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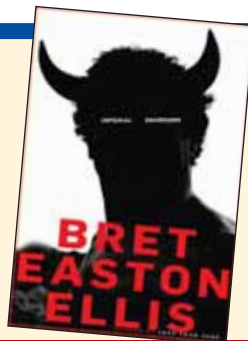


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Friday, 25 March 2011 / 19 Adar II, 5771

Volume 15 Number 11

University of Johannesburg cuts ties with Ben-Gurion University

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FALL FROM GRACE

Former Israeli President Moshe Katsav leaving a Tel Aviv courtroom on Tuesday after receiving a seven-year sentence for rape and other sexual offences. (PHOTOGRAPH: YOSSI ZELIGER/FLASH90) **PAGE 6**

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17:44	18:33	Durban
18:03	18:52	Bloemfontein
18:00	18:55	Port Elizabeth
17:56	18:46	East London



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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

On a full stomach



PARSHAT SHEMINI
Rabbi Yossi Chaikin
Oxford Synagogue

BEFORE WE sit down to enjoy a meal, we take a cup of water and pour its contents over our hands. Netilat Yadayim (or as it is called in this country, in a half-Afrikaans, half-Lithuanian accented Yiddish, “wassing”) is a centuries-old rabbinic precept to enable us to eat our daily bread in purity.

Less-known is the practice of Mayim Acharonim, which is done at the end of the meal, just before bensching (“Birkat Hamazon”). At this stage water is poured over the fingertips. There was a form of salt, known as Sodomite salt, that sometimes made its way into food.

While it was harmless if ingested, contact with eyes caused blindness. It was therefore essential to remove any potential traces of this salt from our fingers before rising from the table, lest we accidentally rub our eyes and damage our vision.

Sodomite salt is unheard of nowadays. So why do we still religiously rinse fingers at the end of meals? Perhaps it still exists, in a somewhat altered form.

Sodom is the ancient city mentioned in the Book of Bereishit. It was a corrupt society and was met with total Divine annihilation. Her sin? Her fate was not sealed because of the eponymous perverse behaviour usually associated with this city.

Sodom was located in the most fertile area of the Jordan valley at that time. Its inhabitants were very wealthy and wanted to preserve their prosperity at all costs. It became the anti-welfare state.

Sharing was unheard of, visitors were unwelcome, hospitality was banned and charity became a criminal offence. Such a civilisation had no future and was eliminated by Hashem.

The formerly lush and fruitful fields became a desolate wasteland, covered in sulphur and salt, where growth would not be possible. Lot’s wife, who disobeyed the instruction not to look back as she fled the city, was turned, of all things, into a pillar of (you’ve guessed it) salt.

Her real offence: when her husband had secretly harboured guests she, a Sodomite through and trough, had cynically run around the neighbourhood asking to borrow some salt for her husband’s visitors. Her intention was to publicise Lot’s flaunting of local custom. In so doing she placed host and company in mortal danger.

Before the meal, when our stomachs are grumbling, it is easier for us to be attuned to the requirements of those less fortunate. If a beggar knocks on the door, pleading that he is hungry, he is likely to be given a generous response.

On a full stomach, it is different story. Having fully enjoyed our own repast, it is more difficult to be sensitive to the needs of others. That is when the “Sodomite salt” can get stuck to our fingers and “blind” our eyes to our fellow’s hunger. Mayim Acharonim are poured over our hands at the end of the meal to remind us how dangerous this form of loss of sight is indeed.

One of the final verses in this week’s Torah portion enjoins us: “You shall sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy.” The Talmud in Berachot explains the tautology as follows: “You shall sanctify yourselves” is a reference to washing before meals. “You shall be holy” is talking about “Mayim Acharonim”.

To be pure while we are eating is of primordial importance - to sustain holiness even after we get up from the table is even more imperative.



Brixton Jewish Cemetery tells a sad tale of neglect

RITA LEWIS
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

“WHERE HAVE all the flowers gone, long time passing” are words of a song that could well be used in connection with the decay of the Brixton Cemetery where the wreaths of flowers have long since faded away and nothing but grass and weeds grow between the stones.

It is not just the grass that causes the visitor to feel dismay, it is the sight of the vandalised Ohel, its walls decayed and an air of neglect pervading the entire area.

At the moment the Ohel is home to vagrants. All the inside walls are filthy and blackened from fires; and rubbish lies strewn everywhere. Washing hangs out to dry over the tops of gravestones.

Why, when there is a specific Country Communities Department of the SAJBD with its own rabbi, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft to look after all the now defunct country cemeteries, has this one been allowed to deteriorate so much?

Through financial constraints, there isn’t a security guard to watch over it.

The once beautiful edifice in the historically significant Brixton Cemetery, across the corner of Crouse Street and Brixton Drive, is destroyed and wasted in a cemetery which was laid out in 1912 and opened in 1914 - although the first Jewish person, Susman Abrahamson aged 49, was buried there only in 1921.

Jewish burials continued to take place there, especially where there was a site reserved, but from the 1940s, most Jews

were buried in the West Park Cemetery.

Brixton Jewish Cemetery has a large section for children, mostly without headstones, as the children were stillborn, or had not been named when they died, and there is also a section for Reform Jews.

A war monument near the main entrance, commemorates the SA soldiers who died in the First World War. Along the main drive, there is a second First World War monument in memory of the South African Scottish regiment.

Today, the Chevrah Kadisha has an easily accessed database of every burial which has taken place in West Park - now the major Jewish cemetery.

For people wishing to find where their loved ones are buried, the records of the Brixton and Braamfontein cemeteries, are small and easy to look up.

It is interesting to note that the graves in the Brixton Cemetery are in date order, so it is fairly easy to find specific graves and family plots – assuming one has the dates handy and wishes to go there.

Recently however, vagrants have taken over the cemetery, headstones have been broken and there is graffiti everywhere.

There are gaping holes in the perimeter fence. People use the cemetery as a thoroughfare between Vrededorp and Mayfair. Headstones lie face down or broken.

Since the vandalism, the Chevrah Kadisha warns it is no longer safe to visit the Brixton Cemetery and the gates have been locked. Anyone wishing to visit the cemetery may do so accompanied by a member of their staff.



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UJ severs ties with BGU in water reclamation projects

ALISON GOLDBERG

THE UNIVERSITY of Johannesburg Senate decided on Wednesday to terminate formal ties with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The matter went to a secret ballot with 72 in favour and 45 against. Four abstained, according to the South African Union of Jewish Students, Wednesday evening. The decision takes effect from April 1.

Talking to the SAJR on the eve of the Senate meeting, UJ deputy vice-chancellor Research, Innovation and Advancement, Professor Adam Habib (pictured), said the decision on whether to continue ties with Ben-Gurion in joint water reclamation projects, rested on efforts over the past six months by both parties to evolve the UJ-BGU tie into a three-way relationship with a Palestinian university. This was the recommendation originally of BGU.

In the pursuit of a tripartite relationship, a site visit by UJ representatives, including Habib and Vice Chancellor Ihron Rensburg, to BGU and Palestinian institutions, was undertaken in January. Palestinian institutions were not prepared to enter into such a tripartite agreement.

South African Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (SAABGU) executive director Brenda Stern, called the vote a “day of shame for academic freedom in South Africa. The decision by less than half of the UJ Senate members eligible to vote, casts serious doubt on the credibility of this decision,” she said.

“BGU will respond to this decision



and make a statement in due course. The SAABGU has grave concerns about how this matter has been handled by UJ’s management, playing politics with researchers, university students’ careers and the health of South Africans.”

BGU had fulfilled its mandate by finding a Palestinian

academic expert in water research, according to SAABGU. But he has since received death threats.

The three options on the table for the Senate’s consideration were:

- to amend the Senate’s resolution - seeking a Palestinian university as a third party - to allow for a Palestinian individual or NGO to take its place;
- consider separate, bilateral relations with BGU and Palestinian universities; or
- to let the relationship lapse between UJ and BGU and consider any further partnerships on an individual basis.

While it was obviously not possible to anticipate beforehand how the Senate would finally deliberate on the matter, Habib believed the real debate would be on the last two options.

Dasantha Pillay of the UJ Petition Committee who issued a release following the Senate decision, said the Senate found there to be “significant evidence that BGU has research and other engagements that support the military and armed forces of Israel, in particular in its occupation of Gaza”. This statement could not be corroborated.

Pillay called the severing of relations a landmark moment in the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel. The move-

ment to end ties with BGU began with the advent of the UJ petition (www.ujpetition.com) signed by over 400 South African academics, including nine vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors, she said.

After an attempt by the BDS campaigners at UJ last week Wednesday to hijack the fact-finding mission of the UJ academics to Israel - a meeting Habib knew nothing about, and the circulation of yet another petition to academics to break ties between UJ and BGU - Wits Postgraduate Association chairman, Serge Tshibangu expressed concern over an e-mail that had been doing the rounds on the Wits database.

“It is a document from four individuals who are not part of the Wits community but seem to have used official Wits e-mail channels. It asks staff to sign a petition encouraging UJ to cut ties with BGU.

Says Tshibangu: “We have been approached by our postgraduate colleagues at the University of Johannesburg to convey their deep sense of worry on this matter.

“Already because of this petition postgraduate students at UJ have had their masters and PhD funding cut and their research indefinitely delayed.

“Their work involves issues pertaining to water purification. This includes ground-breaking technologies not available in South Africa that have the potential to save many lives in this country.

“However, this issue goes beyond that of UJ. Partners in this research also include Ivy League universities in the US. This petition... would crush expansion of this research and others like it in all universities in the country.

“It will lead to less funding, a tarnished reputation and the isolation of South African academia. It is for this reason that Higher Education South Africa, the representative body of all universities in South Africa, voted not to have this discussed on their agenda last year.”

Bomb in Jerusalem: 1 dead, 39 injured



Emergency personnel responding to the scene of a bomb explosion near a bus station in the centre of Jerusalem, March 23, 2011. (KOBİ GIDEON/FLASH90/JTA)

JERUSALEM – One person was killed and at least 39 injured when a bomb exploded in central Jerusalem on Wednesday afternoon.

The attack took place shortly before 15:00. One of the injured went straight to surgery at Hadassah Hospital; five others were reported in moderate condition.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said following the attack that he would delay a planned trip to Moscow.

Police say the bomb was left in a bag in a telephone booth next to a busy bus stop along a main artery in central Jerusalem near the International Convention Centre and about a block from the city’s central bus terminal. The blast blew the windows out of two buses picking up passengers.

The entrance to the city of Jerusalem was closed following the explosion.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom threatened to launch a new operation against Gaza in the wake of increased shelling on Israel’s south.

“The period of restraint is over; we must do everything we can to strike out against those who wish to hurt the innocent,” said Shalom on a visit to a site in Beersheba struck by two long-range Grad rockets on Wednesday.

“I hope it won’t come to another Operation Cast Lead, but if there is no other choice we will launch another operation.” (JTA)



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Rabbi Moshe Schnerb who gave a superb rendition of the megilla, with Leslie Harris.

SOCIAL SCENE

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Ariela Jacks; Kayla Buchalter hidden inside her cut-out box and Shira Sacke.

Rain couldn't dampen Purim spirit

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

PURIM 2011/5771 was a time of celebratory dressing up, of noise, eating and drinking and of course hearing the megilla being read to remind Jews everywhere how their ancestors' lives were saved by Queen Esther in Shushan.

Thousand of years later in Johannesburg, it was a time of hats and headgear: curly acrylic wigs of all shapes and sizes interspersed here and there with an assortment of hats - the crazier and more brightly coloured, the better.

This year there virtually were no clowns, fewer King Ahazuer-

uses, few wand-waving fairies, princesses, batmen and even fewer Hamans. It seems there are fashions in fancy-dress too!

No "lions" or "tigers" stalked the streets of the city as they did last year - but then "cats" are not too fond of the rain - and rain there was aplenty.

Functions and seudot were planned and held in shuls, halls, schools and homes catering for adults, children and teens. Entertainment in the form of singers, magicians, conjurers and discos was laid on for adults with sufficient food and drink for everyone, while jumping castles, rides, balloons and magic shows kept youngsters busy.

A good time was had by all, but

everything arranged for the afternoon and early evening was totally washed out. Braais were held inside as gardens became soggy messes as the rain and storms lashed the city.

One good thing was, however, that those rabbis and others reading the megilla did not become hoarse in the "non-existent" hot weather.

At the HOD Centre, the megilla was once again read for the public by Rabbi Moshe Schnerb who asked the gathering to leave a donation for the poor in the box by the door. (This was virtually full of notes when everyone left).

Rabbi Schnerb's "Purim Production" is gathering a growing number of devotees every



Tova Feldman; Rachel Goldberg; Rochie Weber; Sarah Jacobson; Chedvah Cohen; and Lisa Jacobsberg.

year.

He delights his mostly adult audience by highlighting the reading with theatrical elements and musical dynamics, turning the words into living emotions by varying the tempo, nuances and cadences of his reading.

Another unique feature is that some sentences are sung to appropriate and well-known tunes and he always reads the last lines to the tune of Hatikvah.

He has started a new vogue which is catching on with other megilla readers.



Chava Goldberg gives the thumbs up for Purim.



Tamara Nussbaum and Lial Azaraf.



Benjamin Marks shows off his cockscomb.



Rebbetzen Wendy Hendler celebrates the day with verve.



Akiva Fox with Andy and Adam Marks.



Left: Ashley Lazarus with Rebbetzen Marice Gerson; Odette Livshitz; and Gaby Lazarus.



Dorit Rothschild with a masked Sheila Bogarti.

Northcliff's match made in heaven

OWN CORRESPONDENT PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

WHAT NACHAS! The Northcliff Shul celebrated the marriage of Moses Tshabalala of Venda to Yentl

Shmaltzberg of Johannesburg this past Saturday night on Purim evening.

Though genetically proven to be descended from a long line of Cohens, the groom's father Justice



Jacob Zuma; King Moshoeshoe V (Stan Ellis); Sharon Shmaltzberg (Rodney Salkinder - partially obscured); Justice Tshabalala, (Rabbi Pesach Fishman); Yentl Shmaltzberg (Karsten Bannier); Moses Tshabalala (Ziona Dobriner); Beauty Tshabalala (Nachana Fishman); Mervyn Shmaltzberg (Sharon Gomer); Glenn Agliotti (Wayne Gomer); and the chazzan (Louis Neutel).

Tshabalala had undergone conversion on the advice of the wise rabbis and to satisfy the demands of Yentl's family.

The clash and melding of African and Jewish traditions and cultures raised many crises and laughs, as Chatan and Kallah introduced their bashert to their respective families. Questions of lobola, caterers and dresses, were all amicably resolved.

Thankfully the wedding went off without a hitch, thanks to specially composed Sheva Brachot and other songs sung to the tunes of Shoshaloza, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika and If I Were a Rich Man. Joyous dancing followed the ceremony which was consecrated by the traditional drink machau in a special traditional cup.

Gracing the occasion were Jacob Zuma, Schabir Shaik, Julius Malema, Glenn Agliotti and many African chiefs accompanied by their wives, children and grandchildren.

The Shidduch was made by committee member Sharon Gomer, who also directed the wedding. Catering was provided by Thandi and the Shul's Ladies' Guild.

We are pleased to report that the couple are now enjoying their honeymoon in Orlando. Soweto that is, not Florida.

Purim (in Persian style) in Pretoria

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH: DIANE WOLFSON PRETORIA

PURIM IN Pretoria was certainly a freiliche affair, celebrated as "Purim in Persia" which set the scene with camel rides, hennaed hands and typical food. Even the late onset of rain did not manage to dampen the joy and celebrations for the large crowd, with numerous visitors from Johannesburg and surrounding areas.



Gavin, Sharin, Gina, Romy and Jesse Yuter won the main prize, arriving as the full range of Johnnie Walker whiskys.

When Gerbi decided no more ‘Mr Nice Guy’

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

IN 1967, there were some 5 000 Jews in Libya, 50 000 having left since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In the wake of the Six Day War, Libya’s King Idris told the Jewish community that he could not guarantee their safety and that they should “just leave”. Among the refugees who headed for Italy, hopeful of returning some day, was the 12-year-old David Gerbi. Today, the psychotherapist and Jungian analyst, divides his time between Italy and Israel and conducts seminars internationally on dream interpretation.

As an actor and dancer, he mounted a

one-man show titled “Making Peace with Gaddafi” in 2006 and has performed it in theatres around the world. “I see now how wrong I was,” he comments. “We lived in a place that tolerated us,” he recalled of his life in Libya, with the constant fear of retaliation. Gerbi was addressing a gathering at the home of Viv Anstey, during a visit to this country, arranged by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. When Muammar Gaddafi came to power in 1969, he declared that the Jews would not be allowed to return to the country and that all their property was to be confiscated. When trying to renew his mother’s passport many years later, Gerbi discovered an aunt who they thought was dead, living as the last Jew in Libya. After writing to Gaddafi, he was invited by the ruler to come

and visit her. In return, the dictator asked Gerbi to “help normalise” his country’s relationship with the United States and in what he refers to as an “unspoken agreement, perhaps in the future also with Israel”. Despite American Jewish leaders’ cynicism, Gerbi was treated “more than a VIP” on a visit to Libya. He had, however, been shocked at the state of the Jewish facilities and resolved to “redo” them. A highway had been built over one of the cemeteries and another was being used as a dumping ground. “Inside I was revolted,” he recalled, “but I had to keep calm.” But he was later detained, subjected to “psychological torture” and expelled from the country, while the six mezzuzot that he had brought for the synagogue, were confiscated. In middle 2009, Gerbi was invited to meet Gaddafi in Rome, which he did, arriving for the encounter wearing “a big Magen David” which was “very vulgar, but I didn’t care. We spoke again about (restoring) the synagogue - he said it would be okay, but nothing happened.”

Following the uprising in Libya last month, Gerbi says: “I totally changed my position and started to speak without fear of retaliation. Before, I was a peace activist - sweet, nice, kind and forgiving. “I saw that that identity didn’t bring results, just exploitation. When we are a victim or have a fear of retaliation, we are giving power to the other,” he added. “The moment we speak up, we take from their power. I have started to believe that there are people who are evil,” he said of the Libyan dictator. Gerbi’s wish is to enable the Jewish community to return, get Libyan passports, get back property that was confiscated and take relatives’ remains to Israel for reburial. He hopes to see the synagogue restored as testament to the Jewish community’s 2 000-year presence in Libya. • Gerbi spoke at the Humanities Graduate Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand. He also held a workshop at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, and did extensive media in both cities, including SAFM, e•tv, Channel Africa, 702 and SABC TV.



Dr Barbara Lewis; Libyan Jew Dr David Gerbi; and Ronnie Gotkin.

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Katsav: The shame and the pride

BOTH SADNESS and pride are evoked by the sentencing in the Tel Aviv District Court on Tuesday of former Israeli president Moshe Katsav to seven years in prison and two years' probation for rape and sexual harassment.

The sadness comes from the spectacle of a man from humble beginnings who reached such great heights, falling so ignominiously and publicly to the depths of shame. The pride comes from seeing the proof that Israeli democracy and its justice system really works. Nobody is above the law, regardless of rank or stature.

Judge George Karra, reading the argument for sentencing, said: "Katsav's high rank can't be taken to his credit - on the contrary, it makes his acts more severe... The higher the rank, the greater the disappointment... It is Katsav's high rank that makes this case unique, not the crimes themselves."

Looking at Israel's regional context, it is instructive to compare Israel's Katsav case and the current upheaval in the surrounding countries, most of which live under dictatorships where it is almost inconceivable that a president would be jailed like this - the dictator determines the law. Israelis can hold their heads high, despite the shame of Katsav's crime.

Hopefully, Israeli women will be much empowered by this judgment. The macho politician, army officer or other such figure who attempts to intimidate young women into granting sexual favours, will henceforth know that it may come back to haunt him years later, as it did for none other than a president of the country.

For South Africans, it is natural to juxtapose this Israeli case with the situation here - does the law apply equally to all? How prevalent is rape?

South Africa is advanced constitutionally, with a tradition of powerful women playing a huge role politically, in business and other areas. Pillars of strength like Albertina Sisulu, Helen Suzman and others come to mind. We have more women in business than numerous other countries.

An iconic historical example of women's action was the march of thousands of women in 1956 to the Union Buildings to protest the pass laws.

Yet, sadly, South Africa has nothing to be proud of - indeed, much to be ashamed of - on the issue of rape. It is a gigantic scourge here, contrary to the powerful ethos of our legendary women.

A 1996 survey of reported rape cases in 120 Interpol-member countries ranks South Africa as the country with the highest number, registering 119,5 per 100 000 population. By comparison, Botswana had 68,5, Swaziland 59,4, the United States 36,1, Sweden 18,2, England and Wales 8,8, and Spain 2,9 (Interpol cautions about the use to which figures are put, since data collection measures may differ from country to country).

Figures from other sources show that some 40 per cent of reported rape cases here were of children under the age of 18.

The trauma goes further, into the aftermath of rape, where women rape victims may be told they brought it upon themselves because they "dressed provocatively" or they "led him on". They often have difficulty even laying charges or opening a docket at the police - or the case is never actually investigated.

The Katsav judgment is likely to become something of a "cultural shift" in Israeli society. Opposition leader Tzipi Livni said on Tuesday that a day in which a president of the State of Israel goes to jail for rape "is not a day of joy", but she hoped Israel was changing because of this case, and there would henceforth be "practical content" to the concept of "equality before the law".

The case is now a solid legal precedent which every Israeli is aware of. Israeli women have been given the power to say not only "no", but also "beware".

We need something dramatic like this in South Africa - our own very public watershed legal case, our own "cultural shift" - if we are to begin turning our appalling rape statistics around.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Katsav sentencing shows Israeli leaders are not above law

MARCY OSTER
JERUSALEM

FORMER ISRAELI President Moshe Katsav's sentence to prison on rape and sexual assault convictions, shows that not even the country's leaders are above the law, Israeli leaders have stressed.

A panel of three Tel Aviv District Court judges on Tuesday sentenced Katsav to seven years in jail and ordered him to pay compensation. The sentence came nearly five years after he was first accused.

Katsav, 65, reportedly began sobbing after the verdict was read and then yelled out several times, interrupting the judges, saying: "It's all lies", "the sentence is a mistake" and "it's not true".

Katsav's prison sentence is set to begin on May 8. He was also ordered to pay more than \$28 000 to the rape victim and about \$7 000 to the sexual assault victim. Following his release from prison, Katsav will serve two years' probation.

"The defendant committed the crime and like every other person, he must bear the consequences. No man is above the law," the judges wrote in their sentence, which was read out in the courtroom.

"The contention that seeing a former president of the country go to jail is too painful to watch is an emotional argument, but it definitely cannot be accepted as an ethical argument."

In a minority opinion, Judge Judith Shevach said that Katsav was judged prematurely in the media; she slammed Attorney Gen Menachem Mazuz for his public statements during the investigation.

"The attorney general isn't supposed to operate in the media arena," Shevach said. "If he already decided in 2006 that Katsav was a sexual offender - what else can the public decide?" Premature judgment of the accused by the media put him in a shaky opening position."

Katsav has 45 days to appeal. "This is an extraordinary day in the State of Israel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said following the sentencing. "This is a day of sadness and shame, but it is also a day of deep appreciation and pride for the Israeli justice system.

"The court issued a sharp and unequivocal ruling on a simple principle, that of equality before the law; nobody is above the law, not even a former president, all are subject to the law. This distinguishes the State of Israel to a very large degree."

Netanyahu said the court also ruled on equality between men and women. "Every woman has the right to her body, the right to respect and freedom, and nobody has the right to take these from her. This also distinguishes the State of Israel to a very large degree."

The closed-door trial of Katsav lasted one year, ending with a guilty verdict on December 30. Two years ago, Katsav declined what was seen as a lenient plea bargain - one that dropped the rape charges for lesser charges and likely would have left him with a suspended sentence - saying he wanted to clear his name in court.

Katsav, who immigrated to Israel from Iran in 1951, became president when the Knesset elected him in 2000, upsetting candidate Shimon Peres. Peres became

president in 2007 after Katsav resigned in the wake of the allegations shortly before the end of his term.

The allegations came to light when Katsav went to the attorney general, telling him that he was being blackmailed by a female employee. The investigation turned against Katsav when the employee alleged rape and sexual harassment.

During a meeting with soldiers in northern Israel, Peres said he did not think a bust of Katsav should be removed from the President's residence.

"You mustn't change history, for good or for bad," Peres said. "History is full of bad and good things."

Opposition leader Tzipi Livni, head of the Kadima Party, said the harsh sentence did not make it "a happy day".

"A day when a president of the State of Israel goes to prison for rape is not happy. You can't negate the presidency after the fact, but you can deny liberty," she said, referring to the prison sentence.

The lawyer representing "A", the former Tourism Ministry employee raped by Katsav, said following the sentencing that his client was "relieved and satisfied".

"I never sought vengeance, and the severity of the sentence did not mean that much to me," "A" told Ynet.

"The most important thing for me was the verdict, the fact that the court, unanimously, believed me and did me justice, even if it was stalled. I shall be happy to return to my daily life, family and anonymity."

Katsav is not the first president of Israel to be accused of a crime. President Ezer Weizman resigned his position in 2000, less than halfway through his second term, after being accused of accepting cash gifts from businessmen. He was not put on trial, however, since the statute of limitations had run out. (JTA)

Gay community's rift over 'flotilla' fundraiser

NATHAN GUTTMAN
NEW YORK (THE FORWARD)

THEY'VE LONG faced off on college campuses and in the media, and now Israel's supporters and detractors are in a pitched battle for the hearts and minds of the gay and lesbian community.

This fight bubbled over earlier in March when New York's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Centre cancelled a pro-Palestinian group's event for which the centre had rented space. The cancellation followed complaints from supporters of Israel in the gay community.

The centre's move set off a heated dispute within the gay community. In this debate and elsewhere, Israel and its supporters are highlighting the Jewish State's progressive attitude toward gay and lesbian issues. Pro-Palestinian voices, meanwhile, accuse Israel of "pink-washing" its conflict with the Palestinians.

"This is considered to be a use of gay and lesbian rights in order to deflect from, and justify, the widespread decimation of basic human rights for other populations, or even for minority queer populations," said Judith Butler, professor of rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley and an influential figure in the field of queer theory, in an e-mail.

Butler has criticised the LGBT Community Centre for cancelling the March 5 event, titled "A Party to End Apartheid". The event was organised by a group called Siege Busters in order to raise money for another flotilla to Gaza. It was part of a nationwide set of events hosted by various groups under the banner of Israel Apartheid Week.

News of the planned event brought the LGBT Community Centre under fire from supporters of Israel. Michael Lucas, one of America's leading producers of gay porn movies and a right-leaning columnist at The Advocate, a leading gay publication, was the most outspoken, calling on donors to boycott the centre if it did not cancel the event, which he described as anti-Semitic.

"At first I thought this was a joke," he said. "Israel is the only country in the Middle East that supports gay rights, while its enemies round up, torture and condemn gay people to death."

Lucas's threat of boycott and complaints from other gay Jews eventually led the LGBT Community Centre to call off the event. In a statement, the centre's executive director, Glendna Testone, said the dispute surrounding the event "began to distract from our core mission".

Many supporters of Israel in the gay community applauded the centre's move. But the cancellation also brought accusations of censorship, with a number of prominent gay activists signing a petition protesting the centre's decision.

On the day that the event had been scheduled to take place, a group of 150 pro-Palestinian activists staged a protest outside the centre.

"Personally, I would not want to be part of a queer community that does not support rights for every person, including Palestinians," said Hannah Mermelstein, an activist with Adalah-NY, a group that supports boycotting Israel. "For me this does not square with the values of the LGBT community."

Supporters of the Palestinian cause within the gay community argue Israel and its supporters are deliberately trying to shift discussion toward gay rights in Israel instead of talking about the conflict with the Palestinians.

"This is the core of pink-washing," Mermelstein said. "My question is, so what? Does this mean that people should support Israel and not the Palestinians?"

But supporters of Israel disagree. "Pink-washing is a fundamental misnomer because there is nothing to wash," said David Kaufman, a New York-based journalist who has covered Israeli culture and society for the past decade.

"Israel actually is progressive when it comes to LGBT rights. So there is nothing to wash. You can't pink-wash a fact."

An interactive map on Amnesty International's website drives home this point. It shows Israel as the only country in the region that not only refrains from legally persecuting gays and lesbians, but also has laws preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation, allows gay and lesbians to serve in the military, and permits gay adoption.

All Arab countries surrounding Israel, including the Palestinian Authority, limit

the rights of gays and lesbians.

Butler, however, called it "simplistic and false" to assert that Palestinians are homophobic and Israelis are not. She said that there are "modes of living as queer" within Palestinian areas and "modes of virulent homophobia among right-wing religious people" in Israel.

Israel's liberal approach to gay issues is viewed both by Israeli diplomats and pro-Israel activists as an asset in its campaign to brand Israel progressive.

Israel's consulate in New York has been actively pursuing this agenda.

Ido Aharoni, Israel's consul general in New York, is the driving force behind Israel's branding effort and the idea of focusing public diplomacy on issues beyond the Israeli-Arab conflict.

"Branding means that it is just as important for Israel to be attractive as it is to be right," Aharoni said.

He added that the gay community is "one niche among many we are trying to reach out to", and stressed that by doing so Israel is talking to each community "about issues they care about".

Aharoni says the gay community is part of the "progressive elite" with which Israel sees special value in forging ties. "These are trend-setters," he said.

Stressing Israel's openness to gay issues is seen as an opportunity to build bridges to liberal and left-wing circles that have grown increasingly critical of Israel.

The Jewish community has also been quick to follow up on the issue. A flyer produced by the Anti-Defamation League for campus activists asks: "Which of the Middle East nations protects the legal rights, safety and freedom of the LGBT communities?" The answer, in bold pink letters: "Only Israel".

The battle over Israel in the gay community is playing out abroad as well.

In Toronto, Mayor Rob Ford announced that he was pulling municipal support for a gay pride week planned for June because of the participation of a group called Queers Against Israeli Apartheid. And in Berlin, pro-Palestinian gay activists protested Israel's exhibition at the city's international travel trade show, which featured the Tel Aviv Gay Vibe cam.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS – FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Guard against Itamar-type hatred taking root in SA

THE REACTION on the Palestinian street to the Itamar atrocity would seem to have been fairly muted, at least in the West Bank. Unlike in Gaza, where the murders were publicly celebrated with the usual raucous glee, the official stance at least was to condemn the action.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas did this quite eloquently, in fact, while going by the tweet-blog buzz, many ordinary Palestinians would likewise seem to have been genuinely appalled. It is very different from how the killers of Tali Hatuel and her four daughters a few years ago were officially lauded as heroes and martyrs.

Could it be that this shows a genuine revulsion towards terrorism is taking root among West Bank Palestinians, not merely because it is tactically counter-productive but because it is in and of itself morally repugnant?

Alas, Abbas' official words of condemnation on the latest incident belie a very different reality. Certainly, the Arafatian strategy of feigning co-operation in combating terrorism, while busily fomenting it as much as possible behind the scenes, has been abandoned, doing much to ensure that the Israel-West Bank border has been mercifully quiet over the past three to four years.

What has decidedly not changed, however, has been the culture of incitement to violence and hatred that continues to permeate Palestinian society.

The Itamar killers were the products of such a society. Whether in



BARBARIC YAWP

David Saks

their schools or mosques, in the media, in popular culture (ranging from websites to something as trivial as crossword puzzles) or by their political leaders, they were relentlessly taught that Jews epitomised everything that was evil and that their slaughter was therefore a boon to humankind.

No normal person would wish to know what was going through the mind of the man who bent down to hack the Fogel baby to bits, but the hatred, demonisation and glorification of violence that permeates the environment in which he was raised will undoubtedly have been a substantial part of it.

For PA spokespeople to express outrage after the fact, is all very well, but what about their silence - and sometimes more than silence - when it comes to fostering a culture where the very things they condemn are overtly promoted?

What the Palestinians surely need to do is move beyond their own festering grievance culture for once and engage in some serious introspection. Presumably, no-one halfway normal can feel proud to be part of a society that breeds such monsters as the Itamar killers.

It is numbingly awful enough to be confronted with the brutal

deaths of five innocent Jews, three of them children. Is it even possible, then, to consider how during the Rwanda genocide an equivalent atrocity took place virtually every minute for a full month?

There, too, the massacres did not just happen; they were preceded by months of virulent hate-mongering in the media, particularly over the radio, against the intended Hutu victims.

Jews know perhaps better than any other people that in order to justify mass murder, one must first deny the prospective victims their humanity. Once people have been fitted into a designated category of evil – “Killers of Our L-rd”, “sub-humans”, “descendants of pigs and monkeys”, “enemies of the Revolution”, “parasites”, “bloodsuckers”, “a cancer” - destroying them en masse is no longer a crime, but a necessary act of cleansing.

In the decade preceding the transition to democracy, large segments of South African society came close to being similarly torn asunder by hatred of “the other”, whether this was based on ideology, ethnicity, tribalism or simply fear and rumour.

Officially around 25 000 people, most of them black, were killed in internecine violence in rural (then) Natal and the various Witwatersrand townships.

The real figure would have been a great deal higher. A big part of the “South African Miracle” of April 1994 was how this all ceased practically overnight. Up until the elections, over 300 people were dying in

politically-related violence each month. In the 17 years that have since passed, I don't think that politically-related killings have amounted to even half that number.

A disturbing development of late is how much the cracks in the country's non-racial facade are starting to widen. In other democratic countries, it is considered unacceptable to defame or threaten ethnic minorities, but in South Africa those taboos would seem to be breaking down.

It is not merely denigrating but actually threatening when ethnic minorities like the Indians and Coloureds are described by a spokesman from the dominant racial caste as “over-represented” and an obstacle to black economic advancement.

As for “Kill the Boer, kill the farmer”, this is incitement to racial murder, regardless of that chant's “Struggle” origins. That thousands of white farmers have in fact been murdered since 1994, should make the criminality of such a slogan a given, yet the ruling party chooses rather to push for its legalisation.

Certainly, things are nowhere near as bad at this point as they were in pre-genocide Rwanda, pre-Kristallnacht Germany or Gaza. The danger, though, is that precisely because the anti-minority sentiments are comparatively mild right now, people will choose simply to squirm and then move on.

Given how easily negative stereotypes of “the other” can become broadly accepted if not vigorously challenged from the outset, this is, to say the least, short-sighted.

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

DUTCH SOCCER PLAYER RUES ANTI-SEMITIC CHANTS

DEN HAAG - A Dutch soccer player has apologised for chanting anti-Semitic slogans caught on camera following a victory over a team with traditional Jewish support.

Lex Immers of the Dutch ADO Den Haag team apologised on Monday in a statement on the team's website for the remarks made in a bar with team fans.

Immers was caught on camera chanting “we're going to hunt for Jews”, referring to the fans of the opposing team, Ajax, which is identified with Amsterdam's Jewish community.

“I got carried away in the euphoria of a special win and at that moment was unaware of the offensive tone to an entire nation,” Immers said in a statement. “I regret it and will accept the penalty imposed on me.

“When I sing ‘We're going to hunt for Jews’, I mean that we want to beat Ajax. Nothing more, nothing less. The slogan ‘We're going to hunt for Jews’ seemed innocent,” he also said in an interview in Voetbal International.

The team is investigating the incident and told ESPN that Immers would receive the maximum fine. (JTA)



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South Africa and Israel – A shared tomorrow

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Joburg Theatre,
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Nelson Mandela, Bizet’s
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(011) 877-6800. In the People’s
Theatre, “Pinocchio” until
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Lyric Theatre, Gold Reef
City, Ormonde: “Streets of
Gold”, written by Alan
Swerdlow, directed by Vicky
Friedman, ends April 3, (011)
248-5168.

Maker, Parkwood: Jonah
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Market, Newtown: In the
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REVIEWED BY PAUL BOEKKOOI
PHOTOGRAPH BY RUPHIN COUDYZER

OPERA AFRICA’S current staging of Carmen is stupendous. There’s a real and continuous synergy on a mission between those extremely diverse elements which make up what we call opera. The linking of those basics should make sense before a whole new artistic entity can be created which, in many ways, can reflect a magical universe all of its own.
It’s quite unlike any production we’ve seen in the past locally, on film or on DVD. This one is strongly character-driven without ever under-estimating the often predominant influence of the crowd scenes on the tragic story as a whole.



A confrontation between (from left) Don José (Noah Stewart); Remendado (Phenye Modiane); and Frasquita (Friedel Mitas); Carmen (Christina Nassif) is on the ground.

But within them there are individuals who complete the picture. The way in which they become instrumental in the outcome of this tragedy is handled with incisive insight and detail through James Marvel’s stage directions. One’s only reservation is exactly why he put Carmen and Don José on centre stage during the final act while the crowds can hear every word and watch every move. The interpersonal level of the drama which traditionally plays itself out behind the bullfighting arena, is now lost. It becomes a kind of display.
It might just be that Marvel wanted to break with the preceding extreme realism in combina-tion with a tasteful pinpointing of the “opéra comique” elements to create a jerking finale in which he confronts us with a verisimilitude of happenings reflecting extreme obsessions.
Let’s get closer to the music and the singing. Cristina Nassif is an all-encompassing Carmen. She’s magnetic, has the “physique du rôle”, meaning she’s an athletic creature who stalks, captures and discards her prey, striding the stage and José with equal aplomb.
Her beautifully warm and flexible soprano voice took us through all the alluring emotions the character is capable of. She even managed her lower register well – quite gorgeous in much of the Card Song.
As Don José the other American principal, Noah Stewart, manages fully to suggest the vast emotional life’s journey he has to take: from a dedicated son to a murderer. He is intensely memorable.
Often sweetening and lightening his voice, he sang the Flower Song in a way that is all his own. That final, desperate “cri de coeur” of an anti-hero as the curtain drops on Act IV, was spine-chilling.
Kelebogile Boikanyo’s Micaëla was a con-stant surprise with her sweet voice, rich in core, purity of style, expressiveness, finesse and understated truthfulness. Ntsikelelo Mali as Escamillo was slightly stiff in his Toreador’s Song, but one experienced his true vocal craft even better in the duet with Don José.
The smaller parts sounded authentically French, while the choruses and the orchestral playing gave the proceedings a vivid theatrical presence. Timothy Myers’s conducting kept the pot boiling with ideal tempi, tight-reigned ensemble work and clear inner textures. Steven Capone’s set designs are both stunningly origi-nal and evocative.
This is the one Carmen you’ll just have to experience.

Breath of fresh air at JPO final season concert

Concert: Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (Linder)
Conductor: Bernhard Gueller
Soloist: Kelebogile Boikanyo, soprano
Programme: Music by Wagner and Mahler

REVIEWED BY PAUL BOEKKOOI

THREE CHRONOLOGICAL chunks of orchestral pieces from Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde, per-formed in a continuous sweep, formally opened this final concert of the JPO’s First Symphony Season of 2011.
This was preceded by the Linder debut of the JPO’s Academy Orchestra under the leadership of ‘cellist/conductor Sonja Bass. They gave us a sur-prisingly disciplined reading of the Allegro moder-ato from Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony. Among local youth orchestras, this was the breath of fresh air we’ve been waiting for.
Bernhard Gueller conducted his first Wagner with the JPO. Although hardly managing to reach the highest levels of incandescence and urgency in the performance of the Prelude, Nachtgesang and Liebestod, he nevertheless established a sumptuous account of the score.
Sharply-edged contours and precise motivation were in place, but inevitable sweep, ecstasy and grandeur was still wanting in places - especially in the Nachtgesang. One prominent positive impres-sion was that Gueller put nothing in the way of structural coherence.
Mahler, whose Symphony No 4 was also per-formed, once said during a discussion about art that “Tradition ist Schlamperei”, meaning (loose-ly translated) that tradition is something superfluo-us that is dragged along.
What he most likely meant is that his music should always be approached afresh and that his scores alone should be a directive.
He also was one of the only composers ever who prophesised that “my time will come”. That only started happening seriously more than 60 years after his death a century ago, which is now com-memorated.
It is quite astonishing how interpretations of this symphony, trying to evoke a vision of heaven, differ. Some conductors see it as a dark, almost



Soprano Kelebogile Boikanyo. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WWW.BIGTALK.CO.ZA)

Grimm-like fantasy; others don’t dare to dig any deeper than its iridescent dream-worlds.
Maestro Gueller gave us something of both. Bite and depth characterised the wood-wind and brass solos, but also the subtle creation of an ideal space around seraphic strings.
In the opening movement there was fine artic-ulation of every picturesque detail, while the Scherzo had enough bounce, but could do with slightly more bite and irony.
The Poco adagio responded well to the conduc-tor’s objectivity, but lost some exultation at the opening of heaven’s gate.
Kelebogile Boikanyo sang the finale’s solo radi-antly. She could have grabbed more opportuni-ties for tonal variety and her German diction should have been clearer.

FELDMAN
ON FILM
Peter Feldman

NOT QUITE PICK OF THE WEEK

I Am No 4

Cast: Alex Pettyfer; Dianna Agron;
Timothy Oliphant
Director: DJ Caruso

“I Am No 4” shouldn’t have too many problems connecting with its teenage audience because of its youthful mix. Hollywood seems to know what this younger market wants.
It boasts a good-looking star in Alex Pettyfer, blessed (or cursed) with a jutting chin and an expression that hardly varies. He plays opposite the attractive Dianna Agron, who has very nice dimples, and who made her name in the “Glee”

TV series, something I haven’t got round to watching just yet.
However, these elements seem far more important than intelligent storytelling and strong character development, aspects sadly missing from DJ Caruso’s sci-fi trip.
What Caruso seems to have achieved here is creating a film that stitches together bits and pieces from other productions. It’s fast, loud and somewhat derivative of other cheesy teen dramas and superhero adventures we’ve seen in the past
Pettyfer plays a character named John Smith (not his real name) who is a fugitive continual-ly on the run with guardian Henri (Timothy Oliphant).
There are ruthless enemies out there intent on killing them. John is no ordinary teenager; he is from another planet and has many heav-enly powers. There are nine others who were saved from genocide on a distant planet.
Changing his identity, moving from town to town, John is always the new kid with no ties to his past. In the small Ohio town he now calls

home, John encounters unexpected, life-chang-ing events - his first love, powerful new abilities and a connection to the others who share his incredible destiny.
Three teenagers with the incredible same powers have already been eradicated by the dark forces and, as the title suggests, poor John is number four.
There is very little fresh or exciting material in “I Am No 4”. It suffers from recycled clichés in both the dialogue and action sequences and, after a while, it all runs to tedium.
The production is really a watered-down sci-fi flick, much like the “Twilight” franchise where the werewolf/vampire elements bear no resem-blance to legendary horror offerings of the past.
The biggest surprise, though, is that the pro-ducers have left the door wide open for a sequel. And sequels seem to work very well in today’s film climate when there are genuinely few new ideas around. The producers, however, must work much harder to develop the same appeal in their lead characters as the “Twilight” bunch, which still hasn’t run its course.

TAPESTRY – ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Novel’s driver is cynicism; its outcome is nihilism

Imperial Bedrooms by Bret Easton Ellis
(Picador, R199)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBEY

IMAGINE COMBINING “The Catcher in the Rye” with “A Clockwork Orange” and “Trainspotting”, and you will have some idea of the dissipated cynicism which saturates this book.

The sequel to Ellis’s 1985 novel “Less Than Zero” (which was turned into a film noir cult classic), it is every bit as disturbing as fans of his distinctive genre have come to expect. And, given the acclaim it has enjoyed since its release, it is set to best Easton’s most controversial and successful work, “American Psycho”.

Reading it, however, requires a broad mind, and equally broad shoulders, for - from the first paragraph - Ellis drags one down an alley into a place more frightening than anything a horror novel could produce.

The narrator of the book, Clay - who played a key part in “Less Than Zero” - has come back to his native Los Angeles after a 25-year hiatus in New York, where he has achieved moderate success as a filmmaker.

Now in their early 40s, neither he nor his circle of friends has changed. They are still debauched, drug-addicted, rootless individuals, still out of control and blithely amoral.

All they have gained in two-and-a-half decades is weight, a few wrinkles and some money in the morass of the LA movie industry.

Sporting spray-on tans, bleached teeth and pitted faces, they are jaded, sagging relics, trying to hang onto fading youth and using the same manipulation, double-dealing and violence that characterised their teens.

Most notably, they are utterly alienated from any sense of purpose in the world: the grim price paid by those steeped in a celluloid culture where nothing lasts, no-one minds and nothing matters.

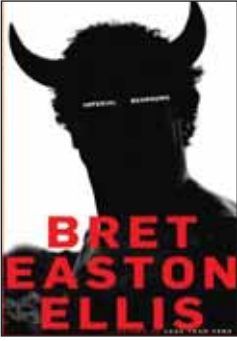
This is an über-decadent culture of cocaine, of Xanax, duplicity, alcohol and snuff movies, teenage pornography websites, material abundance - and at its centre, a yawning void.

Consumerism has been taken to the point of satiety and then turned in on itself.

“The digital billboards glowing in the grey haze all seem to say ‘no’ and the poinsettias lining the median at Sunset Plaza are dying and fog keeps enveloping the towers in Century City and the world becomes a science-fiction movie - because none of it really has anything to do with me. It’s a world where getting stoned is the only option,” Clay tells us.

His one-time girlfriend, Blair, is now involved with someone else. His favourite drug dealer, Rip, has a face ravaged by plastic surgery scars. And Julian Wells, his erstwhile friend - the least trustworthy of them all - extends a hand of welcome, but intrigues behind the scenes.

Before long, Clay begins a relationship with a young



actress, Rain Walker, whose only interest in bedding him is to fast-track herself into a part in his upcoming movie. Both of them know this, though when Clay begins to actually care about her, he is thrown: this is an undeveloped, and unwelcome, turn of events.

Then murders begin to take place: first a young filmmaker, Kelly Montrose, in a gory execution. An increasingly paranoid Clay believes he is being stalked. He receives threatening SMSes and notices a blue Jeep following him.

He finds items in his hotel room rearranged every time he returns to it. Someone is out to either get him, or seriously undermine his already tenuous mental stability.

In the background, the character of Julian Wells looms, vaguely menacing, then - when it becomes apparent that Rain is actually involved with him - the danger becomes palpable.

Not that this is surprising. Clay has many enemies, most of them still harbouring issues from 25 years previously.

Besides, these are people to whom betrayals and infidelities come as naturally as the next crystal meth hit.

The second murder comes as the climax of the novel, and offers a horrifying glimpse into just what Hollywood’s Beautiful Young Things are capable of. The sheer barbarity of this killing, and the way it is conceived, will remain with readers long after the book has been closed.

It takes some manoeuvring to gain entry to this novel and walk beside Clay through the detritus of his life, shivering from his inner coldness. One needs to abandon any expectation of lucidity, logic or compassion.

The novel’s only driver is its wary cynicism, its only outcome nihilism. The tone of the writing is zombie-like, recited in a bland, emotionless voice. The characters are never explored - their actions speak for them; but, then, these are not articulate people, emotionally or morally.

“How do you live like this?” Clay asks his whoring, treacherous lover. “I pretend I don’t,” she replies.

Later, he wonders of a former girlfriend: “Could she locate the moment she (read ‘I’) went dead inside?”

The pain - and there is plenty of it - is masked by insouciance. The author also employs some interesting, but confusing conceits in linking this novel back to its prequel, though the work eventually gains enough gravity to stand alone.

At one level, the book is a macabre thriller. At another, it is an intensely distressing excursion through American subculture from which one returns with heavy misgivings about what is being incubated in a free (some might say too free) world.

Ellis’s style may not be to everyone’s taste, but the tale he tells - saliva trickling from his mouth and bloodshot, drug-crazed eyes staring balefully at us - demands that we take a long, hard look at how we live and what we aspire to.

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E&OE

Most enjoyable show - warts and all

ALISON GOLDBERG
PHOTOGRAPH: LISA MORALEE

ORT SA last week brought the Yiddish Song Festival to The Lyric Theatre, Gold Reef City to celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Now in its 11th year the festival hales from Cape Town under the musical directorship of Matthew Reid and Fay Singer.

A hauntingly beautiful Mazeltov Overture played by Reid and his Klezmer band, “Playing With Fire”, opened the show.

Reid, an award-winning clarinetist and saxophonist, provided the orchestration with Victor Tichardt on piano, Elinor Spier on violin, David Ridgway on double bass, Gene Kierman on drums and Mike Blake on trumpet. Their instrumental Man and a Hat equaled their opening in style and class.

An enraptured audience - my neighbours clung to the balcony rails - clapped and cheered and sang along to Yiddish classics such as Chiribim Chiribom; but quietly and



Stage director Irma Kesler; Producer Philip Todres; Music co-director Fay Singer.

reverentially to Rozhinkes mit Mandeln - Raisins and Almonds.

This traditional lullaby was undoubtedly the most beautiful song, performed flawlessly by coloratura soprano Beverley Chiat.

Zola with shades of Bette Midler’s pulsating stage presence, yielded a soft and breathy Ich Beynk Aheim (I Yearn for Home), composed by her late uncle, Leib Rosenthal who perished in the Holocaust.

Bei Mir Bis Du Shein - 1938’s most popular song made famous by the Andrews Sisters, was energetically sung and danced to by Caley Levy with Ivor Joffe, David Gordon, Kevin Berman and Erez Shaked. The song originated in New York’s Second Avenue.

Aviva Pelham was at her best in a comedy duet with Erez Shaked in Ich vil a Chusin (I Want a Man), each enumerating the qualities sought for in their ideal of a member of the opposite sex.

Unfortunately, there was no rikkud - traditional Hassidic dance. And The 10 Tap Dancing Rabbis from Minsk didn’t tap, merely shuffled.

One has to be a shayteh d’ooreissa - Aramaic for a statutory idiot, to negatively criticise something so clearly loved. But shrill and loud it was at times - the female singers, apart from the few exceptions - imposed on their voices an aged, matriarchal edge, which not even Yiddish can be blamed for.

The male solos were loud in finale where more shading, à la Chiat in Rozhinkes, could have thrilled. The crowd scenes were reminiscent of entertainment shows on Tel Aviv TV - just too many people on stage.

But succeed the show did, warts and all, for evoking Der Heim and all the love and longing that goes with it.

New Keilim Mikvah in use in Johannesburg

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY RITA LEWIS

A NEW Keilim Mikvah for the immersion of new crockery and cutlery, prior to it being used, was opened this week in Glenhazel in Johannesburg and housed in the same building as the new KosherWorld.

The idea of creating a mikvah was mooted by Arnold Garber, Joel Back and Shaul Daniel who got together a creative team to put the idea into fruition.

The mikvah will be open daily (except for Shabbat) from 07:00 to 19:00 and for those wishing to make use of it, the keys will be available at KosherWorld who will also attend to the mikvah’s upkeep and cleanliness.

There will be no cost for its use by the community and no restrictions on where the items might have been purchased.

A mezuzah was affixed to the door by Rabbi Ziggy Suchard who with London-based. Rabbi Meir Posen, are two of the foremost poskin (halachic decision-makers) in the world on mikvaot.

During the building of the mikvah, which is the first and only one of its kind not connect-

ed to a women’s mikvah, the two rabbis were in constant contact and collaboration.

The six people, each one in some way connected to the building of the mikvah, together with Maish Rosengarten and Yechiel Asaraf from KosherWorld, watched as the tap was turned on and water flowed into the mikvah for the very first time.

It was an exciting moment the culmination of virtually two months from the time of its inception to its completion



Rami Amdur; Shaul Daniels (behind); Joel Back; Mark Kruger; Brad Stein; Rabbi Ziggy Suchard; Arnold Garber; Yechiel Asaraf; and Maish Rosengarten.

COMMUNITY BUZZ

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JEWS ON THE NATAL SOUTH COAST

From ‘Evancol’:

“For years Margate was a very popular holiday spot for Jews of the Witwatersrand area, despite the distance. Yet resorts closer to Durban, like Amanzimtoti and Scottburgh, were not Jewishly popular.

“Several Jewish businessmen were active on the coast. Jack Levin ran the Blue Marlin Hotel and then sold it, and ran the Cutty Sark Hotel at Scottburgh for many years.

“In Amanzimtoti there was a lawyer, Mailey Donen, and a dentist, Barry Rosenberg. Another dentist Ernest Lange operated in Scottburgh. When one considers the propensity of Jews to hostelry, the fact that there was only the one Jewish owned hotel among the hundreds of hotels, is strange.

BULAWAYO

Shulamit Kagan continues:

“Rev Kibel was our ‘Ba’al Tefilah’ for a time. We then had, if my memory serves me well, a young Israeli ex-serviceman who had lost an arm in one of the Israeli wars.

“I remember very little about him except for a story which circulated and for the truth of which I cannot vouch. Apparently this young man went on a tour of the Wankie Game Reserve. He ignored the guide’s warning not to go walking alone in the reserve and went strolling along the paths of the reserve as if he were walking in the streets of Tel Aviv.

“Along came a mother elephant who must have thought that this strange creature presented a grave danger to her young and charged him. With the dexterity of a true Israeli soldier, he climbed a tree and hung there for dear life while the enraged elephant shook the tree trying to dislodge him.

“After what must have seemed like hours, along came a game ranger, shooed away the elephant and got the soldier down. This must have taught him a lesson in humility.

“Then, from Jerusalem, came young Asher Hainowitz, with his heavenly voice and his perfect Hebrew diction...”

(To be continued.)

JOHANNESBURG

From Dinah Oshry:

“I thought that this might be of interest for our Jewish history. My name is Dinah Oshry; my maiden name was Dinky Forman. Mr Ichilchick was my music teacher. He also taught Sarah Zundelowitz. (as mentioned recently in Community Buzz).

“He was conductor of Prince d’Oldenburg Symphony and Opera Orchestras in the times when it was a great honour for a Jew. His son was Dan Hill (the legendary late band leader in Johannesburg).

“Dr Solly Aronowsky conducted our orchestra. Sarah Zundelowitz and Solly

Kerzner played in it. He played the accordion. I played the flute.

“My brother is Sid Forman, the well-known jeweller, artist and sculptor. His son is Mark Forman who has had many exhibitions of his sculptures of our Jewish history in the foyers of our shuls.”

JOHANNESBURG

The trial of Jewey Cooke

The Johannesburg Sunday Times report continues:

“At last the end was reached. The jury retired and the student of criminal types had leisure to examine the remarkable collection of faces that milled at the barrier.

“Those who knew, pointed out the noted law breakers among them, but you hardly needed the information - their illegal liquor, illicit gold, opium selling, card sharpening, and the trade of the pimp were written large over the whole crowd.”

The jury returned after one hour and gave their verdict. Both men were guilty! The judge’s voice was heard in the silent court in words that bit like acid.

Mr Justice Curlewis intoned: “The jury has found that you ravished this girl and are found guilty of a revolting and brutal crime, more serious in view of her tender years. I sentence Cooke to eight years and eight lashes and accused number two, Silverstein to seven years and 10 lashes.”

TOBRUK

With the events in Libya being in the headlines for the last week, some of the names of towns there bring back memories to many people in South Africa who were involved in the Second World War; either as participants, family of people in the forces or those who stayed at home, watched and prayed as they followed the war’s progress.

Before the war, Libya had been an Italian colony, but when Italy joined Germany as an ally and their forces in North Africa threatened the Suez Canal (and, by extension Palestine and the Yishuv), Libya became a bitterly contested battleground.

Names of towns such as Tripoli, Benghazi, Barda, Tobruk, Derna, Bardia and others, became familiar.

In October 1941, the Italians were in control of Tobruk, but by December 7, South African troops were among the Allied troops that took the city.

On June 22 1942, Tobruk was captured by the Germans under General Erwin Rommel and 35 000 Allied soldiers were cut off. General Klopper formally surrendered.

Over 9 000 South Africans of the Second Division were taken prisoner.

On November 6, Tobruk was retaken by the Allies, including the South African First Division who were told that all the prisoners had been taken to Italy as prisoners-of-war. For many years after the end of the war, we heard stories from those who had spent three years as war prisoners in Italy. It is believed that nearly 600 South African Jews were among those captured.

I have been informed that many e-mails sent to me during February and March bounced. I would appreciate it if these were re-sent to me, as the reason for that has (hopefully) been corrected.



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AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

HELEN THOMAS TELLS PLAYBOY SHE IS 'FED UP' WITH ISRAEL

NEW YORK - An unrepentant Helen Thomas said in an interview with Playboy magazine that she knew exactly what she was doing when she said on camera that Jews "should get the hell out of Palestine".

"I knew I'd hit the third rail," she said in an interview published in the April issue of Playboy. "You cannot say anything about Israel in this country. But I've lived with this cause for many years. Everybody knows my feelings that the Palestinians have been short-changed in every way.

"Sure, the Israelis have a right to exist - but where they were born, not to come and take someone else's home. I've had it up to here with the violations against the Palestinians. Why shouldn't I say it? I knew exactly what I was doing - I was going for broke. I had reached the point of no return. You finally get fed up."

Thomas, 90, told a video blogger at the White House on May 29, 2010, that Jews "should get the hell out of Palestine" and "go home" to Poland, Germany and the United States. The comments cost her her job as a columnist for the Hearst Corp.

In the Playboy interview, Thomas also told contributing editor David Hochman, who is Jewish: "Everybody is in the pocket of the Israeli lobbies, which are funded by wealthy supporters, including those from Hollywood. Same thing with the financial markets. There's total control."

Hochman reported that Thomas cried when asked what people will say when they write her obituary, and that Thomas said she knew it was going to say "anti-Semite" instead of "reporter".

Thomas last week told a national conference of campus journalists that President Barack Obama owed her an apology for his criticism of her comments about Israel at the White House, Editor & Publisher reported.

"Her comments were offensive," Obama said during an interview on NBC's "The Today Show" shortly after the video of her comments was made public and was widely viewed on the Internet.

"It's a shame because Helen's someone who has been a correspondent through I don't know how many presidents, was a real institution in Washington, DC. But I think she made the right decision. I think those comments are out of line, and hopefully she recognises that."

Thomas apologised for the comments, but has since reiterated the same sentiments in several public forums.

"I want an apology from the president," Thomas said during the keynote session of the annual spring convention of College Media Advisers in New York City.

The White House refused to comment to E&P on Thomas' demand. (JTA)

A WIZO workshop on that big day and after

THE ESTHER branch of WIZO in Johannesburg, is introducing "Beyond The Dress", a series of workshops "created to help you navigate your way towards happily ever after", WIZO says in a media release.

The date is Sunday, April 3, at the HOD in Orchards, Johannesburg. Registration takes place at 09:30 and the cost of R200 per person includes the workshop, tea and "a fantastic goody bag".

Tickets can be purchased from Andrea Wainer, 083-677-8999 or Lori Milner 083-344-6729 or e-mail queries may be sent to lori@beyondthedress.co.za. Please send proof of payment to confirm your booking.

Banking details are: Nedbank Balfour Park, account name: WIZO Johannesburg; account number 1511028858, branch number 151105, reference 'SurnameBTD'.

"Whether you're still preparing for your big day or if you're already there, experts in the fields of health and wellness, financial planning, time management, communication, home management, image and beauty, will share their knowledge and expertise to assist you.

"The launch workshop will feature celebrity chef and author Sharon Glass on 'Secrets from a Successful Kitchen' and Brenda Lasersohn, a psychologist in clinical practice, with emphasis on family and marital therapy, will discuss: 'Can I be a Wife and Still Retain my Own Identity?'"

All proceeds are for the upliftment of women and children in Israel.

BRITISH AUTHORITY UPHOLDS COMPLAINT AGAINST TRAVEL PALESTINE AD

LONDON - Complaints against an advertisement for travel to Palestine have been upheld by the British Advertising Standards Authority.

The authority in a ruling released on Wednesday said the Travel Palestine ad should not be published again as it was currently constituted.

The advertisement, which was published in the National Geographic Traveler magazine, read: "Palestine is a land rich in history with a tradition of hospitality. From the famous cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, Nablus, and Gaza, the Palestinian people welcome you to this Holy Land."

It also says: "Palestine lies between the Mediterranean Coast and the Jordan River... It takes a visit to this wonderful country to appreciate the most palpable facet of its culture: the warmth and humour of the Palestinian people. Join a long list of visitors over the centuries who have seen the beauty of this land."

Some 149 complaints were filed with the Advertising Standards Authority saying that Palestine is not a recognised country, that the advertisement suggested that all of the land mentioned was Palestinian, and that Jerusalem and the other cities mentioned are Palestinian.

The authority's verdict agreed that the ad was misleading in saying that the cities listed were accepted as Palestinian - though it did point out that the "status of Jerusalem is in dispute" - but did not uphold the complaints that the ad claimed Palestine was a "recognised country, or that the whole area "between the Mediterranean coast and the Jordan River" was Palestinian. (JTA)

JEWISH FUNERAL HOME TO OPEN IN MOSCOW

MOSCOW - A city funeral home in Moscow is to be converted to a Jewish funeral home, the only one in the city.

The funeral home will operate under the auspices of the Moscow chief rabbinate, the Bais Menachem Chabad-Lubavitch Synagogue and the Chevrah Kadisha Hamerkazi Jewish Burial Society of Moscow, according to Rabbi Sheah Deitsch, a Jewish burial society member and Chabad emissary in Moscow.

Deitsch said the Jewish community in Moscow had had to struggle with city funeral homes over the past two decades to make sure Jewish traditions and death rituals were observed, including fighting to halt unnecessary autopsies and getting permission to perform a tahara, or Jewish ritual purification.

The funeral home, near the local Jewish community centre, "will avoid the struggles and red tape that families faced, ever since the fall of communism, when trying to organise a Jewish burial for their loved ones. Doing a Jewish funeral until now has been a nightmare," Deitsch said.

Most of the burials take place in the Jewish Cemetery in Malakhovka, a province of Moscow, and a 40-minute drive from the center of Moscow. (JTA)

The White House Gallery

Red dot end-of-summer art sale



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A TASTE OF LIMMUD

Session 1 19h00 – 20h00	 Phoenix from ashes: The Revival of Jewish Life in Lithuania and The Baltics <small>Courtesy of The Isaac & Julia Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies</small> Simon Gurevichius	 Ghosts in the Garage: Recovering Lost Letters of the Shoah Shirli Gilbert	 Democracies or Danger: An Analysis of the Current Fires in the Middle East Malcolm Ferguson	 The Dead Sea Scrolls Brought to Life Simon Berg	 The Postmodern and the Ancient: Quantum Physics and Kabbalah Larry Paslovsky	 The Other Face of Human Rights: Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel Romi Kaplan
	Light meal 20h00 – 20h30					
Session 2 20h30 – 21h30	 "The New" Middle East and its impact on Israel Ely Karmon	 Settlers to Shoah to South Africans: Australia's Evolving Jewish Community <small>Courtesy of The Isaac & Julia Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies</small> Suzanne Rutland	 The Miraculous and Complex: Lithuanian Jewry in 2020. A panel <small>Courtesy of the Joint Distribution Committee</small> Simon Gurevichius	 Consciousness, Reality and thoughts on the Purpose of Existence Ian Weinberg	 Disobedience or Destiny: Genesis and Milton's Paradise Lost Lorraine Chaskalson	



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LETTERS

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

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.	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
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FOGELS REMEMBERED IN MEMORIAL IN JOHANNESBURG

IN TIMES of darkness, we spread light. In times of baseless hatred, we respond with baseless love.

This was the theme of the Fogel family z”l memorial held last Thursday evening, hosted by the young adults division of the IUA-UCF.

A light was spread both literally and figuratively, while hundreds of candles burnt throughout the hall and the value of life and family was emphasised.

The memory and humanity of such a family were discussed and how we, as a commu-

THE WORLD REMAINS SILENT ON FOGEL SLAUGHTER

THAT BARBARIC act of butchery last week of the Fogel family in Itamar has raised much editorial comment in sympathetic Jewish publications. However, as has been aptly documented, hardly a comment in the general or electronic media anywhere in the world.

But after all, what would we expect when it is only “settlers” who were murdered, as clearly this is a terrorist’s “human right” to slit the throats of children. Not forgetting that there is a subtle difference between human life and Jewish life.

If, however, a Palestinian had sprained his ankle running from a “jackbooted” Israeli soldier, this would no doubt have made headlines worldwide.

This, of course, we can well understand, as the murder of little children is not newsworthy, except the Al Dura hoax that triggered the intifada in 2000, where the world witnessed the staged shooting of a little Palestinian boy.

The world media never rose to the occasion when this farce was successfully challenged and exposed in the French High Court.

Interesting just how unmoved our human rights advocates have been over this dastardly deed. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, our peace prize laureate - silent! The

HASHEM ALWAYS FULFILS HIS PROMISES TO US

IN MY letter (SAJR March 4) I did say that our liberal and leftist friends were going to get their knickers in a knot. Thank you, Mr Frack, for proving me right.

I am proud to admit that I take inspiration for my political views from the Torah. I think it would be wonderful if an Israeli ambassador would go into the UN General Assembly and read to the members there from a Sefer Torah. They might just sit up and take notice.

Frack, in his righteous indignation, has demoted the Creator of the Universe to a mere “tribal deity”. He has also removed title of the earth from Him. What incredible arrogance.

Any five-year-old child who has studied his first lesson in Chumash with Rashi’s commentary, would be able to tell Frack that title to the Land of Israel (and to the rest of the world) rests with Hashem and that He can give it to whomever He pleases.

Thank you, Mr Frack, for at least giving Hashem credit for taking us out of Egypt. It must have been a very brave act for a mere “tribal deity” to have challenged the super power of the time.

Frack also has his sensitivities disturbed by Hashem’s command to destroy or drive out the inhabitants of the Holy Land. He would do well to put aside his Bible and study some Torah texts.

All the nations that he mentions tried by every means available to them to annihilate us. With Hashem’s help we defended ourselves and they were defeated.

Those nations were also corrupt and immoral. They practised every possible perversion, including human sacrifice. Those are the reasons Torah gives for Hashem’s command to obliterate them. Then, as now,

FOR THE RECORD

WRONG AGES GIVEN IN OLDIES MARRIAGE

IN OUR story on page 4 of the issue of March 11, entitled “True love is ageless, it seems”, the ages of the bridal couple

MMA EXPONENT IS JOSHUA, NOT JONATHAN

JONATHAN MULLER extends his thanks to Melvyn Kramer (SAJR Marc 11) for pointing out an error made by Jack Milner in the SAJR of March 4, stating that

nity, will never forget the family that would rather have stayed anonymous.

Thank you to all who attended, including Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and the Av Beit Din-Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag.

A special thank you to Gary Friedman and all at the HOD for their continued support of our community.

Saul Jassinowsky
YAD
IUA-UCF
Johannesburg

head of the UN High Commission for Human Rights Navi Pillay - silent! Mr Justice Richard Goldstone together with his able advocates Arthur Chaskalson and Albie Sachs - silent!

Our Open Shuhada Street bastions Nathan Geffen and Doron Isaacs - silent! Kader Asmal and that “Thinker” Essop Pahad who so succinctly labelled the boarding of the Mavi Maramara as murder most foul - silent! Then of course your regular columnist Mr Justice Dennis Davis whose column sounded loudest of all - silent! Now, how proud we should all be of our UN for the screening of the anti-Israel film “Miral” in the General Assembly Hall of the UN - something never experienced before in the history of this body, while the world leaders sat pondering on the text of a proposed no fly zone over Libya, while the slaughter of the dissidents continued.

How quickly the world forgave our “Brother Leader” Muammar Gaddafi after his sudden pang of guilt spurred him to destroy some weapons and change his spots from history’s über-terrorist to the darling of the human rights community. But what do they say about leopards and their spots?

Allan Wolman
Norwood, Johannesburg

if Jews dare to defend themselves, the world screams ethnic cleansing and genocide.

I have news for Frack. Far from Hashem having broken His promises to us, He has, in fact, kept most of them. Those that have not, as yet, been fulfilled, will be in the very near future.

Frack would have us believe that Hashem had very little to do with protecting Israel during the Yom Kippur War. He states that the Americans saved us by re-supplying our nearly-destroyed air force.

The fact is that the Americans were not at all happy to re-supply Israel and when they eventually did, it was only because Russia was supplying vast quantities of arms to Egypt and Syria.

If the Americans had not stepped in, it would ultimately have led to confrontation between America and the Soviet Union.

During the first Gulf War, when Iraq’s Saddam Hussein sent hundreds of Scud missiles into Israel, there were no fatalities. Please tell me how that could have been if not for the mercies and protection of Hashem?

The one Scud missile that was sent into Saudi Arabia unfortunately landed on an American army barrack, killing 250 American soldiers. America is our great protector? Oh please!

In my “appalling ignorance” I still maintain that making deals with our enemies would be a fatal mistake. Our Torah scholars teach that it is certainly not what Hashem wants.

And by the way, Mr Frack, the State of Israel came into being in 1948 not in 1947.

Dov Grauman
Lyndhurst, Johannesburg

are incorrect. Leone Shein is 75 and her husband, Bernard Muscat is 85. We regret the error.

Brendon Katz is not the only exponent of Mixed Martial Arts.

He points out, however, that his name is “Joshua” Muller and not “Jonathan”.

I REFER to your leader-article in last week’s Jewish Report and also about “Baruch’s resignation”.

Memories are short. When Anwar Sadat, speaking for the Egyptian people, wanted to make peace, he came to Israel and said so. Only after Sadat acknowledged Israel’s right to exist, did peace talks spontaneously occur. Only then did Israel concede Sadat’s request that Israel should give back Sharm El-Sheikh and all the other “giveaways” that Egypt got.

When Israel gave away its rights to Gaza, what was the result? Rockets fired daily. Specialist gardeners left glass hot-houses containing flowers for export, when they left. The people in Gaza threw stones and destroyed these hot-houses!

Britain divested herself of Rhodesia. So what has Mugabe offered his people? Intimidation, aggression, taking over farms, which were handed to Mugabe’s cronies, and chasing off farm workers who had previously lived and worked on those farms.

Mugabe and his wife have plundered that country, (which was the breadbasket of

EASIER CONVERSION IS NOT THE ANSWER

MANY JEWS have asked me why I decided to become Jewish.

“It’s so hard, are you meschugah?” or “The horrors of keeping kosher, oy vey”! resound all round.

What does it really mean to be Jewish? People of the Book, the Chosen People? With every privilege in life comes responsibility.

What would happen if conversion laws were relaxed? Will we end up with Madonna wannabees who think wearing a Kabala string (made in China) around your wrist makes you Jewish?

Will our shuls be crowded with people demanding that Yiddishkeit be watered down to make the “bitter” pill of conversion more palatable to swallow?

Judaism has not survived for so long because it “changed with the times”. Would you feel comfortable visiting a doctor or specialist if you knew that the requirements for his exams were relaxed?

How much more with our spiritual health? Knowledge is power and the extensive syllabus of conversion enables the convert to fully integrate and stand tall and proud as a Jew.

Yes, conversion is hard and difficult, more so for singles like myself who are not converting for marriage and are left to carry the financial burden of converting alone.

HAVE WE LOST OUR MORAL COMPASS?

THE MAINSTREAM media must be complemented on the extensive coverage of the disaster in Japan as well as the crisis in Bahrain and Libya.

It is with sadness however that I note the total lack of adequate reporting of the massacre of the Fogel family by what can only be described as an act of pure evil by a maniacal terrorist/s.

To describe the butchering of the children and parents and to try and imagine the trauma of the 12-year-old daughter who discovered the scene and the two-year-old who was found crying, trying to wake up his dead and blood-soaked father, is just too painful to communicate.

The perpetrators of this heinous massacre of babies have lost the right to be referred to as humans. This was an act of animals and the fact that such a disgusting act was greeted with jubilation in Palestinian Gaza, with sweets being handed out by Hamas, is abhorrent.

Yet these are the very same people that seek support and sympathy. This act should be condemned by the world, but all we hear is silence.

Have we as a society totally lost our moral compass? Are we so biased against Israel that we shut our eyes to the reasons why they build walls, to keep animals like this out?

I have no doubt that when these terrorists are hunted and caged like the animals they are, that this will be splashed across headlines. To all those sympathetic voices, I would like to

DETAILS OF RABBI YESORSKY’S DEATH SHOW DISRESPECT

I REFER to the (continuation) article in Community Buzz, from Shulamit Kagan in the Jewish Report of last week, on life in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

I feel that the paragraph written about the nature of the passing of the Late Rabbi Yesorsky (z”l) was in poor taste and quite unnecessary. It was disrespectful to his family and indeed to those of us who had the privilege

Africa), to such an extent, that now his people are starving.

Apart from Botswana, is there one “freed” country in Africa where law and order (which was Ian Smith’s one motivation) exist?

And what is happening in South Africa where white rule no longer exists? A song is sung, “Kill the Boer and shoot the farmer” and over 1 000 farmers have been killed. In every little dorp there are grain elevators, such was the production of food. Now South Africa is importing food.

Peace can only and simply come when the Palestinians, recognise Israel’s right to exist. Israel must not go cap in hand, to beg them to give us peace. They, like Anwar Sadat, must want peace and act on it. Instead they want to push all Israelis into the sea.

Please, get real! Have some pride and self-respect or do you want them to take over all the land Israelis sweated to clear and renew, all the land that young Israeli men died for?

Esme Shay-Cohen
Sandringham Gardens, Johannesburg

Conversion is a very emotional and life-changing process and the timeframe set by the Beth Din has exactly that in mind. Conversion is not a drive-through where they throw in a free yarmulke.

Rather than seeking a quick-fix for our dwindling numbers, we should ask ourselves why this is happening.

Assimilation is a very big threat to Judaism; we just have to look at our brothers and sisters in America to see its devastating effects. More and more Jewish children are growing up in homes where their parents are “Just Jewish”.

Why should they marry “in” rather than “out” if they never learned to have pride and love for being Jewish?

Soon we will be celebrating Pesach. Why were the Jewish people redeemed from Egypt? Was it because they relaxed their laws to blend in with the Egyptian society or because they stood firm in their faith and way of life while facing unbearable hardships?

There is a saying that the world will never make you forget that you are a Jew. Maybe it is time that we start to remember.

Ansie Janse van Rensburg
(in conversion process)
Pretoria Hebrew Congregation

remind you - a three-month-old baby’s throat was cut and a family butchered.

I would expect that all those righteous and moral individuals who so regularly and vociferously condemn Israel, shout as loudly to condemn this barbarism.

It is about time that intelligent human beings around the world stand up as complacency is simply no longer good enough.

The question I have for your readers is this: What are you doing about this, and where is your voice? Seventy years ago people were saying: “What could I do?” and: “I was only following instructions.” Well, it is 2011 and we have come so far, yet have we learnt so little?

An assistant editor of a well-know publication explained that news which is outside of what society expects, receives preferential publication. I am proud that the world expects Israel to act morally. However, it brings no sense of comfort that the world to an extent expects the Palestinians to act immorally.

What this ultimately means is that Israel stands no chance of receiving favourable reporting, as this is how they are expected to act. Isn’t it ironic that it is the terrorists that constantly receive favourable reporting as they act contrary to their expected barbarism?

This skewed reporting is frankly just unacceptable. Enough is enough.

Aubrey Miller
Cape Town

DETAILS OF RABBI YESORSKY’S DEATH SHOW DISRESPECT

to have had him as our rabbi and teacher. It would have been more appropriate to write that his passing was tragic and premature.

His funeral was dignified and his contribution to our community was valued and respected. May his memory be a blessing.

Leon Sossen
Melbourne, Australia

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



ABOVE BOARD
Zev Krengel,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

SA in the international arena - doing the right thing

LAST WEEK, South Africa joined fellow UN Security Council members in supporting a resolution authorising the implementation of a no-fly zone over Libya, a measure aimed at facilitating foreign intervention in protecting the lives of civilians.

It is laudable that our government decided to take this principled, humanitarian stance, given that it would inevitably be condemned even by certain factions within its own ranks and despite the fact that the Gaddafi regime has extensively supported the ruling ANC in years gone past.

Indeed, the decision has proved to be a very controversial one, with accusations being levelled that South Africa is supporting unilateral military intervention and foreign military occupation against Libya. Despite this, the government has stuck to its guns and supported the decision, thereby going beyond ideological considerations to demonstrate a principled commitment to protecting the lives of innocents.

A second demonstration of this country's resolve to take independent principled decisions was in the decision to allow former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who has been living in exile in this country for the past seven years, to return to Haiti.

In doing so, it resisted pressure from the US not to do so on the grounds that Aristide's presence might disrupt the forthcoming Haiti presidential elections.

The government's stance was that since Haiti itself had granted Aristide a passport, it was not for South Africa to prevent him from going there. This too, I believe, was a sensible course to adopt, and in addition it will have shown that this country does not feel the need to dance to the tune of foreign powers.

David Gerbi visit - getting the right message across

David Gerbi, a Libyan Jewish exile and peace activist, has just completed a whirlwind 10-day visit to Johannesburg and Cape Town under the auspices of the SAJBD. Given what is currently unfolding in Libya, the timing was exactly right for such a visit. The Board took the fullest advantage of the visit, organising a host of public events, media interviews and seminars for him.

Energetic and unfailingly enthusiastic, David was more than up to this demanding programme. He appeared on no fewer than nine radio and television interviews and was further interviewed by four newspapers.

His public talks in Johannesburg and Cape Town, including on Wits campus and at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, drew excellent attendances.

David is someone who was unjustly expelled from his homeland solely because he was Jewish, yet rather than dwelling on his own justified grievances, his sincerest wish is to help the Libyan people to emerge from beneath the yoke of oppression and create a better future for themselves and their children.

The message of reconciliation that he put out, is one that will surely have resonated in our own society, which was able to move beyond its own unhappy past to forge a united non-racial democracy.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD

YOUTH TALK

Alison Goldberg youthsajr@global.co.za

Purim with class and pizzazz at KDHL

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
KEREN ZWICK

PURIM AT King David High School Linksfeld, is comparable to no other event of the year. The chag is marked by two things that any learner or alumni will undoubtedly recall: the Purim Play and the Purim Day festivities.

The Purim Play is a play for the kids, by the kids, starring the kids. The learners script, produce, direct, cast and create the play to commemorate the story of Purim and at the same time, showcase the incredible, diverse talents and wonderful enthusiasm KDHL learners have.

The last two nights saw the performance of this year's "Beatlemania Purim 2011" show. With 10 directors, nine choreographers, upwards of 180 learners, dancers, band, chorus, actors and back-stage, the show is a daunting task.

Without the guidance of Gary Block, Peter Szevach and Morah Ayelet Spectre, and the leadership of headmaster Marc Falconer, none of this would have been possible.

One cannot help feeling an overwhelming sense of pride when watching the play - floored by the sheer charisma of KDHL learners.

The Purim celebrations took place on

March 16, before our school closed for the midterm break. The learners dressed themselves up to the nines - the matrices leading with an unprecedented effort to go "all out" in their final year of school Purim.

The ruach and spirit that makes the school and this particular matric group so unique, was evident in the costumes on display. The day started off as any other, with lessons in place, but ended in a celebratory assembly hosted by matrics Tali Nasatyr and Daniel Singer of the "Spirit Committee".

The hall was filled with staff and learners and a multitude of skits, performances, comedy and dance took place.

Marc Falconer and Dr Rohan Quince delighted the audience with a re-enactment of a famous Monty Python scene. The grade 8 band, dressed up as rock band "Kiss", played the "School of Rock" for their matrics.

Siblings Dani and Kyle Boonzaier



Tali Nasatyr; Yarin Weltzman; Kayleigh Luntz; Kelli Noach; Tanna Michaels; Gia Jacobs; Rebecca Gore; and Kayla Felder.

sang together and all sorts of delightful escapades made the assembly a memorable one for all.

Purim also happened to coincide with another annual highlight for us - "Sweethearts Day". Organised by Candice Rakusin, "Sweethearts Day" is a celebration of friendship in our school during which the grade 11s sell a variety of sweets, teddy bears and key-rings and deliver them, anonymously or otherwise, to their intended recipients.

The event is a fundraiser for our school and the grade 11s maximised on the opportunity to get dressed up for their love-themed deliveries.

Bnei Akiva's Purim bash was something to behold

CHAVA GOLDBERG
BNEI AKIVA

THIS PAST weekend was jam-packed for Bnei Akiva; Purim 2011 was celebrated like never before.

The Bnei Shul at the Yeshiva College campus in Johannesburg, hosted all

types of characters from cats in hats to cowboys and even some Red Indians. Straight after megilla reading the Gurim carnival started, for the little ones of the movement.

From ages 13 and up, Bnei Akiva turned heads as a whopping 220 ridiculously dressed channichim and madri-

chim took over the ice rink at Festival Mall at Kempton Park.

It didn't stop there. On Sunday morning Bnei Linksfeld had a cupcake and candyfloss carnival packed with a boxing ring, jumping castle, tie-dye T-shirts and an awesome activity with the Gurim maddies, to mention just a few.

In the afternoon, the madrichim were treated to their own seudot hosted by the Windmontes and Alexanders.

Great fun was had by all. Watch this space, because this year the movement is a bigger, braver, Bnei Akiva!

Hadracha Tzeira builds young communal leaders

BATYA BLOCH

HADRACHA TZEIRA is a three-week Bnei Akiva programme which, over the last 30 years, has seen thousands of grade 10s travel to Israel and explore their Jewish identity and values.

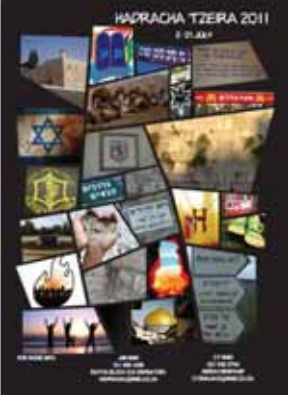
The mission statement of Bnei Akiva is "Am Yisrael be Eretz Yisrael al pi Torat Yisrael" (to promote Jews in Israel according to the Torah) and this is exactly what Hadracha offers.

It is an opportunity to be inspired, to fall in love with Israel and to gain memories which will last a lifetime. Hadracha is a programme which aims to build young leaders in the community and to instill in its participants the Torah values for which Bnei Akiva proudly stands.

Hadracha is undoubtedly one of the best Israel programmes out there. Some participants will travel to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Kinneret, Sefat, the Negev, Massada, the Dead Sea, the Galilee and of course Eilat.

We also spend several days doing Gadna where channichim get a real taste of the Israeli army. Hadracha is a wonderful opportunity to interact with Israeli society and channichim really get to do this by spending a Shabbat with Israeli families.

Hiking is another one of the high-



Bnei Akiva's youth leadership poster.

lights of Hadracha as we trace the footsteps of our forefathers and discover the Jewish history in every place we go.

As a youth movement we are constantly striving to move forward and evolve. We are looking forward to a hadracha this year which is even bigger and better than ever before. To the Lehava group, we cannot wait to embark on this journey of a lifetime with you.

Hadracha Tzeira will be taking place from

July 2 - 21. The programme will be for three weeks.



Young TA busy bees pack mishloach manot

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANI ZWICK

GRADE 4 girls from Torah Academy Primary School busy packing and making their mishloach manot for Purim.

The children entered into the spirit of the festival with decorative gifts, which they made as part of their crafts programme.



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WHAT'S ON

Barry Bilewitz barry@sajewishreport.co.za

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

Today Friday (March 25)

- **UZLC** presents Nadine Lemmer from the Arthritis Foundation on “Living with Arthritis”.

Saturday evening (March 26)

- **SAZF** is holding their 47th conference this evening and tomorrow. Guest speakers: Harvard academic Prof Alan Dershowitz; John Howard - former prime minister of Australia; and Col Richard Kemp - former commander of British forces in Afghanistan. Bookings: (011) 645-2541 or email on sharon@beyachad.co.za

Sunday (March 27)

- **Second Innings** presents Jacqueline Teague on “Spring Clean Your Life”.
- **Society of Israel Philately** meeting at 10:00 in

the boardroom of the Waverley Synagogue. All welcome. Refreshments. Free entry. Contact Maurice Daniels 082-385-9736.

Monday (March 28)

- **UJW Johannesburg** presents Tom Wheeler on “A South African Diplomat Remembers: From Verwoerd to Mandela”.
- **UJW House & Garden Circle** meeting. Contact (011) 648-1053 or e-mail ujw@mwweb.co.za

Tuesday (March 29)

- **Great Park Synagogue** invites you to a “Parenting Workshop” with Trevor Friedman, for parents of pre-adolescents (10 yrs and older) and adolescents, at 19:30. Cost R30. Booking essential. Contact Goldie - 072-832-2001; or email on goldiesimpson@gmail.com

Wednesday (March 30)

- **Balfour Park Parkinson's Disease Support**

Group meeting at 10:00 in the boardroom, Randjes Estate, Randjeslaagte Road, Highlands North. Dr Nadia Loewke will speak on a general introduction to homeopathy. Contact Rosemary Burke on (011) 640-3919.

- **Second Innings** outing to Doonholm Herb Farm and Nursery. Meet at 09:00 at Oxford Street Shul parking. R130 includes the bus, the guided tour, and lunch. Book with Annette Bergman by no later than March 27.
- **UJW Cape Town** presents Andy Goldman from the Cape Town Jewish Museum who will talk on his “Experiences Working with the Jews in Ethiopia”.
- **Jaffa** in Pretoria is holding a Pesach “Gift Fair” from 18:00.
- **CKCS** meeting from 17:30 to 19:00. Call Tania Leibowitz on (011) 532-9719.

CROSSWORD NO 203

BY LEAH SIMON

ACROSS:

1. Fibs destroy isle (4)
3. Giving prize to article on hospital room with bad gin (8)
8. Thus, hour begins in London area (4)
9. Mark on mail shows the way (4, 4)
11. Show white pill around to an elusive person (4, 1, 3, 4)
13. Continue with curriculum vitae (6)
14. Go back on green in east, somehow (6)
17. How to exert one's authority as a sniper? (4, 3, 5)
20. Did the good man say stammer? (8)
21. Maned animal is dishonest, we hear (4)
22. Made secure, but died around east (8)
23. — Blyton, children's author (4)

DOWN:

1. Amen to the end of the argument! (4, 4)
2. Formerly healthy southerner breathes out (7)
4. Legal document for the man – makes him squirm violently (6)
5. Seen, wear the French out and extend hire period (5, 5)
6. Tools of the press? (5)
7. Ancient German-Roman in tango there (4)
10. Fault around drome, having created recipe (10)
12. Calculated in fire, as on edition (8)
15. Feeling of myself returning to nothing, into a mess (7)
16. Dash forward for a fee (6)
18. Article on inspiration can make one laugh (5)

19. Employs Sue's revision (4)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 202

ACROSS: Feel; 3. Ping-pong; 8. Rapt; 9. Slattern; 11. Curds and whey; 13. Sprain; 14. Craved; 17. Organ failure; 20. Imagined; 21. Thai; 22. Hedonist; 23. Erne.

DOWN: 1. Forecast; 2. Emperor; 4. Island; 5. Get a word in; 6. Obese; 7. Gone; 10. Aspiration; 12. Adhesive; 15. Voucher; 16. Offers; 18. Roald; 19. Rich.

1		2			3	4		5		6		7
8					9							
				10								
11												
												12
13							14			15		
						16						
	17	18										
19												
20									21			
22										23		

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE by Jeff Sapire

THE HAND below popped up recently in a game where the standard was about average – no real experts, but no rookies either.

Before you read on, I suggest you cover up the South and West hands and decide how you would defend 3NT on the bidding below, on the lead of the two of hearts with dummy playing the five.

South dealer, both vul

			NORTH		
			♠ J963		
			♥ Q5		
			♦ 5		
			♣ AJ9842		
		WEST		EAST	
		♠ KQ104		♠ 87	
		♥ 962		♥ K1087	
		♦ QJ73		♦ 10984	
		♣ 153		♣ K106	
			SOUTH		
			♠ A52		
			♥ AJ43		
			♦ AK62		
			♣ Q7		
South	North				
1D	1S				
2NT	3NT	Opening lead: H2			

Note North's response of 1S, despite holding a much longer club suit. If you haven't got 10 points (or nine with a decent six card suit) you cannot respond at the two level – so 1S it has to be, even though it's clearly a distortion of the shape. But this is one of the key disciplines of two over one bids by responder.

West correctly decided to go for an unbid suit, and tried a heart, hoping to find partner with a good holding there.

His partnership was playing “lowest from any three

cards”, hence the H2. Others, who play MUD leads would pick the six instead. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, but worldwide, experts generally choose the former.

Declarer put in the five and East, following the principle of “third hand high” played his king, and that was the end of the defence.

Declarer won in hand and advanced the queen of clubs, running it to East's king. He returned a heart but declarer had a very easy eleven tricks.

East could have done so much better – at trick one he should insert the 10, keeping dummy's queen covered – one hardly ever puts up one's highest honour when dummy has an honour too, but there was a further reason here, and that was to ensure that declarer could be cut off from dummy's long clubs.

Say East plays the 10 which declarer wins: Now, when the queen of clubs is run, East must hold off the first time, following smoothly with the six.

If declarer, as is likely, repeats the club finesse he will go three down, and even if he guesses to put up the ace of clubs (which he won't) he has nowhere near enough tricks.

There are many rules in bridge – on defence two that come to mind are “second hand low” and “third hand high”, but these are really guidelines – so if you want to defend well you have to think a bit deeper about some positions.

If East had only given more thought to the threat of the long club suit, he may have come up with the winning defence.

Every Tuesday (Intermediate) and Wednesday (Advanced) I run bridge workshops from 10:00 – 12:00 at the Great Park Shul – alternating play hands one week and a bidding lecture on the other. Corner Glenhove Road and 4th Avenue, Houghton. For more information, e-mail me at jeffshirl@telkomsa.net

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sport

Zac proves he is more than able

JACK MILNER

WHILE MANY people were watching the leading cyclists come home in the Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour in Cape Town last week, they may not have noticed a 13-year-old cross the line some 37 minutes behind winner Tyler Day.

Zac Abel completed the 110km journey in three hours, nine minutes and 55 seconds to win the under-14 age group in the country’s premier cycle event. It was a remarkable effort, especially considering Zac is a year younger than many of his opponents in the age group.

In fact, he impressed a number of people and was dubbed “a young legend in the making”.

Zac, in grade 8 at SACS, is a keen cyclist



Zac Abel on his way to the under-14 victory in this year’s Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour.

and has been riding with a purpose since the age of four.

He is up every weekend morning at 05:00 and eager to get going to take part in whatever race is going that weekend.

Zac participates in both mountain and road races, although road racing has always been his preference. Zac and his proud parents were treated on the Monday morning following the race to a champagne breakfast at the Round House in Camps Bay, where winners of all ages were honoured by the Argus cycle tour organising committee

Clean sweep by Gauteng at Maccabi Inter-Pro

THE TEAMS from Gauteng swept all before them at the Maccabi SA Interprovincial junior soccer tournament in Cape Town last Sunday and on Monday.

The tournament saw 200 players participating in a revival of this significant event for the first time in over 20 years, with teams coming from Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

The tournament commenced on Sunday morning with a public reading of the megilla for Purim, followed by the official welcome speech by Jeanne Futeran, former Maccabi World Union president, and culminated in the passionate singing of Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika and Hatikvah

The round robin and play-off games in the under-10, 12 and 14 age groups, showcased some exciting young future stars of South African football.

The high quality football even included a nail-biting penalty shoot-out during the under-14 final between Maccabi Gauteng and Grass Boots FC, with Gauteng coming out victorious. Among the encouraging aspects of the tournament was the inclusion of the Maccabi KwaZulu-Natal team and the development Grass Boots Football Club.

The tournament concluded with a closing speech from Futeran and current Maccabi SA chairman, Cliff Garrun at the medal cer-

emony where all players were presented with a medal and participation certificate.

According to Darren Lazarus, Maccabi Western Province chairman, the tournament was supported by 800 members of the South African Jewish community over the two days and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

“Plans for next year have already begun... watch this space!” said Ronen Cohen, Maccabi WP soccer convener.

Tournament standings

Under-10
Maccabi Gauteng (Gold Medal)
Maccabi Western Province (Silver Medal)
Maccabi Western Cape (Silver Medal)
Maccabi Cape Town (Bronze Medal)
Maccabi KwaZulu-Natal (Bronze Medal)

Under-12:
Maccabi Gauteng (Gold Medal)
Maccabi Western Province (Silver Medal)
Grass Boots FC (Silver Medal)
Maccabi Western Cape (Bronze Medal)

Under-14 :
Maccabi Gauteng (Gold Medal)
Grass Boots FC (Silver Medal)
Maccabi Western Province (Silver Medal)
Maccabi Western Cape (Bronze Medal)

Jewish amateur jockey Waley-Cohen wins UK Gold Cup

JACK MILNER

IN WHAT has been termed a most remarkable performance, amateur jockey Sam Waley-Cohen won the Gold Cup at the Cheltenham Festival with his horse, Long Run, owned by his father, Robert.

He beat three former champions - Kauto Star, Denman and Imperial Commander - who were all in a line with 800m left in the race. Waley-Cohen, who was 7-2 favourite to win, sneaked past to win the cup.

“I want to say thank you to everyone for believing in me and the horse. This is beyond my wildest dreams. I didn’t think we were going to get there, but he picked up, and I think he still had a bit left. When he got there he saw the crowd and he wanted to stop and have a look. What a horse he is!”

Sam became the first amateur jockey to win a Grade 1 National Hunt race since Jim Wilson in 1981 when he rode Long Run to victory in the King George V Chase at Kempton in January. He is the grandson of baronet Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen.

Sam hit the sports pages in 2007 when he came fifth on his father’s horse Libertine in



Amateur jockey Sam Waley-Cohen after his remarkable victory in the Grade 1 Cheltenham Gold Cup last Friday.

the Grand National.

The Waley-Cohens clearly have a sense of adventure and are also plotting to add to their trophies by winning the Grand National at Aintree on April 9.

Sam, who has performed with distinction in several other races over the National fences, will ride leading contender Oscar Time, who is also owned by his father and trained in Ireland by Martin Lynch.



JERUSALEM MARATHON

25 March 2011

“Donate and make a difference”

On 25 March 2011, the first ever Jerusalem Marathon will take place. The selected course narrates the story of Jerusalem over the 3000 years of this city's history.

Few cities in the world can include into their marathon course inspirational views, like Jerusalem's famous historical sites and amazing landscapes. That is beauty of Jerusalem; an amazing combination of the old and the new side by side and it is this which gives this city a special atmosphere unique to it.

But perhaps what differentiates Jerusalem as a city is that it's less about architecture and historical sites and more about the people who made those sites come alive. This is what makes it a city with a soul. Its history is one of people celebrating in each others' joys and shedding tears in each others' pain.

The Shoshana foundation in South Africa raises money for single parent families as a result of tragedy. While the loss for these families cannot not be replaced, the foundation aims to reduce the burden of its consequences. To this end, a group of runners – some novice and some experienced – have decided that their run in the first ever Jerusalem marathon will be dedicated to raise money for these single parent families.

Please send your contributions to The Shoshana Foundation.
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t/a The Shoshana Foundation-Mission is to assist single parent families in need.
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Approved public benefit organisation in terms of the income tax and estate duties act
Reference no. 930032605



You too can be a part of this momentous event

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