, quadrupled its representation from three to 12 seats.

Together with the Sephardic Orthodox Shas party and the haredi Orthodox United Torah Judaism, the rightwing Knesset bloc will hold 62 of the Knesset's 120 seats - a slim majority.

That's anything but a mandate for Netanyahu, who campaigned on the slogan: "A strong prime minister, a strong Israel".

Instead of being able to lead a new coalition with a large party behind him, Netanyahu will have to negotiate with rivals and forge compromises with opposing camps.

Judging from the successes of Yesh Atid, Labour and Jewish Home, Israelis cast a resounding vote for progressive economic reform and new leaders in their parliament.

The biggest thorn in the prime minister's side looks to be Lapid. Unlike the fiscally conservative Netanyahu, Lapid won support by calling for housing reform, opposing tax increases for the middle class and including haredi yeshiva students in Israel's mandatory military conscription.

Unlikely to be able to lead a new coalition with a large party behind him, Netanyahu will have to negotiate with rivals and forge compromises with opposing camps.



Likud-Beitenu supporters cheering after hearing the results of exit polls on the Israeli elections on Tuesday. (Miriam Alster/FLASH90/JTA)

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Abe Krok - philanthropist, businessman of note, passes away

"Abe was an example to businessmen in SA regarding the sharing of his wealth with the less fortunate and his involvement in educational matters," said Rabbi Mendel Lipskar of Chabad.

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Brixton Jewish Cemetery finally being spruced up



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'Faith and Protection' - UNHCR Dialogue on Challenges

Ultimately, all religious communities and organisations must stand up and take the lead in initiating and supporting efforts of conflict resolution and peace-building, from local to national level.

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SAKS: Rabbi Hertz, King James Bible, stilted to modern ears

The phenomenon of "Bible Criticism's", assumption that the entire canon of Tanach was a human cultural construction to be "deconstructed" like any other literary text, was in its hey-day.

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MILNER: Armstrong has fallen on his own lance

Something about Lance Armstrong indicates that not being in the limelight is a death sentence to him. He was a facilitator and deserves everything he's got - and getting.

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Shabbat Times

Jan 25 / 14 Shevat		
Jan 26 / 15 Shevat		
Parshat Beshalach Tu B'Shvat		
18:15	19:36	Johannesburg
18:30	20:32	Cape Town
18:15	19:32	Durban
18:20	19:50	Bloemfontein
18:05	20:04	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:52	East London

Saturday it's 'new year of the trees'



The crown of the eucalyptus trees, one of the tree types that have embraced JNF and Tu B'Shvat values for over a century.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

This Saturday is Tu B'Shvat, corresponding with 15 Shevat, celebrating the new year of the trees. In contemporary Israel, the day is observed by over a million Israelis as an ecological awareness day and trees are planted in celebration; for many, it has become known as Arbour Day.

A Pesach-like ceremony dating to the Middle Ages, which has in kabbalistic traditions been revived, sees the celebration of Tu B'Shvat in a feast of 10 specific fruits and four cups of wine in an order, with the aim of bringing human beings and the world, closer to spiritual perfection.

The name of the festival, like several in the Jewish calendar, is derived from its Hebrew date. In Biblical times, this day was the day on which the beginning of the agricultural cycle was calculated, for the purpose of tithes.

On Tu B'Shvat in 1890, Rabbi Ze'ev Yavetz, a founder of the Mizrahi movement, took his students to plant trees in the agricultural colony of Zichron Yaakov. Ten years later, this idea of planting trees had become a custom adopted by the Jewish Teachers Union and later the Jewish National Fund.

In the early years of the 20th century, the JNF focused primarily on planting eucalyptus trees to halt the spread of malaria in the Hula Valley in northern Israel.

In keeping with the idea of Tu B'Shvat marking the revival of nature, many of Israel's major institutions chose this day for their official inauguration. The cornerstone-laying of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1918 took place on Tu B'Shvat, as did that of the Technion in Haifa in 1925 and the Knesset in 1949.

- In celebration of Tu B'Shvat, this Friday Soul Workout is displaying a Tu B'Shvat table at KosherWorld in Glenhazel, featuring Soul Workout booklet, environment-friendly supplements, and the opportunity to purchase a tree in Israel. 10:00 - 14:00.
- On Monday January 28, Greenside Shul hosts a Tu B'Shvat tea at 7a Chester Road Greenside from 15:00. Call (011) 788-5036 or e-mail info@greensideshul.co.za

'Stand up and see'

In Parshat Beshalach, the Jewish people find themselves between a rock and a hard place; or, to be more precise, between Pharaoh's army and the sea. They cry out to Moshe saying: "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the desert? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Egypt?" (Shmot 14:11)

And Moshe's response to them is: "Don't be afraid! Stand up and see Hashem's salvation that He will make for you today" (Shmot 14:13).

This is certainly an encouraging response for the Jewish people, but seems to contain an unnecessary element: Why must the Jewish people "stand up and see"? Why doesn't Moshe simply assure

them that there's no need for fear and that Hashem will save them? That is, after all, the encouragement that they need to hear.

Some years ago, I did a course on "defensive driving" – the essence of which is to become aware of the actions of everyone else on the road and take precautionary measures. As an exercise, we were asked the make of our watches – and to take a look to confirm. Immediately after that, we were asked the time – and none of us knew it! Although every one of us had seen the time when we looked at our watch face, none of us had paid it any mind, and it made no impression on us at all.

The Maggid of Dubno, Rabbi Yaakov Kranz of 18th century Lithuania, explained our incident

in the Torah with a similar insight. Hashem was about to perform one of the greatest miracles of all time, but for the Jewish people at that moment, the fact that they were about to be saved was a more immediate reality than the way in which Hashem saved them – there was a very real possibility that they would have missed the significance of the event, and remained only with a vague impression of what had actually occurred.

"Stand up and see!" Moshe tells them. Be aware of what is happening! Absorb the significance and meaning of this event; it is something that you will relive throughout your lives, and throughout Jewish history.

There is an exercise called "sa-



PARSHAT BESHALACH
Rabbi Sam Thurgood
Beit Midrash Morasha

vouring", wherein you think back over positive or significant events in your life, and consider their significance - it's a powerful way to integrate something into your emotional reality. Moments and experiences are fleeting, and it's only through consciously paying attention and applying mindfulness that we will gain long-term impact from them.

Just like the Jewish people at the sea, we are in danger of missing the special moments. When you feel inspired, when you witness something great, when you feel Hashem's involvement in your life - stand up and see! Take in it, and that moment can last forever. Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Brixton Jewish Cemetery spruced up

STAFF REPORTER
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

The Jewish section of the Brixton Cemetery is finally in the process of being restored and secured.

Following controversy over the cemetery being allowed to fall into rack and ruin, the Chevrah Kadisha says work is now well underway to restore the cemetery, maintain it and increase security and lighting.

This was made possible through the generosity of a benefactor, said Tzivia Grauman, head of group communications for the Chev.

In recent years, the cemetery was regularly vandalised and occupied by vagrants, who also stripped the ohel, where they cooked and slept.

Rubbish was strewn all over and the gravestones were used to hang washing on.

Last year, the Chevrah demolished the ohel, a move shrouded

in controversy because it was a heritage building; it did so without permits from the City of Johannesburg, or City Parks or the provincial heritage bodies.

Grauman said fencing had been erected around the Jewish section of the cemetery and security guards were already in place 24 hours a day.

"A major clean-up of the area is in progress and lighting will soon be connected. In a final phase, we intend to repair all broken tombstones and lay them flat – a popular practice in Israel and other countries - which preserves ageing stones and prevents their disintegration," she said.

The Brixton Cemetery is over 100 years old and still has a special place in the hearts of the Jewish community, with many still regularly visiting it.

The cemetery was laid out in 1912 and opened in 1914, although the first Jew - Susman Abrahamson, aged 49 - was buried there only in 1921.



"Although funerals no longer take place there, those buried at Brixton form a rich historic tapestry of Jewish South Africa and include pioneers, community leaders and rabbinic luminaries," she said.

A special section is set aside for rabbonim and those who served Jewish community organisations like the Beth Din, Witwatersrand Benevolent Association and Chevrah Kadisha.

Among the many notable names is that of Rabbi Moshe Friedman, a dayan of the Beth Din and a distinguished, beloved scholar whose funeral in 1925 was attended by 10 000 people.

Brixton is also the final resting place of the Tzaddik, Rav Mordechai Slom, who resettled his community from Chelm in Lithuania to Oudtshoorn, and many still come to pray at his graveside; Sir Harry Graumann, first Jewish mayor of Johannesburg in 1909; Annie Slovo, mother of Joe Slovo; Joseph Ratzker, a president and honorary life president of the Witwatersrand Hebrew Benevolent Association; Jacques Klisser, president of the

Chevrah Kadisha in 1898, as well as many other prominent people too numerous to mention here.

Future plans for the cemetery include guided tours. Isaac Reznik, affectionately known as "a walking Jewish encyclopaedia", will be leading the tours, which could be extended to West Park and Braamfontein cemeteries.

Alan Buff, a special advisor to City Parks, said since Brixton Cemetery was built, the Jewish community had requested to manage and maintain it themselves.

"This practice was in force in the beginning. However, there was no maintenance done in recent years, and the cemetery fell into disrepair. Last year we discovered that two heritage buildings had been demolished - one in Brixton, and one in the Braamfontein cemetery."

City Parks is working with the Jewish community to try to assist them in making their section more environmentally-friendly, but not much could be done until the heritage bodies decided what action to take about the demolished buildings.



Likud leads...

Continued from page 1

But Netanyahu’s biggest concern may be a rival in his own rightwing camp, Bennett, who appears to have picked up most of the seats lost by Likud-Beiteinu.

While Netanyahu remains ambiguous on the question of a Palestinian state - he formally endorsed it in a 2009 speech at Bar-Ilan University but has hardly mentioned it since or done much to promote it - Bennett passionately opposes the idea. Instead, Bennett, a former hi-tech entrepreneur, calls for annexing much of the West Bank.

Even within Netanyahu’s party, nationalists on the Likud list who never before made it into the Knesset, will now occupy seats. Among them is Moshe Feiglin, leader of the Jewish Leadership faction of Likud, who favours West Bank annexation and encouraging Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship, to leave Israel.

The rise of Yesh Atid and Jewish Home do offer Netanyahu some new opportunities, too. Rather than rely on the haredi Orthodox parties such as Shas and United Torah Judaism for the coalition, he could make common cause with Yesh Atid and Jewish Home, both of which want to draft haredi Israelis into the army or a form of national service - even though they may significantly disagree on security matters.

Lapid talked during the campaign of his willingness to join a Netanyahu coalition, influencing the government from within rather than from the opposition.

So, even though the haredi parties grew by three seats - Shas went to 13 from 11 and United Torah Judaism to six from five, according to exit polls - Lapid’s willingness to provide Netanyahu with an equally large chunk of seats to build his coalition, means that the haredi parties may have lost their political leverage to keep yeshiva students out of Israel’s military draft.

For its part, Labour looks destined to lead the Knesset’s opposition; its chairman, Shelly Yachimovich, has vowed not to join a Netanyahu coalition. Tzipi Livni’s new Hatnua party, which won just six seats, is likely to stay in the opposition, too.

The election represented a major defeat for Livni, who in the last election led the Kadima party to 28 seats - more than any other party. This time, the eviscerated Kadima failed to win even a single seat.

Hatnua’s poor showing also suggested how little of the election was about negotiations with the Palestinians. Livni made much of the issue during the campaign, but it failed to resonate with voters.

Hatnua’s six seats equaled the

showing of Meretz, the solidly leftwing party. By contrast, Labour, traditionally a promoter of peace talks, barely raised the issue in the campaign. Instead it focused on socioeconomic issues and made significant Knesset gains.

With Election Day over, the coalition building begins: To win another term as prime minister, Netanyahu now must cobble together an alliance of at least 61 Knesset members to form Israel’s next government. Who he chooses - and who agrees to join him - will determine a great deal about the course charted in the years to come by the Israeli government.

Election results (at exit polls): Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu: 31; Yesh Atid: 18; Labour: 17; Shas: 13; Jewish Home: 12; Meretz: 6; United Torah Judaism: 6; Hatnua: 6; Hadash: 5; Raam: 4; and Balad: 2. (JTA)



Members of Yair Lapid’s Yesh Atid party celebrating in Tel Aviv after hearing the results of exit polls of the Israeli elections on Tuesday. (Yehoshua Yosef/Flash90/JTA)

SA notables react to Israeli elections



RABBI MOSHE KURTSTAG (ROSH BETH DIN):
“It is surprising and disappointing. I believe the polls do not reflect reality; it was anticipated that the right would be on the leading side. It will be difficult for Netanyahu. It’s a pity about wasted votes that went to smaller parties. It’s also a pity from a religious point of view: many religious people didn’t vote, possibly under the influence of the Satmar Rebbe. It was nice to see Habayit Hayehudi establish itself on the political map. But where did the haredim go? Did they not vote? Did they vote for other parties? What will happen to the Torah world?”



PROF MILTON SHAIN (DIRECTOR, KAPLAN CENTRE FOR JEWISH STUDIES):
“There was always an undecided factor of about 16 per cent, who moved to Lapid mostly. It’s a bruising for Netanyahu. The election was fought on domestic economic issues, religious issues, security and Iran. The Palestinian question was not up for serious discussion. It’s likely Netanyahu will go for a broad coalition including the extreme right, Naftali Bennett’s party, Habayit Hayehudi and Lapid. He’ll face pressure from Europe and the US on the Palestinian question. Time will tell whether he bows to it. If he does, he will have to jettison the far right.”



AVROM KRENGEL (CHAIRMAN OF THE SA ZIONIST FEDERATION):
“It was a foregone conclusion that Benjamin Netanyahu would be prime minister and would form a government - he has expressed the desire for it to be a broad-based coalition representing most Israeli votes. In the context of the elections, some of the parties were winners and others were losers. Ultimately, the election itself was a celebration and triumph of democracy and Jewish sovereignty.”



MR JUSTICE DENNIS DAVIS:
“The results show clearly there is a massive divide in the country between those who want peace and a democratic Jewish state and those who are less concerned with democracy (and) peace with Palestinians and consider, at best, that the status quo is to be preferred. Given that divide and a second Obama administration, it’s to be hoped that the incoming government will understand with half the population wanting and voting for peace and thus change and with greater external pressure for the same, this is the time for bold, decisive action towards preserving the Jewish and the democratic (state) in Israel.”



DAVID ABEL (WHO REPRESENTS LIKUD IN SA):
“In a volatile election in which two themes predominated: Jewish settlements in Judea and Shomron, as well as social responsibility issues - Likud has emerged as by far the largest individual party, with Netanyahu the only party leader capable of forming a broad, truly Zionist national coalition. All of which is as it should be. Two debutant parties (led by Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett) made significant impacts and are expected to feature in government. No party can cope better with the situation than Likud, and there is no better national leader than Netanyahu.”



TALI NATES (IN HER PERSONAL CAPACITY):
“I feel a glimmer of hope with the growth of individuals and parties that discuss openly the character of Israeli society and the democratic values of the country. However, my worry is that the current electoral system does not work and needs to be re-looked at and changed. It is of great concern that there is such concentration on egos of leaders rather than on the political and social needs of Israel that are more urgent now than ever before.”

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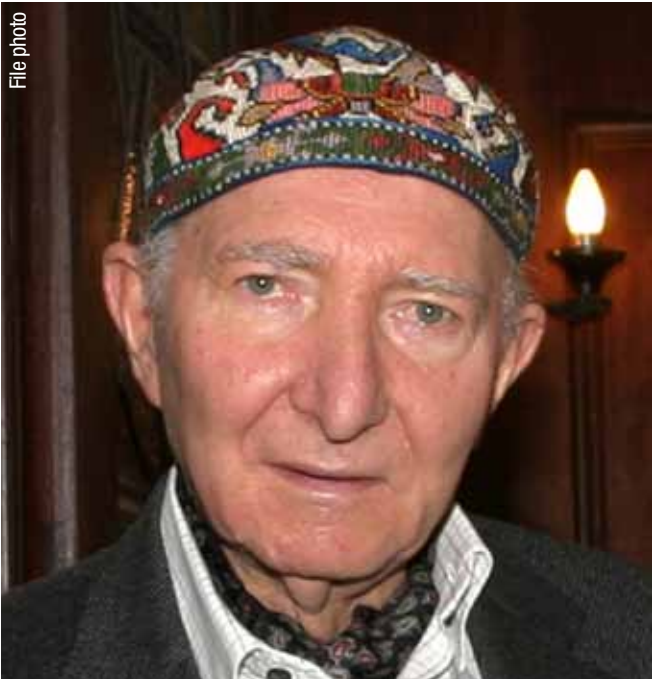
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SUZANNE BELLING

Abraham (Abe) Krok (pictured), internationally-known philanthropist and businessman, passed away in Johannesburg on Monday after a long illness for which he was in hospital for over four years. He was 83.

Abe was born 19 hours after his twin brother Solly.

Abe Krok – philanthropist and businessman of note, passes away

The famous twins were an inseparable team, with Solly, the accountant, and Abe, the pharmacist.

“Abe was an example to businessmen in South Africa regarding the sharing of his wealth with the less fortunate and through his involvement in educational matters,” Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, of the Shul at Hyde Park (housed in one of the Kroks’ major acquisitions, Summer Place), told Jewish Report.

Rabbi Lipskar, who conducted the funeral at West Park Jewish Cemetery on Tuesday, described Abe as “an exceptionally charitable man”, supporting causes in South Africa, Israel and all over the world.

With Solly, Abe was instrumental in founding the shul at Summer Place - the only corporate headquarters (Krok Family Enterprises) to have its own synagogue on the premises.

Among his many joint successes was the establishment of the Apartheid Museum, Gold Reef City and ownership of the Mamelodi Sundowns Football Club.

Summer Place served as the base in 2002 for the 2006 Soccer World Cup bid and, at one stage, it was suggested by former President Nelson Mandela that it be used to house the ANC headquarters, which was not to be.

Millionex, a forerunner to today’s National Lottery, formed part of Abe and Solly Kroks’ charitable endeavours.

From small beginnings in a little shop near Park Station, the Kroks began the giant Twins Pharmaceuticals in the 1960s.

More recently, Abe was co-founder of the Mykonos Casino in Langebaan, the Golden Horse Casino in Pietermaritzburg and Gold Reef Resorts Limited in Johannesburg.

He served on the board of the South African Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and, in 1989, was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Bar-Ilan.

With Solly, Abe co-founded the He’atid Leadership Programme with the Mizrahi Organisation in 1995 - a programme that developed over 500 business and government leaders.

Wendy Kahn, national director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and former executive director of He’atid, said: “This programme made a valuable contribution in growing South African leaders through exposure to relevant case studies in Israel.

“Critical learnings in the areas of leadership, small business and co-operatives, were shared with our country thanks to the generosity of the Krok brothers.”

Abe’s personal friend of many years and fellow philanthropist Bertie Lubner, who with his wife Hilary, visited Abe shortly before his passing, described Abe as “a notable legend of our time.

The successes that he and his brother Solly achieved together, are historic.

“Abe’s generosity knew no bounds.”

Abe is survived by his wife Rosie, his brother Solly, sister Bella, sons Maxim, David and Mark, daughters Elana Pincus, Shelley Croock and Simone Lerman and his grandchildren.

The day that human compassion triumphed over Everest glory

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Nadav Ben Yehuda sacrificed his attempt to summit Mount Everest, mid-May last year, endangering his own life in order to save a life, contrary to the code of the mountain.

The 24-year-old Israeli law and government student reflected on his three-month venture to the world’s highest peak, at a gathering at Beit Midrash Morasha.

Setting out from Katmandu, he was equipped with three sleeping bags and a down suit to protect against the -60°C temperatures, five types of gloves, a helmet and ice axes.

Oxygen cylinders are also essential for the Death Zone, where the altitude is higher than 8 000 metres and the body is unable to acclimatise any further on its own.

The climber has to contend with occasional 400 kilometre per hour winds, ice-covered mountains and crevasses (deep fissures) covered by snow.

Two-and-a-half months were spent at base camp acclimatising.

“You climb up and down a few times - you can’t go straight up because you’ll die,” Ben Yehuda noted.

“There are ice cracks all over and one is coping with avalanches.” One climber’s oxygen cylinder exploded, leading to a minor avalanche and the death of three climbers, he recalled.

Within reach of his goal, Ben Yehuda made a decision to postpone his summit for 24 hours because of the “traffic jam” which could result in his freezing to death.

“But I didn’t have enough oxygen or sleeping bags because (I hadn’t) planned to sleep there.

“I didn’t have food because you



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Nadav Ben Yehuda, who forfeited his chance to summit Mount Everest by saving a Turkish climber.

can’t digest it - it was a really hard night.”

He started his ascent the following night.

“After three hours, I see my first dead body - a Canadian woman I knew from base camp. She was too slow going down the summit.”

Two hundred and fifty metres from the summit, he saw another body stuck inside a crevasse.

“I shook the body and heard a voice - he was alive,” Ben Yehuda remembered.

“I suddenly realised I knew the guy” as the person with whom he had been arguing about Israeli politics days earlier.

“It was a lose lose situation - I’m not ashamed to say. (I thought) maybe I can go to the summit, then come back to take him down - no, he would be dead (by that time),” he said, referring to the 95 kg 46-year-old Turkish American.

In the event, he attached the unconscious man to his harness, describing the descent as “the longest and most painful eight hours I’ve ever had in my life. I had to put him between my legs or over my shoulder.

“After 20 minutes, I stopped feeling my hands.” Thirty minutes into the rescue, his oxygen mask broke and he had to remove it.

“You feel like someone has put a belt on your neck and is pulling as strong as he can.”

A few hours in, the Turk fell into a crevasse and pulled Ben Yehuda in too.

“I actually thought we’ll be one of those stories (of) dead bodies on the mountain. After half an hour, I pulled out my ice axes and started pulling myself out of the crevasse - my eyes couldn’t even see anymore, it was too cold.”

Once they reached camp, he put the man inside his sleeping bag and gave him oxygen.

Of his experience he says: “I was really close, but what can you do? I was really mad I didn’t get to the top.”

Community Briefs

INTERNATIONAL NAHUM GOLDMANN FELLOWSHIP IN KINERET IN JUNE

The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture is now accepting applications for the 25th International Nahum Goldmann Fellowship, which takes place in Israel on the Kineret, June 11-17. The fellowship provides an intensive experience in Jewish living, learning and leadership for men and women from around the world, aged between 25 and 40, who show serious interest in Jewish culture and demonstrate a potential for communal leadership.

The Memorial Foundation has organised 25 Fellowships since 1987. For more information and to obtain application forms contact The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture: (212) 425-6606, or visit www.ngfp.org or office@mfjc.org.

ORTJET SA SPREADS ITS WINGS GLOBALLY

ORTJET South Africa is going global! Paul Bacher, CEO of ORTJET (Jewish Entrepreneurial Training) is working with people in Canada and the US to establish ORTJET in their neighbourhoods.

“A group of Baltimore professionals and entrepreneurs is the first to start the ORTJET business and training model in the US. They are using our methodologies, processes and documents.”

The business mentoring model is unique to ORTJET and includes assistance for new and small businesses with skills, mentoring, counselling and training.

“It is not every day that a small local outfit gets a USA crowd launching our home-grown concept,” said Bacher.

- MARCELLE RAVID



Israeli elections: best of democracy, or too many choices?

The many surprising results of the Israeli elections illustrate the maxim: “a week is a long time in politics”. As South Africans we should envy the fluidity of Israeli democracy.

Despite having the same basic electoral system - proportional representation, where each party gets a number of seats in parliament (Israel’s Knesset) correlating with its proportion of the national vote - differences between South Africa and Israel were starkly illustrated in Israel’s poll.

The 32 Israeli parties contesting the election meant Israelis faced a huge array of choices. While some were tiny parties, quite a few represented major blocs of power, garnering significant numbers of Knesset seats.

Social and economic conditions were high on the agenda - recent surveys show that almost one in four Israelis live in poverty. Peace with the Palestinians is obviously another major issue.

Netanyahu’s relatively narrow win - 31 seats in the 120-seat Knesset with the right and left blocs almost equally balanced - means his task of forming a government will be no easy matter.

In contrast, in South Africa the ANC has, since it came into power two decades ago, always had a massive majority - 60 per cent plus - meaning it calls the shots in any coalition with a smaller party. Purely technically, we don’t have a one-party state, but in practical terms it often feels like it, with minorities exerting little influence.

The large number of parties also indicates a leadership crisis in Israel at a crucial time in its history. There is not one candidate who a majority could support wholeheartedly. One respected Israeli columnist commented that Israelis were voting for “the best of a bad lot”.

This refrain sounds familiar to South African ears. No South African leaders today clearly stand out for their greatness - the recent re-election of Jacob Zuma as ANC president - and essentially South African president, as he is expected to be endorsed in next year’s general election - elicited a response of great weariness among many South Africans.

For South African Jews, a relevant question is what a new Israeli government’s attitude will be towards this country. In recent years we have slipped low on Israel’s radar because of our government’s virulent anti-Israel atmosphere. Israel now regards South Africa as of little political importance, given its kneejerk hostility.

Does the hostility derive from the stalemate in the peace process? Or a basic rejection of Israel itself? Or inherent affinity with the Palestinians because of historically close relations with the PLO?

Whatever the reasons, South African Jews, traditionally very Zionist, are having a hard time getting their views heard in the current climate.

Looked at from a distance, a feather in Israel’s cap was given just days before the election by the US-based Freedom House, whose annual report titled “Freedom in the World 2013” said Israel was the Middle East’s only “free” state, countering the country’s critics who say its democratic values are eroding.

The report, ranking the world’s countries by political rights and civil liberties, said Israel is surrounded by countries where freedom is a scarce entity. Jordan and Syria were “not free,” and Egypt and Lebanon were “partly free.” Freedom House ranks a “free” country as one with open political competition, a climate of respect for civil liberties, significant independent civic life, and independent media. A “partly free” country has limited respect for political rights and civil liberties; in a “not free” country basic political rights are absent and civil liberties widely and systematically denied.

Of nine countries given the worst ratings, two were in Israel’s region: Saudi Arabia and Syria. Other “not free” countries are Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Tunisia, Kuwait, Libya and Morocco are “partly free”.

With the election over, the political wrangling begins as Netanyahu negotiates the political maze to come up with a government most Israelis can support. Let us hope the outcome will produce a government that can not only improve the lot of Israelis, but also achieve a breakthrough towards peace with the Palestinians.

‘Faith and Protection’ – the UNHCR Dialogue on Protection Challenges

ALANA BARANOV

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him... you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt.” (Leviticus: 19). Few tenets are repeated as often in Jewish law, and indeed protecting the vulnerable and solidarity with the foreigner is a core value of all the major religious traditions.



Sadly, as seen in the unfolding crisis in Syria (where an estimated 600 000 people have fled their homes since the outbreak of the civil war), few principles are as overlooked by humanity. Local religious communities are on the front lines of humanitarian crises. As we learnt first-hand in South Africa during the xenophobic attacks of 2008, they often act as “first providers” of life-saving assistance. Uniquely positioned to advocate for human dignity, and drawing on principles held close to the hearts of the faithful, these groups can empower the defenceless.

Recently, I was privileged to be one of the few South Africans to attend the fifth UNHCR Dialogue on Protection Challenges, as a representative of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). The theme of the Dialogue for 2012 was “Faith and Protection”.

The SAJBD was present at the Dialogue as part of a broader Jewish delegation, which was led by Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and included other religious and NGO leaders from Israel and the United States.

The Dialogue had three major objectives: to explore how the right to seek asylum and the protection of stateless persons are reflected in religious traditions; identify practical ways for the UNHCR to better engage with religious leaders and communities to help assist refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons and to improve protection space; and finally, to consider developing principles of partnership for co-operation between stakeholders.

The issue of xenophobia was raised across the Dialogue’s roundtables, and South Africa was cited as both an example of how protection can fail, but also how faith-based organisations and religious leaders can bravely make a difference in terrible times.

Initiatives such as the Hate Crimes Working Group, a coalition of civil society role-players advocating for hate crimes awareness and legislation, in whose establishment I was involved on behalf of the SAJBD, were raised as examples of best practice.

These issues are particularly pertinent for South Africa. Our country is the recipient of the highest annual number of asylum applications worldwide, with 106 904 applications in 2011 according to the UNHCR.

Other challenges we face include an asylum system that is overwhelmed by the sheer number of such applications and recurring xenophobic attacks which impede integration into local communities.

I am hopeful that the outcomes of the Dialogue will contribute to creating sustainable solutions for these types of protection challenges. With a plan to maintain a network of communication between organisations involved globally in this sector, to share resources and ideas (such as the proposal from the Jewish delegation for “cities of refuge”) and encouraging religious leaders to sign up to a “code of conduct” on how to preach about refugees, there is much to work on.

Ultimately, all religious communities and organisations must stand up and take the lead in initiating and supporting efforts of conflict resolution and peace-building, from the local to the national level.

As the South African Jewish community, with our own history of fleeing oppression and facing prejudice as the outsider, as well as the principle of *tikun olam* in our religious tradition, it is imperative that we each do what we can to make a difference.

Remember Martin Luther King’s battle against hate

KENNETH JACOBSON
NEW YORK

For those of us who closely follow the progress in America in the battles against racism and anti-Semitism, the observance of the Rev Martin Luther King Jr’s (pictured) birthday this year on January 21, had particular relevance.

First, the King holiday reminds us of two significant anniversaries surrounding the civil rights leader. It was the 50th anniversary of his historic “I Have A Dream” speech at the Mall on Washington and the 20th anniversary of all 50 states in the union observing the holiday.

Second, while leading the monumental struggle for civil rights, King never equivocated in denouncing anti-Semitism.

“The segregationist and racist make no fine distinction between the Negro and the Jews,” he stated bluntly.

In a letter to Jewish leaders just months before his 1968 assassination, he said: “I will continue to oppose it [anti-Semitism] because it is immoral and self-destructive.”

The message - that it is never enough for Jews and Jewish organisations to condemn anti-Semitism - remains terribly important for the country.

More specifically, King’s condemnation of anti-Semitism was and is important for his own African-American community. For too long, levels of anti-Semitic attitudes have been too high. Not only did King react against blatant anti-Semitism, but he anticipated more sophisticated versions. In an appearance at

Harvard, as reported by Seymour Martin Lipset in “The Socialism of Fools”, King responded to a hostile question about Zionism: “When people criticise Zionists they mean Jews; you are talking anti-Semitism.”

Third, King understood the importance of standing up for other minorities.

Perhaps King’s greatest legacy was his conviction that justice for black people could not be achieved in a vacuum, that all Americans must live free from oppression in order to guarantee freedom.

Why was obtaining civil rights for African-Americans so important to the American Jewish community? Because it was the right thing to do, and because it was good for all and built coalitions in fighting all forms of prejudice.

Fourth, King knew that power politics were important to bring change. Speeches, marches, demonstrations and sit-ins were all about power politics. But he profoundly understood that ultimately, appealing to the moral values, the goodness and long-term interests of those who needed to change - the white majority - was the key to changing society.

In the long run, however, changing hearts and minds through education and appealing to the best instincts of America is the real solution.

Fifth, the civil rights revolution led by King also further opened up America for Jews and is one of the key elements as to why today American Jews are the freest community in the 2 000-year history of the Diaspora and things are so much better for Jews than 60 or 70 years ago.



Civil rights legislation allowed Jews to challenge their exclusion. Even more, the revolution changed society in a way that being different and expressing one’s differences was no longer a liability.

King’s work in seeking equality for all, was consistent with the values expressed by the Jewish sage Hillel two millennia ago: “If I am not for me, who will be?” One must have pride and stand up for one’s own.

“If I am only for myself, what am I?” To be fully human, one must go beyond one’s own problems and stand up for others.

“If not now, when?” Justice delayed is justice denied.

These values were King’s values. Too often in society today we stray from them. This 50th anniversary of his “I Have a Dream” speech provided us with an opportunity to recommit to those things that brought us all together. (JTA)

(Kenneth Jacobson is deputy national director of the Anti-Defamation League.)

Rabbi Hertz, King James Bible, stilted to modern ears



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

My wife and I are of a scavenger bent and enjoy burrowing for discarded items of interest in sheimos bins at the various shuls. Perhaps we should get out more. At any rate, on one such expedition, I found a copy of the Hertz Chumash, in excellent condition.

The Hertz, for those under 40, was for much of the last century the standard commentary on the Torah and Haftaros in synagogues throughout the English-speaking world. Nowadays, it is only in the older, more mainstream congregations that one finds the occasional copy.

It is not hard to see why the commentary, authored by the then Chief Rabbi of the British Empire Joseph Herman Hertz and published in the 1930s, should have fallen out of favour. It is a product of its time, when much of the traditional Jewish world felt itself under siege by secularist intellectual challenges to Judaism's sacred texts.

Back then, the phenomenon of "Bible Criticism", at the core of which was an assumption that the entire canon of Tanach was a human cultural construction to be "deconstructed" like any other literary text, was in its hey-day.

Hertz's commentary was a stout-hearted but in retrospect perhaps misjudged attempt to challenge the "scholars" on their own terms and provide the Jewish layman with intellectual ammunition to refute their theories.

In doing so, it would not be unfair to say that he made far too many concessions, in effect too often playing down the miraculous in favour of prosaic, rationalist explanations and giving too much prominence to secular academics whose comments are all too often rather banal.

Looking through the commentary, it is rather jarring to see names like Chadwick, Rawlinson and even Olive Schreiner jostling for space alongside Rashi, Ibn Ezra and the Ramban.

While their cited comments, as selected by Hertz, are obviously not themselves contrary to Jewish belief, they are so je june and antiquarian as to simply be a waste of precious space. Only the smallest fraction of the accumulated wisdom of past Torah giants can be presented in an anthology of this nature. Why take up so much of it with tangential observations on modes of Chaldean worship or Assyrian lexicography, even if these do provide insights into the milieu in which Judaism originated?

It would seem that Rabbi Hertz was anxious to demonstrate at every opportunity that the material of the Hebrew Bible was rooted in and reflected historical realities. Maybe it was

necessary to take this approach in his day, but in our own times it comes across as being overly defensive, even apologetic.

Going through the text, moreover, I found myself cringing every time attention was drawn to "beautiful example of Hebrew poetry". Shakespeare's poetry is also beautiful; it is not the reason why we put on Tefillin every morning.

Another feature of the Hertz Chumash that has made it unfashionable is that it uses the King James Bible text. No matter what one can say about the majestic language of that famous rendering, it is much too archaic for modern ears, the sundry ye's, thee's, thou's and smiteth's having become the stuff of caricature.

Some renditions now sound faintly ridiculous: "Jacob sod pottage" (Yaakov was cooking a stew - what's this "sod pottage" nonsense?!); "Joshua discomforted Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (well, yes - if I was being hacked into little pieces by an edged weapon, I'd also feel "discomforted"); and referring to cattle as "kine" merely sounds pretentious.

Hertz had a strong South African connection. His first important rabbinical position was in Johannesburg, where he became rabbi of the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation in President Street in 1898.

President Paul Kruger expelled him from the Transvaal following the outbreak of the Anglo-

Boer War because of his strident pro-Uitlander speeches. This in no small part led to his being recommended by Lord Milner for the post of Chief Rabbi of the British Empire.

Hertz returned to Johannesburg after the war to take up his old position for several more years. At the 1905 SA Zionist Congress, he presented what was probably the first scholarly potted history of the SA Jewish community.

All in all, while his Torah commentary is no longer in use, he should be remembered for what he was: a proud Jew, a fine Judaic scholar a doughty fighter for the honour of Judaism, even if the form this activism took could be controversial.



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The consequences of Israel’s vote

URIEL HEILMAN
WASHINGTON

A few observations about the Israeli election results:

Right-left split changes, but not much: From an outsider’s perspective, Israel would seem to be a very politically unstable place. The biggest party in the previous Knesset, Kadima, crashed from 28 seats to a grand total of zero. The No 3 party, Yisrael Beiteinu, hitched its wagon to the ruling Likud party, but their combined list lost about a quarter of its seats, down to 31 from 42.

Meanwhile, a party that didn’t exist until a few months ago, Yesh Atid, emerged as the 120-seat Knesset’s second-biggest party, with 18 or 19 seats, according to exit polls.

Yet despite the swapping of party labels, not too much changed in the right-left split. The rightwing appears to have lost a little ground - from 65 seats in the last Knesset to 62 in the new one. The centre and left gained some adherents, but remains a minority with fewer than 50 seats (the balance goes to the Arab parties).

New priorities: With Israelis pessimistic about the chances for imminent peace, a significant number of voters went for parties that made socioeconomic issues, not security, the centrepiece of their campaigns.

Yesh Atid ran a campaign about social and economic issues, and Labour leader Shelly Yachimovich, who led the party to 17 seats, up from eight in the last Knesset, virtually ignored security issues in her campaign. This represents a

sea change from the old days, when campaigns were all about security. Tzipi Livni’s Hatnua bucked that trend, emphasising peace with the Palestinians. The result: six seats.

New faces: The 19th Knesset will see a plethora of new members, with more than a quarter of the parliament occupied by first-timers, most of them from Jewish Home and Yesh Atid. Jewish Home is led by a son of American immigrants to Israel, businessman-turned-politician Naftali Bennett, and Yesh Atid is guided by former TV personality Yair Lapid, also the son of the late politician Tommy Lapid.

Women: The new Knesset will have more women; Yesh Atid leads the way with eight female representatives. The Likud-Beiteinu list has seven, Labour has four, and Jewish Home and Meretz have three. Hatnua and Hadash each has one. Among the newcomers will be the body’s first Ethiopian-Israeli woman, Penina Tamnu-Shata of Yesh Atid, an attorney who immigrated to Israel at age three during Operation Moses.

The end of Kadima: Twice in its short history, the Kadima leader occupied the prime minister’s office. But in just one election cycle, the party went from Israel’s largest faction to not winning a single seat.

Various factors doomed Kadima: the rise of Yesh Atid, whose socioeconomic-focused platform and charismatic leader peeled away centrist voters; Livni’s failure to gain adherents for Kadima and subsequent defection to her new party, Hatnua; and Shaul Mofaz’s



An Israeli man casting his vote at a polling station in Jerusalem on Tuesday. (Miriam Alster/FLASH90/JTA)

decision to join, albeit briefly, the Likud-led ruling coalition. It’s not the end of centrist politics in Israel, but it is the end of the road for the party started by Ariel Sharon as a breakaway from Likud.

Bibi’s reign: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s supporters used to herald him as Bibi, King of Israel. So did Time magazine just a few months ago. But with the combined Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu list falling

by a quarter after what was widely panned as a lacklustre campaign, it’s difficult to make the case that Netanyahu’s star is burning brighter.

He’s almost sure to capture the premiership again - now comes the horse trading that is Israeli coalition building - but it seems it will be more for lack of an alternative than enthusiasm for Netanyahu.

Hello, Naftali Bennett: If there was any enthusiasm on the right

wing this time, it appeared to be for Naftali Bennett, leader of the newly-constituted Jewish Home party (itself a successor to the National Religious Party).

The party captured 12 seats, up from just three as the NRP in the last Knesset. Bennett, who supports annexation of parts of the West Bank, is likely to apply pressure on Netanyahu to shift further right on security issues. (JTA)

World News in Brief

NETANYAHU WILL NOT UPROOT MAJOR JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN ANY PEACE DEAL

JERUSALEM - In an interview on the eve of the general elections in Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – fighting Tuesday’s general election on a Likud-Yisrael Beitneu ticket, made it clear that as Israel’s re-elected leader, he would not uproot major Jewish communities just beyond the pre-1967 lines.

“I think that there is recognition that ultimately there has to be a real and fair solution, and that certainly doesn’t include driving out hundreds of thousands of Jews who live in the suburbs of Jerusalem, and in the suburbs of Tel Aviv, in the Ariel bloc,” Netanyahu said in an interview from his Jerusalem office, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Netanyahu reaffirmed that these communities would be part of Israel in any peace deal with the Palestinians. “There is a common acceptance that the so-called settlement blocs will remain part of Israel in any settlement,” Netanyahu said.

However, despite the focus on construction in these areas, Netanyahu told a group of visiting US Senators last week Sunday that the real problem was not Jews building houses, but Iran. “The problem in the Middle East is Iran’s attempt to build nuclear weapons... This was, and remains, the main mission facing not only myself and Israel, but the entire world,” Netanyahu said according to the Associated Press.

In the interview, Netanyahu also addressed concerns regarding a report by American columnist Jeffrey Goldberg in which President Barack Obama is quoted as saying: “Israel doesn’t know what its own best interests are.”

Netanyahu responded he was “confident that President Obama understands that only a sovereign Israeli government can determine what Israel’s interests are”. (JNS.org)

ISRAELI TROOPS DISMANTLE SECOND PALESTINIAN OUTPOST

JERUSALEM - Israeli troops on Monday morning dismantled a Palestinian tent city, the second erected in recent days in the Jerusalem area.

The soldiers entered the Palestinian outpost in north-west Jerusalem near Beit Iksa and began to take down the four tents and the structure serving as a mosque. Bulldozers removed the structures, the Palestinian Maan news agency reported.

Twenty Palestinian protesters were removed peacefully from Bab al-Karama, or Gate of Dignity, according to reports. The outpost was founded last week Friday.

It was the second Palestinian outpost established last week, and the second to be dismantled. Israeli troops late last week dismantled a Palestinian tent city erected in the controversial E-1 corridor between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim. (JTA)

BEDOUIN BROTHERS ARRESTED FOR PLANNING ATTACKS ON ISRAEL

JERUSALEM - Two Bedouin brothers were arrested earlier this month for planning terror attacks inside Israel, the Shin Bet secret service said last Sunday. They were indicted at the Beersheva District Court

Their plans included a suicide bombing attack at the Beersheva central bus station, an attack on a passenger train and firing rockets at Israeli targets, according to reports. Two Jewish Israelis, one reportedly an Israeli soldier, also were arrested for allegedly providing the Bedouin suspects with weapons that allegedly were stolen from the Israeli army. The Jewish Israelis reportedly received drugs in return for their co-operation.

Police found instructions on rocket building on the older brother's computer, as well as the components necessary to build the rockets in his apartment. (JTA)

FACEBOOK APOLOGISES FOR CLOSING ACCOUNT, ARAB-ISRAELI JOURNALIST WRITES

JERUSALEM - The Jerusalem Post's Arab affairs reporter said Facebook had apologised for closing his account and removing posts.

Khaled Abu Toameh wrote in a column published on last Friday by the Gatestone Institute, that Facebook issued a “sincere apology” and that a member of its team had “accidentally removed something you posted on Facebook. This was a mistake.”

Toameh said the social networking site cited “security reasons” for shutting down his account for 24 hours last week. One day later the account was reopened with posts critical of corruption in the Palestinian Authority and Jordan deleted. Toameh had received hate mail and death threats due to the posts, according to The Jerusalem Post.

“Facebook’s move came at a time when Arab dictatorships in general, and the Palestinian

Authority in particular, have been cracking down on Facebook users,” Toameh wrote on the website of Gatestone, an international policy council and think tank.

Toameh pointed out that some Arab countries and the Palestinian Authority had established teams to monitor Facebook and other social media for critics.

“But the problem becomes worse when Facebook itself starts removing material that bothers dictatorships and tyrants,” he wrote. “One can only hope that the same Facebook employee who ‘accidentally’ removed the article will make the same mistake and close down accounts belonging to terrorist organisations and their leaders.”

Facebook allows Hamas leaders and other known terrorists to maintain pages. (JTA)

JEWISH HOME’S BENNETT ATTACKED BY HAREDI ORTHODOX AT WESTERN WALL

JERUSALEM - Haredi Orthodox Jews reportedly on Monday pushed and verbally attacked Naftali Bennett, head of the Jewish Home party, at the Western Wall.

The attack occurred as Bennett began praying in front of the Wall, the day before Election Day. He was protected by a security detail.

Jerusalem police reportedly detained a haredi Orthodox youth who called on Bennett to take off his kippah. The youth reportedly shouted: “You want to draft our children to the army, mothers are crying at night,” and: “Let me study Torah. Don’t force me to go to the army, you’re inciting sin!”

Bennett, whose party has been rising in the polls, has sent out mixed signals on military service for all Israelis, including haredim.

Hundreds of supporters had greeted Bennett upon his arrival at the Wall.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of the haredi Orthodox Shas Party, on Saturday night had called the Jewish Home party a “home for the gentiles”.

“It’s forbidden to vote for them,” Yosef said in his weekly sermon. “These are religious people? Anyone who votes for them denies the Torah.” (JTA)

Disclaimer

The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

Guidelines for letters

Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact telephone or cell number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

EL AL DOES NOT SHOW COMPASSION IN TIMES OF GRIEF

This letter, about a flight to Israel to attend a funeral, does not refer to El Al’s old age and poor state of their planes travelling the South Africa-Israel route, or the poor quality of their food, or their sometimes poor air-crew service, or their screening of Hebrew programmes without English subtitles, or alternative viewing possibilities, etc, etc...

It refers to compassionate travel arrangements. Specifically, I had to travel to Israel to attend a funeral. There was never a real intention by El Al’s office personnel to accommodate me or make any effort to place me on a flight. Ethiopian Airlines was more

amenable. I ended up flying to Israel with Ethiopian and returning with El Al.

Where is the compassion, the so-called Jewish empathy, the one Jewish nation that binds us all together?

Apparently El Al had a compassionate travel arrangement in place, which was cancelled in June 2012. Why was this stopped? Shouldn’t it be reinstated?

In situations like a funeral, emergency travel arrangements become a nightmare. Lack of tickets/seats availability, when having to fly at a moment’s notice, are extremely problematic. However, Ethiopian Airlines was more understanding than our

national/Jewish airline, where no effort at all was made to try to assist me.

And then the price: I paid for a one way ticket, Johannesburg to Tel Aviv with Ethiopian Airlines R5 603, while El Al charged me for a one way ticket from Tel Aviv to Johannesburg R14 722 (same distance, but being a direct flight, uses less fuel, pays less airport taxes and incurs less operating expenses), or an incredible R9 119 more than the competition.

How do we safeguard against being a helpless victim of such a service provider?

Leonardo Kleiman
Bedfordview

REMEMBERING THE MIRVIS FAMILY IN THEIR JOHANNESBURG DAYS

I read Suzanne Belling’s article about Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis with interest.

His early life was not limited to Cape Town. I clearly, as a child, remember walking home from Pine Street Shul, Johannesburg, with the Mirvis family on Shabbat and Yomtov during the early 1960s.

His elder brother, Howard,

was also a member of the shul choir. Our families walking together, made quite a spectacle at the time as there were four children in each family of the same age group.

I recall they lived in the house opposite the Raedene shops in the “island house” bounded by Hathorn and Ninth Avenues and Kinfauns Street. Around 1965/6,

the family moved to Benoni where the Reverend Lionel Mirvis was employed at the local shul and possibly the local Jewish primary school as well. It was after this period around 1968/9 that the family then relocated to Cape Town.

Ron Ozen
Sydney, Australia

World News in Brief


HAGEL MEETS WITH TOP JEWISH LEADERS

WASHINGTON - Top Jewish organisational leaders met with Chuck Hagel, President Barack Obama’s defence secretary nominee, and Vice President Joe Biden. A four-sentence statement on Monday, issued by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, described the meeting in Washington last Friday as “an important opportunity for a serious and thorough discussion of key issues of importance to all of us”.

The statement, which also noted the presence at the meeting of the leaders of the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, did not further elaborate.

The meeting came days after Hagel, a former Republican senator from Nebraska, conferred with top Jewish Democrats and apologised for a 2006 comment in which he described the “Jewish lobby” as “intimidating” and reassured them that despite his past scepticism of some sanctions on Iran and wariness of a military strike to keep it from obtaining a nuclear weapon, he was now on board with President Obama’s postures on those issues. (JTA)

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News

SA JEWISH REPORT 9

And still Professor Karabus is waiting...



Prof Cyril Karabus’ son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Jen, with their son born a few days ago.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

There have been no material further developments in the situation of Professor Cyril Karabus of Cape Town, who remains out on bail in Abu Dhabi in Dubai, for close on six months on a 10-year old accusation of manslaughter. He did not even know that he had been tried and found guilty in absentia,

“We have publicly called on (International Relations and Co-operation) Deputy Minister Marius Fransman to travel to Abu Dhabi as soon as possible to demand the release and the return home of Professor Karabus,” said attorney Michael Bagraim, who is representing Karabus, in an e-mail interview. (The case has been postponed umpteen times because Dubai authorities cannot locate the original file on Sarah Abdullah, the three-year-old

patient when Karabus did a locum in Dubai; she died of leukaemia.)

“We have, however, been told that the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi is going to be in Davos this week and so obviously it would be better for Deputy Minister Fransman to visit there the week after that.

“The latest situation is that Abu Dhabi is appearing at the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council, on January 28. We have asked our government to raise the question of foreign workers in the UAE and fair trial procedures.”

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‘Santa’s Story’ - a huge, joyful generational celebration



Aviva Pelham in a scene from “Santa’s Story”.

ROBYN SASSEN

If you not were fortunate enough, in Johannesburg, late in 2011, to have seen “Santa’s Story” at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre, with the inimitable Aviva Pelham, her two sisters and her mother, to whom this show is dedicated, fear not. A new version, which recently sold out in Cape Town, performs in Sandton, next month. Pelham, a world-class soprano who trained in Cape Town and has had a glorious 40-year-career, explained: “My mother turned 90 five years ago; we wanted to celebrate her life. It has been absolutely unique, taking her from Germany to Spain to France to Rhodesia, under really hard circumstances through the war. “She was enormously talented, but never had the chance to develop her own skills. She met and married a stranger from Africa who she stayed married to for over 60 years. My daughter, Gabriella, who is an English academic, wrote her story in a book and this show is a taste

ORT played a major role in helping Santa and family

ORT International played a considerable role in helping European refugees like Santa; “Santa’s Story” celebrates the life-saving energies it offered Santa and her family. For a time, the family had refugee status in France, which they had fled to from Spain. This meant that they could live there, but were not allowed to work - and they were starving. ORT facilitated the training of Santa and her brothers in capacities which would not have come to bureaucratic attention, but was enough to enable them to eat, until they were recognised as Jews, that is. One of Santa’s brothers became a machinist in an airplane factory, another became a dishwasher in a restaurant. The value of a position like this was about income, but also, and perhaps more importantly, scraps from customers’ plates. “They spent a lot of time shifting food from each others plates,” recalls Santa’s daughter, Aviva. “My mother trained to become a manicurist.”

Arts Briefs

BROOMBERG, CHANARIN PUT LENS ON POLAROID AND KODAK TECHNOLOGY

The Goodman Gallery in Rosebank, Johannesburg, hosts an exhibition by SA-born, London-based photographers Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, “To Photograph the Details of a Dark Horse in Low Light”. It’s about the history of Kodak and Polaroid technology, in the light of an understanding of prejudice in photography. In the case of Polaroid, according to a media statement, “the artists reflect on the company’s questionable relationship with the apartheid government and their consequent withdrawal from South Africa, which became the catalyst for the foreign disinvestment that crippled the National Party’s leadership”. The exhibition closes on February 16. (011) 788-1113.

SINGER YONATAN RAZEL BACK FOR A SHOW AT THE LYRIC

The musical act headlining last year’s Sinai Indaba, American-born singer/songwriter Yonatan Razel who lives in Nahl-aot, Jerusalem, returns to South Africa for a once-off concert on February 13, at the Lyric Theatre, in Ormonde. Razel rose to prominence in the Orthodox community in 2009, when he collaborated with Ya’akov Shwekey on the song “V’hi Sheamda”, a song which touched the hearts of millions and was named song of the decade by the religious radio station Kol Chai. In 2007, YNet named Razel singer of the year, coinciding with his release of his debut CD, “All in All”. Booking through Computicket.



Aviva Pelham with her mother, Santa.

of what the book is about. “It has been wonderful to be able to celebrate four generations of the Pelham family, like we have always done it: through song.” She laughs: “We were like the Von Trapp family. Singing was terribly natural for us and I remember as a child singing at the table, singing on picnics. I studied music - clarinet (which I hated!) and piano, and was rejected from singing as a second subject, in my first year at the University of Cape Town.” It affected her self-esteem badly, but such was her will to succeed that she forced her hurt feelings out of focus and enrolled toward the end of her degree in an opera course. The rest is operatic history. “I plucked up courage, which overrode my tendency to be asthmatic and I fell in love all over again with opera. Opera is the culmination of everything. I will never get over the thrill of singing accompanied by an orchestra!” “‘Santa’s Story’ is a 90-minute account of a deeply personal odyssey which has universal impact. It debuted at the Fugard Theatre, last year, under the direction of Janice Honeyman - she has known the family for a long time - with lighting by Mannie Manim - he has such warmth in his eye - and design by Dicky Longhurst - who is so clever and authentic. “The show features a carpet of three fantastic musicians, including klezmer stalwart Matthew Reid, who is doing the musical arrangement. “It’s daunting,” Pelham admits, about doing a one-man show, with a diversity of songs in languages and genres ranging from ‘night clubby French’ to Yiddish. It’s about stamina, but I’m a seasoned professional and you plough into it what it needs!”

- “Santa’s Story” is at Old Mutual Theatre on the Square in Sandton, February 7 - 17. (011) 883-8606.
- The Union of Jewish Women has purchased the preview show on February 5 as a fundraiser. Call Barbara (011) 645-2591 or Margot 083-383-2986.
- WIZO Tzabar hosts a performance of “Santa’s Story” on February 13. Call Graciela 082-925-0924 or email gskudi@gmail.com.

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO CELEBRATE LIFE OF ARTIST COLIN RICHARDS

Colin Richards, arguably one of SA’s most respected art academics, who passed away suddenly at the age of 58 at his home in Cape Town, on December 26, will be celebrated at a memorial service on February 1, at Hiddingh Hall, Michaelis UCT, at 16:00. Richards touched the lives of hundreds of art students during his 25-year teaching career at Wits University. With his wife, artist Penny Siopis, he moved to Cape Town in 2009. Known for an intensely fine body of watercolour and pen and ink work, Richards wrote prolifically and influentially about art in Africa, and contributed to the field of art therapy.

NATHANIEL STERN AND JESSICA MEUNINCK-GANGER FROM UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE SHOW 14 NEW WORKS IN JHB

Art on Paper Gallery in Milpark, Johannesburg hosts an exhibition by Nathaniel Stern and Jessica Meuninck-Ganger. A body of 14 new works created through a residency run by the gallery is on show. Both artists teach at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Stern, who spent several years in South Africa in the early 2000s, is an internationally acclaimed digital and installation artist and Milwaukee-based Meuninck-Ganger, a printmaker. The work is curiously layered with supports and techniques, juggling time, space and subject matter. Entitled “Dynamic Statis”, the show blends traditional printmaking and LDC video, and closes on February 16. (011)726-2234 or www.galleryaop.com

A gripping tale of homecoming and departure

The Land Within by Alistair Morgan (Penguin, R175)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

The melodramatic back cover blurb of this novel (“a young man returns to a Karoo farm bearing painful memories of... a tragedy in which he was fatefully implicated”) evokes the interminable (and often sordid) plaasromans beloved of Afrikaans writers (“Die Du Plooy van Soetmelksvlei”, “Die Geheim van Nantes” and, more recently, Etienne van Heerden’s “Ancestral Voices”, which was also inflicted on unfortunate schoolchildren as a prescribed work).

The farm setting has long been a staple of South African literature: the ideal vehicle through which to explore the interplay between land, race, culture and historical injustices.

Happily, though, Morgan’s novel - though it indeed features a farm, a burial ground guarding the obligatory “Terrible Secret”, labourers with unsavoury links to landowners, unresolved conflicts between fathers and sons, machismo, rivalry and retribution - includes compelling insights and writing which is luminous, sensitive and deceptively simple.

Henry Knott, the scion of a wealthy family, has spent his adulthood trying to reinvent himself from lonely farm boy into sophisticated Cape Town psychologist. And, on the face of it, he has succeeded: he has a thriving practice, a comfortable home and a stable (if sexually frustrated) marriage to Marian, who is pregnant with their first child.

The novel opens as the Knotts travel back to the farm on the Camdeboo. It now belongs to a young black couple, Kabelo and Ayanda Mahlangu, who have converted it into a guesthouse.

The purpose of the journey is to secure permission from the Mahlangus to have Henry’s father - who is rapidly succumbing to cancer - buried on the property.

The visit proves to be traumatic on many levels for Henry, beginning with Marian’s discovery that she is bleeding and at risk of miscarrying.

Then comes news that Henry’s embittered mother - whose ancestors first established the farm - has forbidden her former husband a grave in the family burial plot. Mahlangu, noting his visitor’s distress, suggests an alternative: instead of burial, Knott Snr can be cremated and his ashes scattered on the farm.

Seeing again, after decades, the little cemetery, is devastating for Henry. On these headstones, “lifespans were summed up with the brevity of a hyphen chipped into granite”. Here, too, childhood was marred by the loss of his elder brother David in the Angolan bush war, incompatible parents and stints at boarding school.

Two graves, in particular, evoke appalling memories. One belongs to Lillian, a domestic servant through whose deformed, alcoholic son Henry enacted a hideous rite of passage into adulthood. The other is that of David.

The occupants of these two graves - and the truths that lie interred with them - moulder as rankly in the earth as they do in Henry, who now realises how much of himself lies dead and defunct in this soil.

Beyond homecomings, the tale is also one of departures. Morgan’s brilliant nuancing of Henry’s disintegration, South Africa’s racially oppressed past and its former victims’ transition to victors, creates mounting tension which is skilfully controlled until the full power of the novel crashes down on the reader.

This is a story of manhood (and, by extension, nationhood) misread and, ultimately, misspent. And - having deposited us in territory we are loath to navigate - it never lets us fully return.



Read the South African Jewish Report online

www.sajewishreport.co.za

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

The ‘broad tent’ which is called the SAJBD

The SAJBD operates on the understanding that the South African Jewish community is a heterogeneous one, and that in order to fulfil its mandate of being the representative spokesbody of the community as a whole, it must provide a broad tent within which the full spectrum of viewpoints can be heard.

We do not see disagreement among ourselves as a source of weakness; indeed, the contrary is true. However, differences of opinion will undermine our community’s unity and general wellbeing when people are actively made to feel that they are pariahs.

Apart from being counter-productive in terms of creating polarisation and hardening rather than changing people’s attitudes, this runs counter to the Jewish ethos of dialogue and debate.

Without such a culture, we risk fragmenting into hostile camps, increasingly expending our energy in bickering with one another rather than standing together in a common cause.

Last month, the Board issued a media statement taking strong issue with certain intemperate statements made on a blog-post by a prominent member of our community. These had not merely expressed strong disagreement with Jews who have chosen to take a public stand against Israel (or, at least, certain Israeli policies), but called for such individuals to be exposed, boycotted, isolated and deprived of opportunities of making a living.

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Pre-election debate whets appetite for ‘the real one’



An engrossing pre-election debate was hosted last Sunday night by the SA Zionist Federation and the Israel Centre.

The SAZF said in a media release this was done to raise interest and awareness of the Israeli elections which took place on Tuesday.

Moderator Harold Jacobs, vice-chairman of the SAZF, introduced the party representatives: Daniel Barnett of Meretz; Leon Reich proposing Likud/Yisrael Beiteinu; Naomi Hadar for Hatnua; Benji Shulman promoting Hadash; Howard Sackstein representing Labour; and Rabbi Laurence Perez speaking on behalf of both Shas and Habayit Hayehudi.

All the participants spoke with passion and knowledge and with the determination to ensure that THEIR party would be the favoured one when the voting took place at the end of the evening.

Such dissidents are even said to be deserv-ing of the death penalty under classical Jewish law, which even if not intended literally comes dangerously close to inciting actual violence against them.

Such statements, we said, were “highly distasteful, potentially dangerous and divisive and contrary to the freedom of as-sociation that is enshrined in our Constitu-tion and embraced by the South African Jewish community”.

A further harmful result of the arti-cle was that it gave hardline anti-Israel factions an ideal opportunity to depict Jewish supporters of Israel as intolerant, vindictive and reactionary. Predictably, they were not slow in taking this up.

There has been, however, another form of intolerance, in this case practised by those whom the above blogpost de-nounces. Over the past year, we have seen a number of public boycott campaigns being conducted against Jewish business-men whose establishments in some way support Israel, most recently against the Reggies toy store chain, and prominent among those involved in them have been anti-Zionist Jews.

This is likewise unacceptable. It goes beyond merely disagreeing with the views of the owners to advocate bringing about actual economic harm against them in order to browbeat them into changing their standpoints.

The SAJBD welcomes the diversity of views within our community. We respect the right of individuals to express their opinions, even when these differ from those of the Jewish mainstream, and are committed to providing a space in which all viewpoints can be respectfully debated.

In the end, we firmly believe that our Jew-ish community will be stronger and more united for having allowed for such debate.

Community Briefs



Anne Kopelowitz, chairman of Our Parents Home Residents’ Committee and Dr Sophie Msiza, chairman of the Alex Veterans’ League.

OUR PARENTS HOME RESIDENTS TAKE ALEX VETS LEAGUE UNDER ITS WING

Late last year, the residents’ committee at Our Parents Home invited residents from an aged home in Alexandra to spend the morning with them. Over tea and sandwiches, they got to know one another and discussed ways in which Our Parents Home could help them. Our Parents Home subsequently received a wonderful donation of blankets, craft equipment and more from Verimark, which they shared with the Alex Veterans League. Anne Kopelowitz and Maureen Solomon of the OPH residents’ committee; Joy Coplyn (ANC councillor of Dunkeld) and Dr Sophie Msiza (AVL chairman) were all instrumental in making this initiative happen. – CELESTE EVERITT

A HAPPY CENTENARY TO YOU, MARY FEINBERG!

Mary Feinberg (née Imerman), a resident of Killarney, Johannesburg, who spent many years helping her pharmacist husband Teddy, behind the counter, turned 100 late last year. She was born in Johannesburg and lived with her parents in Hillbrow, until she married. Mary’s parents were Russian emigrants; her father started the Kotze Street men’s outfitters Imermans. Mary and Teddy had two daughters, Rhoda and Avis. Teddy worked until the age of 90; he passed away seven years later. Mary has 14 great-grandchildren, 12 of whom live in South Africa.

HOUSE AND GARDEN CIRCLE RAISES FUNDS FOR KOSHER MOBILE MEALS

The Union of Jewish Women Johannesburg’s popular House and Garden Circle has raised a substantial amount of money for Kosher Mobile Meals (KMM), the UJW’s flagship project.

KMM provides cooked, nutritious daily meals to some 160 Jewish people in Johannesburg who are unable to cook for themselves. Under the chairmanship of Helen Slavin, the House and Garden Circle arranges monthly visits to magnificent gardens and interesting homes, with guest speakers sharing their extensive gardening and interior decorating knowledge. - ESTELLE CLINE.

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Ochberg changed the lives of so many

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Overlooked for many decades, a story of bravery and determination is set to take its rightful place in the annals of world and South African Jewry. So said Lauren Snitcher, Cape Town representative of the Isaac Ochberg Committee based in Israel, at the commemoration of Ochberg’s 75th *yahrzeit* held at the Oranjia Children’s Home in December.

In 1921, Ochberg, then chairman of the Oranjia Orphanage, embarked on a perilous journey to save Jewish children from Eastern Europe who had been orphaned as a result of the First World War, the Spanish Flu epidemic, poverty, famine and the Cossack pogroms. At the time, there were close to half a million Jewish orphans in the area.

Though he had permission to bring in 200 children under the age of 16, Ochberg managed to include older siblings by telling the authorities that he needed nurses, teachers and

child-minders for them, thereby keeping families together as far as possible.

At the time, there had been a lot of opposition in the community to his mission, but he “wouldn’t take defeat”, according to an interviewee in the movie shown in which orphans and their relatives speak of their experiences. “He said: ‘Bugger you, it’s my money.’

“To us he was our Daddy Ochberg,” she recalled.

Half the children had gone to Oranjia and half had gone to the Arcadia Orphanage in Johannesburg. From the original 176 orphans he saved, there are now close to 4 000 descendants around the world.

At the event was Michael Radomsky, whose father Ben-nie Karman, one of the rescued orphans, came to this country as a young boy of “eight or nine”. He was adopted by the Radomsky family in Grahams-town after starting out in Cape Town, but “would not speak about it”, according to Michael.

Also there were Rita Shork-end and Tania Jacobson, whose

parents, Isaac Bornstein and Yetta Rosier, Ochberg Orphans, met at Oranjia as children of 11 and 10 years respectively, and married a decade later.

Snitcher referred to Ochberg as “a man whose actions changed and continue to change the lives and destinies of so many. Had it not been for Isaac Ochberg, I, my mother, my children and please G-d one day, their children, as well as so many of you whose faces I recognise as Ochberg Orphan descendants, would never be here.”

Guest of honour was 99-year-old Capetonian Molly Cohen, one of three surviving Ochberg Orphans. The other two are Solly Jossel of Johannesburg and Cissy Harris who lives in Israel.

President of Oranjia, Rodney Stein, noted that Ochberg had joined Oranjia’s committee soon after its founding in 1911. While the Ochberg Orphans were a “fundamental part” of the home’s 101-year history, the nature of childcare had changed.

In 1921 there were 100 children; today there are four. “The real issue is that these children need Oranjia - without it they would have nowhere to turn,” he pointed out.

“They come from extremely difficult family circumstances and are in need of intensive psychological and emotional support. It is also a day-care centre for those living at home - we see this as the future of Oranjia.”

Tessa Webber, Ochberg’s great-granddaughter, travelled from England to attend the commemoration. Though she had never met him, having been born 20 years after he died, she referred to “Isaac’s courageous life and his incredible devotion to his fellow-man”.

Ochberg still holds the record for the largest individual bequest to the Land of Israel. With this, the JNF purchased land in the north of the country - named the Isaac Ochberg Tract - on which Kibbutz Dalia and Kibbutz Gal-Ed are situated today.



Laura and Michael Radomsky. Michael’s father was an Ochberg Orphan.



Photos: Moira Schneider
Ninety-nine-year-old Molly Cohen, one of the three remaining Ochberg Orphans, who attended the commemoration of Isaac Ochberg’s 75th *yahrzeit*.

Good news for badly damaged knees and cartilage from Israeli technology

ABIGAIL KLEIN
LEICHMAN
TEL AVIV

If you get a cut, break a bone or scrape an elbow, your bloodstream brings to the injury all the necessary nutrients for healing. But if your cartilage gets damaged, you’re out of luck. This flexible soft tissue that cushions joints - especially in the knee - has no blood vessels and therefore little ability to heal itself.

However, a privately held Israeli medical device company is now offering a safe and effective, novel off-the-shelf cartilage regeneration solution in a global market worth an estimated

\$1,6 billion annually.

CartiHeal’s trademarked Agili-C can be implanted in a single-step arthroscopic procedure. In clinical studies, it was shown to be able to regenerate true hyaline cartilage (the most abundant type of cartilage in the human body) after six months.

Founder and CEO Nir Altschuler (pictured inset) tells Israel 21c that this is a breakthrough in the field - the “Holy Grail” in orthopaedics - because other experimental treatments generate only “hyaline-like” cartilage, which is actually a non-lasting fibrous tissue rather than the real deal.

“Our clinical results, to

date, confirm rapid cartilage and bone formation, as clearly visible on MRIs and X-rays,” says Altschuler. “Patients are reporting significant improvement in pain level and return to normal function, including sports.”

The implant has earned the European Union’s CE Mark of Approval, and the company is currently running post-marketing clinical studies at leading centres in Europe.

There are approximately 1,2 million cartilage repair procedures performed annually worldwide, and these surgeries mainly aim for pain relief since it hasn’t been possible until now to

regenerate true hyaline cartilage.

Altschuler says Agili-C has the potential to heal the problem at an early stage and halt further joint degeneration, and therefore might have the potential to prevent the need for more radical procedures, such as knee replacement, down the road.

The implant provides a scaffold that enables stem cells to climb up from the bone marrow, form vessels within the scaffold and regenerate tissue, Altschuler explains.

Within a few months, the top layer becomes cartilage while the bottom layer becomes bone - each

identical to the body’s own tissues. The regenerated cells gradually dissolve the implanted scaffold and the joints are nearly as good as normal.

The first patient to receive Agili-C was a 47-year-old Slovenian man, a former athlete whose knee cartilage was damaged due to a volleyball injury six years before the June 2011 surgery. Unable to enjoy sports, he suffered on and off from knee swelling and pain.

Six months after receiving the Agili-C implant, the patient was active on the ski slopes. A year from his surgery, he had completed a 180K cycling marathon, according to company officials.

“The X-ray and MRI images are promising,” says Altschuler. “At six months you can see signs of cartilage formation and at a year it is nearly fully regenerated. The newly-formed cartilage is hyaline cartilage, the body’s native cartilage, distinguished by its specific type of collagen.”

Altschuler founded CartiHeal in 2009 as a portfolio company of Peregrine Ventures’ Incentive Technological Incubator. Today, CartiHeal is backed by a recent financing round of up to \$10 million from Accelmed, Access Medical Ventures and Elon. (Israel21C)

World News in Brief

YEMENITE JEWS BROUGHT TO ISRAEL, IRAN’S FARS REPORTS

SA’ANA - A group of Jews from Yemen arrived in Israel via Doha on a Qatari flight, the Iranian Fars news agency reported last Sunday.

The Fars report cited the Palestinian Arab-language weekly al-Manar, which quoted “informed sources” as saying that the undetermined number of Jews from Yemen had landed in Israel.

Israel was planning to bring more Yemeni Jews in the coming months, according to Fars.

The Jewish community of Yemen last year numbered an estimated 130, with 50 living in the capital Sana’a in a compound secured by the government and the remainder in Raydah, the Jewish Agency told JTA last year. Some 100 Yemenite Jews made aliyah between 2009 and August 2012.

Attacks on Jews in Yemen by Islamist extremists have increased in recent years.

The Fars article suggested that Israel had been “transferring” Jews from around the world to Israel as part of “a Judaisation plot to change the identity of the region”. (JTA)

NETANYAHU CONGRATULATES INAUGURATED OBAMA, DESPITE TENSION

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, hoping for his own re-election on Tuesday, congratulated US President Barack Obama on Tuesday morning and expressed hope they would continue to “work together.”

After being formally sworn in last Sunday at the White House, Obama gave his inaugural address to 700 000 people on Monday. He did not mention Israel, but emphasised his administration “will support democracy from Asia to Africa; from the Americas to the Middle East, because our interests and our conscience compel us to act on behalf of those who long for freedom”, the Jerusalem Post reported. (JNS.org)




Image: Shutterstock.com
CartiHeal’s cartilage regeneration solution could save many patients from joint replacement surgery.

Top three KDVP High matriculants left out of the matric supplement


Through a production error, King David Victory Park’s top three candidates in the 2012 IEB examination – all receiving 10 distinctions – were inadvertently left out of our matric supplement. We regret the error and apologise to the three.
They are:

TEN DISTINCTIONS




Oren Benguri Karstaedt
- Accounting, AP Mathematics, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, Life Orientation, Mathematics Paper 3, Physical Sciences

TEN DISTINCTIONS



Saul Musker - AP English, Dramatic Arts, English, French, History, IsiZulu, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Mathematics Paper 3

TEN DISTINCTIONS



Jake Pencharz - AP Mathematics, Afrikaans, English, History, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Mathematics Paper 3, Physical Sciences, Visual Arts

Redhill School writes IEB exams
In our Matric Supplement, we stated that Redhill School wrote the NSC matric exams, whereas they in actual fact wrote the IEB exam. We regret the error.

King David Linksfield grade 8 Orientation Tour

ERIN DE JONGH

We all assembled at the buses, some of us anxious, some nervous, but all excited for orientation and our grade 8 year ahead.
After the long, vibrant bus ride we finally reached our destination, Meulstroom Lodge. We were introduced to our grade theme, Phineas and Ferb. Discussions followed with our directors and learner leaders.
We were then informed about the various committees and took part in activities that explained what each committee has to offer. A delicious lunch followed. We then had free time where we all enjoyed a dip in the pool.
The night events began with lots of laugh-

ter as hilarious skits were performed by the learner leaders. The desperate and dateless were all fixed up.
A boot camp ended the night on a high. We all had to do as we were commanded. Revenge came soon after with a water fight. The grade 8s punished their boot camp commanders.
After a short night’s sleep and a bus journey back, we arrived at our new home, King David High School. We were familiarised with our surroundings by an “Amazing Race” around the school.
Sadly, after that we were dismissed. Our grade 8 orientation was finished and it was time for big school.



Matric learner leaders: Carla Haarburger; Nikki Silverman; Liat Ilouze; and Yakira Amoils, holding up grade 8 learner Amber Sandler (in the middle).



Aaron Witz, a learner leader, is helping grade 8 learner Joshua Sack lay tefillin during morning davening.

SAUJS welcomes its national committee for 2013

At the end of last year, the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) voted in their new national committee, with Ariela Carno (national chairman) David Subel and Eitan Dubb as their executive committee, SAUJS said in a media release.
Recently, SAUJS sent a delegation to take part in a two-week leadership programme that featured attending the annual World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS) conference in Israel. During the trip, the delegation was exposed to a variety of different political viewpoints from various sectors of Israeli society.
The delegation returned home with a fresh and exciting new outlook on how to combat anti-Israel campaigns and sentiments on campuses around South Africa. With the new committee chosen and the varsity year about to start, SAUJS is ready for an exciting year ahead.
Pictured are the new SAUJS committee: Josh Todes (religious, UCT); Ashleigh Hill (national women officer); Chaya Pomeranz (WUJS); Yossi Singer (Wits); Ami Sonnenberg (national community officer); Gabriella Tobias (national media officer); Ariela Carno (national chairman); Harry Hoshovsky (national political officer). Not in the photo but on the committee, are Candice Sifris (national social officer; and Ariella Odes (national religious Officer).



KDVP Primary warmly welcomes its new pupils

To welcome the children at King David Victory Park Primary School for the new school year, Principal Jannie le Roux, invited them to enjoy juice and a doughnut with him at break.

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What’s On

Today, Friday (January 25)

• UZLC hosts photographer Ilan Ossendryver who will talk on “The Last of the Remaining Ethiopian Jews”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

• UZLC hosts Wendy Kahn, national director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, who will talk on: “2012 - The Year That Was”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

Sunday (January 27)

• ‘Jewish & Israeli Live Music’ with Roni Lea singing/keyboards, with songs of Eretz Israel, Yoram Gaon and army bands. Venue: Kosher Mi Vami, Glenhazel. Time: 13:00 till 16:00. Free entrance. Contact: (011) 440-4933.

• JHGC, UN Information Centre, and Liliesleaf Trust, hosts the “International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust”, with guest speaker Paul Goldreich, internationally-renowned psychologist. Venue: Liliesleaf, 7 George Avenue, Rivonia. Time: 15:00 for 15:30. Booking essential. Call Thuli (011) 640-3100 or thuli@jhbholocaust.co.za

Monday (January 28)

• UJW hosts retired Justice Ivor Schwartzman who will talk on “Politicians and the Law”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273-3044. Cost: R15 for the Friendship Luncheon Club and a R20 donation for lectures unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday (January 30)

• Balfour Park Parkinson’s Disease Support Group hosts Gisela Stanek, of the Parkinson’s Association of SA, who will speak on brain stimulation surgery in Parkinson’s Disease. Venue: The boardroom, Randjes Estate, Randjeslaagte Road, Highlands North. Time: 10:00. Contact: (011) 640-3919.

Friday (February 1)

• United Sisterhood has its book sale at the Benmore Gardens Shopping Centre. Unwanted books and magazines donations are gladly accepted. Contact: (011) 646-2409, fax (011) 646-4654.

Sunday (February 3)

• Second Innings hosts Tali Frankel who will speak on “Women Conquer Mountains”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for

10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

• UJW CT’s Simcha Group has arranged a DVD show. Donation: R40 (incl refreshments). Venue: Stonehaven, 7 Albany Road, Sea Point. Enquiries: 083-439-8006.

Monday (February 4)

• UJW hosts Wendy Kahn, national director of the SAJBD, who will speak on “2013 - New Horizons or New HorrORIZONS”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273-3044. Cost: R15 for the Friendship Luncheon Club and a R20 donation for lectures unless otherwise stated.

Tuesday (February 5)

• UJW presents “Santa’s Story” with Aviva Pelham. Venue: Theatre on the Square, Sandton. Time: 20:15. Donation: R180 per ticket. Booking: Margot 083-383-2986 or Barbara (011) 645-2591.

Wednesday (February 6)

• UJW CT’s adult education division hosts pathologist Dr Len Anstey, who will talk on “Medial Ethics and Religions”. Venue: Stonehaven, 7 Albany Road, Sea Point. Enquiries: 083-439-8006.

Sunday (February 10)

• Second Innings hosts geriatrician, Dr Stanley Lipschitz, who will speak on “Memory Loss and Memory Disorders”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Monday (February 11)

• UJW hosts ballet historian Jonathan Hurwitz, who will speak on “The Future of Ballet in South Africa”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273-3044. Cost: R15 for the Friendship Luncheon Club and a R20 donation for lectures unless otherwise stated.

Tuesday (February 12)

• Second Innings hosts Ernie Saks who will speak on “The Anglo Boer War and the Seven VCs won at Colenso”. Venue: Our Parents Home, Orchards. Time: 14:00 for 14:30. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Wednesday (February 13)

• WIZO Tzabar presents “Santa’s Story” with Aviva Pelham. Venue: Theatre on the Square, Sandton. Time: 20:15. Donation: R150 per ticket. Booking: Graciela on 082-925-0924 or e-mail at gskudi@gmail.com

• Chabad House hosts a series of events throughout the year. Chai Seniors - Holistic & Kabbalistic Nourishment”. Daily programmes: Men’s Kolel Mon-Fri at Chabad House Library, 09:00 -11:00, followed by lunch. Ladies Kolel Tuesdays & Thursdays. Special programmes: Mondays: Brain Worx with occupational therapist, Cynthia Liptz for brain exercises, 09:00 – 13:00. Both men and women welcome. Tuesdays: Guest lectures. For more info contact Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600 or e-mail rak@chabad.org.za

• WIZO Elise Gift Shop in the Genesis Shopping Centre, Fairmount, entrance from Bradfield Drive opposite Shula’s Bakery. Exciting range of baby gifts and gifts for all occasions available at reasonable prices. Hours: Mon - Thurs 09:00 - 17:00, Friday 09:00 - 13:30, Sunday 10:00 - 13:00. (011) 640-2760.

• Bnoth Zion Association WIZO is collecting anything of value for its store. Contact (021) 464-6729 or Linda Saban 072-245-3225 or Cherna Kred0 084-589-8588.

• Intimate Antiques Fair held on last Sunday of every month at Cedar Square corner Witkoppen/Cedar Avenue in Fourways, from 09:00 - 16:00. Contact Robyn 083-311-4768.

• The Selwyn Segal Shop has a huge selection of gifts ranging in price from R30 upwards. Visit them from Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 14:00. Phone (011) 640-6413 or (011) 640-5171. All proceeds to The Selwyn Segal Foundation for the Mentally Handicapped.

Armstrong has fallen on his own lance



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

I suppose that it is inevitable that Lance Armstrong would once again hit the news. This is not a subject I am really that keen to revisit, but I suppose, in the light of his recent interview with Oprah Winfrey, it will remain topical for quite some time.

The whole set-up posed a few questions. Why had he chosen Winfrey to do the interview? If he was looking for somebody who would not ask too many tough questions, Armstrong was wrong. Her first question was: “Did you ever take banned substances to enhance your cycling performance?”

Answer: “Yes.”

Question: “Was one of those banned substances EPO?”

Answer: “Yes.”

Question: “Did you ever blood dope or use blood transfusions to enhance your cycling performance?”

Answer: “Yes.”

Question: “Did you ever use any other banned substances such as testosterone, cortisone or human growth hormone?”

Answer: “Yes.”

Question: “In all seven of your Tour de France victories, did you ever take banned substances or blood dope?”

Answer: “Yes.”

So far, so good. The questions were direct and so were the answers.

She then went on: “Was it humanly possible to win the Tour de France without doping, seven times?”

Answer: “Not in my opinion. That generation; I didn’t invent the culture, but I didn’t try to stop the culture.”

From this point the interviews started going awry. Oprah said she had prepared well for the interview and had put together some 107 questions, most of which she was able to ask.

My problem with the interview is that all too often she failed to question the answers and on the odd occasion that she did, she just accepted those replies.

Question: “You said to me earlier you don’t think it was possible to win without doping?”

Answer: “Not in that generation. And I’m not here to talk about others in that generation. It’s been well-documented. I didn’t invent the culture, but I didn’t try to stop the culture, and that’s my mistake, and that’s what I have to be sorry for, and that’s what something... and the sport is now paying the price because of that. So I am sorry for that. I didn’t have access to anything else that nobody else did.”

She stops there. All Armstrong did was repeat what he had said earlier and expanded on the subject that he didn’t start the doping, that he wasn’t the only one doing it, and that the same drugs were freely available to everybody else.

Surely that is not acceptable. Just because there are other people out there cheating does not justify the fact that you yourself are cheating.

Then, as expected, the subject of his testicular cancer is brought up, not by Oprah, but by Armstrong himself, who once again subtly uses it as a cause for his behaviour.

Question: “How important was winning



Disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong in conversation with Oprah Winfrey.

to you and would you do anything to win at all costs?”

Armstrong: “It was win at all costs. When I was diagnosed (with cancer) I would do anything to survive. I took that attitude - win at all costs - to cycling. That’s bad. I was taking drugs before that but I wasn’t a bully.

“Before my diagnosis I was a competitor, but not a fierce competitor. When I was diagnosed, that turned me into a fighter. That was good. I took that ruthless win-at-all-costs attitude into cycling, which was bad.”

So his disease was to blame for the way he treated his teammates. When you start to analyse Armstrong’s words, one can see how on the one hand he is accepting that what he has done is wrong, but he is always producing “extenuating circumstances” in mitigation of guilt.

The question I have been asking myself is why did he do the interview? He could have just kept his mouth shut and there would still have been people who would have supported the “impression” that Armstrong was not a doper.

I think the answer became apparent when he said: “I deserve to be punished. I’m not sure I deserve a death penalty. I’d love the opportunity to compete, but that isn’t why I’m doing this. This might not be the most popular answer but I think I deserve it.”

No swindler (and that is exactly what Armstrong is) has the right to determine what punishment they do or don’t deserve. That is for the courts and the American Anti-Doping Association to decide on, not Armstrong. Despite his denials, Armstrong seems to believe that if he lays his cards on the table all will be forgiven and he should be allowed to compete in things like triathlons or mountain biking.

There is something about this man that indicates that not being allowed to be in the limelight is almost a death sentence to him. Had he come clean on his own a couple of years back, I would have said a four-year ban would be fair. But he not only used illegal substances but “bullied” teammates into using them. He was a facilitator - just like a drug pusher - and he deserves everything he’s got – and getting.

I am not sure what further legal pro-

cesses can be used, but he did submit court papers and I’m sure they were considered to be “under oath”. As a result, he could be found guilty of perjury.

But what will happen is that he will make a movie of his life (apparently that is already in the pipeline) write another book in which he will bare all, and make a few more million dollars to cover his losses.


To those who have taken the soft view, I say: “Don’t defend him!”


What Lance Armstrong has done is reprehensible and he deserves, as he has called it, the death penalty. It is sad, because he certainly was a great cyclist and personality but he abused his talent and the public and sponsors who supported him. Now it is time to pay the price.

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