



Do you remember holidaying in Muizenberg? (Page 10)

South African Jewish Report

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Photo: supplied

Running for charity! Rabbi David Masinter puffs his way along the London Marathon route. See page 2.

‘Run Rabbi Run’ in London Marathon!

Will Prof Karabus finally come home next week?

Lawyer Michael Bagraim, in the wake of Karabus’ final verdict being postponed to April 29, acknowledges initiatives to raise awareness for Karabus’ plight, he feels “the only thing that can help us now with that ruling is prayer”.

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Steven Friedman finds dictatorships within SA democracy



There are two dictatorships nestled within South Africa’s democracy - one that reigns in the suburbs and another facing the poor who live in townships and shack settlements.

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It is time for the Maccabiah in Israel to take its sport seriously



Solidarity with Israel is important; youngsters travel around the country and see some of Israel’s magnificent attractions. This is fundamental. Having a good time is vital, but being able to have your sports contribution taken seriously, is not negotiable.

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Jewish millennials are showing increased attachments

The rise in Jewish activism is tied to strong support for Israel. Fully 78 per cent of Jewish students today say that support for Israel is important to them - the same percentage that says social justice (and having a sense of responsibility for the Jewish people) is important.

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Shabbat Times

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April 27 / 17 Iyar		
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17:08	17:58	Durban
17:28	18:18	Bloemfontein
17:24	18:15	Port Elizabeth
17:16	18:07	East London

KASHRUT ALERT

COMMUNITY INPUT REQUESTED FOR PESACH BUYING

Every year, shortly after Pesach, the kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues meet with the major retailers and manufacturers to provide them with community feedback.

The community is requested to assist the kashrut department by answering the following questions:

- Which products did you like (and why)?
 - Which products did you not like (and why)?
 - Which products could you not find in your area?
 - Which products would you like to see for next year?
 - Do you buy imported products?
 - Did you use our online services (selling chametz, online guide, facebook group etc).
 - We added features to our Pesach Guide - did you find the guide and its new features/format useful?
 - Any other comments/issues/suggestions?
- Feedback can be sent to kashrutnotice@uos.co.za

From page 1

'Run Rabbi Run' in the London Marathon!

A mere five months ago, a group of men challenged Rabbi David Masinter, Chabad House Director in Johannesburg, to run the London Marathon for charity. Each of the individuals involved pledged a substantial amount of money to Chabad's Miracle Drive fundraiser, should the rabbi finish the race - and needless to say, he did!

Chabad said in a media release that with the camaraderie and support of Jonny Milner, Daniel Milner, Saul Sassoon and Daniel Shapiro, Rabbi Masinter finished the race in just 5 hrs 59 min, breaking the 6 hr mark, thereby raising in excess of R1.8 million.

He crossed the halfway point at 2hr 40min, and when asked how it felt to have finished the race, the rabbi exclaimed: "At over R45 000/km, the pain of quitting would be far worse than the pain experienced while running."

All the money raised from this "Run Rabbi Run" campaign will go towards two specific Miracle Drive programmes, namely the Children's Camp for special needs children and the Balance your Life Programme, being launched in May, aimed at giving sound expert advice to people as to how to bring equilibrium into their busy lives.

Dead man walking

*If health was a thing
That money could buy,
The rich would live
And the poor would die.
But G-d, in his wisdom,
Made it so,
That the rich and the poor
Together must go.*

Or, as our beloved Shammes Normie often puts it: "If the rich could pay the poor to die, the poor would make a good living!"

We all pass on, but we don't die the same way.

According to his sister, Mona Simpson, Steven Jobs' last words were: "Oh wow. oh wow. oh wow!" This reflected his faith in Far Eastern spirituality and the calmness with which it accepts death.

While Buddhists use stoicism, Jews use humour. Mitch Albom (from "Tuesdays with Morrie") was asked by his childhood rabbi to deliver his eulogy, which he did.

When he was finished, he played a cassette surprising the congregation with a pre-recorded message from their rabbi. "Throughout my life I was asked two things: First, do you believe in G-d and secondly, what happens when we die?"

"Does the soul exist after death? To the first question I always answered 'yes'. To the second question my answer is... yes. But friends, I'm sorry, now that I know I can't even tell you. You'll have to find out for yourselves!"

Then there's US Army Maj Nidal Malik Hasan who shouted "Allah Akhbar" as he fired into a group of civilians and soldiers in Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 innocents. To his chagrin, he wasn't killed yet. Nobody's sure what he'll say when they most probably give him the electric chair.

Hezbollah terrorist Hassan Nasrallah said: "The Jews love life... we are going to win because they love

life and we love death."

He's right and he's wrong. Judaism celebrates life - but is not afraid of death. We just find it somewhat unseemly; a bit pointless, if you will. "What do You gain from my death?" asks King David. "Does the dust praise You?"

Parshat Emor opens with this theme. G-d instructs the Kohanim not to "defile" themselves by entering a cemetery. Death is an anomaly, a peculiar space unworthy of entry for priests who are dedicated to the service of G-d, the source of all life.

It is a tribute to Judaism's eternal optimism that we pray on Mondays and Thursdays that G-d should remove "the plague of death" from us. We simply don't accept that it has to be this way.

To be sure, honouring the dead is right up there in Judaism. But when we take our leave of the cem-



Rabbi Dovid Wineberg
spiritual leader
The Green & Sea Point
Hebrew Congregation

etry, we ritually wash our hands to "purify" us from that contact. A definite line separates life from death and we dare not confuse the two.

"The wicked, in life, are called 'dead'; the righteous, even in death are called 'alive'."

Life is purpose and achievement - it is here, in this world, that we could affect change within the world and ourselves. It is here that we could choose to run - not away from danger but towards it - to help the other.

So, to those dead men walking among us, we say: You will never stop us reaching our 'finish line'. We choose life."

Community Voices

Spotlight on challenges facing SA community

South African Jewry in contemporary times seems beleaguered on many levels. We asked key opinion-makers living and working in the community, what they believe our greatest challenges are - leadership issues; crime and corruption in South Africa; religiosity/inclusivity; emigration; BDS and Israel rhetoric, a combination of everything, or whether it is something else.



Victor Gordon (director of Tararam, the Israeli Embassy's cultural arm):

"We can't ignore the potential negative effects of a growing onslaught against Israel. Those forces seeking to delegitimise the Jewish State have the unquestioning support of a largely left-leaning media and an undemanding public, concerned with neither fact nor truth. Danger arises when our own community harbours self-doubt about Zionism's cause and begins to believe that the latter, which forms the very basis of our spiritual longing and need for a state of our own, is in fact an aberration and anachronism. It is essential that every Jew educates him/herself about the reasons for a strong, democratic and secure Jewish State."



Claudia Braude (independent scholar and archivist):

"Short on accurate historical memory, ethical vision and self-reflection and -criticism, local Jewry (left, right; secular, religious; and leadership, community) is faced with identical challenges as citizens everywhere. We read too little and consume too much. While some have failed to constructively engage the apartheid past, others commandeer the high moral ground to now question Israel's right to exist. Never heeding Reb Yechiel Weinberg's affirmation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this community tramples liberal values and tolerance underfoot. Oy!"



David Abel (national vice-chairman: Likud South Africa; and co-chairman: Support Association for Zionism):

As a life-long Zionist activist, I believe that the most important responsibility facing the SA Jewish community is to assist in the promotion and defence of Israel - as a Jewish State existing within the borders of our ancient Jewish homeland according to biblical prophecy, living in peace with her neighbours. That involves: (a) vigorous opposition to BDS, Open Shuhada Street, StopTheJNF and all who promote the delegitimation of the Jewish State; and (b) providing maximum support for the leadership of the SAZF and SAJBD who are doing a splendid job in pursuing those presently threatening Israel's and the community's welfare.

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When will Prof Karabus finally come home?



It was another false start in the Karabus saga; he will now have to wait until April 29 when the presiding judge has indicated he will deliver a final verdict.

ROBYN SASSEN

Retired paediatric oncologist, 78-year-old Professor Cyril Karabus (pictured) of Cape Town, has since last August been detained in Abu Dhabi on charges of manslaughter and fraud. This was as a result of the death of a three-year-old terminally ill cancer patient, which he was tried for and found guilty in absentia and without his knowledge 10 years ago. Scheduled for an appeal on the morning of last Tuesday, April 23, Karabus’ defence lawyer Khalfan Al Kaabi was optimistic that Karabus would leave the court a free man. Indeed, Michael Bagraim, Karabus’ lawyer in Cape Town, told local newspapers he “will be home on Wednesday”. Karabus had already been exonerated by an Abu Dhabi judge, but

the state took the case on appeal. Bagraim’s prediction was not, however to be. “The prosecution said it was appealing because the verdict in the retrial was based on a medical liability committee report, and not a forensic report,” writes Khadija Patel in The Daily Maverick. Though the professor was cleared in March, explain Haneen Dajani and Awad Mustafa for The National, “when a court-appointed medical committee found his treatment of three-year-old Yemeni leukaemia patient Sarah Adel both necessary and appropriate and that he had displayed no negligence in the case, prosecutors believed the

court had failed to properly consider a further finding of the committee - that the decision to turn off the patient’s life support was taken before she was considered brain dead according to international standards.” “Professor Karabus was not administering to the deceased at the time she passed away,” Bagraim pointed out. “Karabus had handed the case over to a neurologist. This is easily verified,” he added, “and should be quick on April 29.”

Bagraim: “The only thing that can help us now with that ruling is prayer”

While Karabus’ lawyer Michael Bagraim acknowledges all the initiatives that professionals and the lay community are making in the name of boycotts and raising awareness for his plight, he feels “the only thing that can help us now with that ruling is prayer.” This follows a statement from the Professional Ethics and Standards Committee (PESC), a part of the faculty of Health Sciences at Wits University in which they refer to the manner in which Karabus has been treated as “morally indefensible and a gross travesty of justice, on the part of the judicial system of the UAE. “Based on core ethical values, which includes the duty to support colleagues whose human rights have been infringed, and while recognising and respecting academic freedom and personal choice,” the statement, which is signed by Professor Jeanine, chair of the PESC and Professor Ahmed Wadee, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, adds, “the PESC calls for a boycott of all activities and programmes associated with the UAE, including the third African Health Conference scheduled to be held

between May 7-9 in Johannesburg. The Africa Health Conference is organised by Informa Life Sciences Exhibition, a commercial company which has its headquarters in Dubai.” According to prominent Johannesburg-based gynaecologist and obstetrician Dr Theo Kopenhagen, who has been driving this awareness initiative, “this call for a boycott of all activities and programmes associated with the UAE, which specifically includes the Africa Health conference and exhibition, in solidarity with Prof Cyril Karabus’ continued incarceration in the UAE, comes from such an impeccable source that it has to carry a massive amount of weight. It now behoves every medical practitioner in SA to seriously consider these statements from these august bodies, and take the appropriate ethical action.”

SAJBD retracts “Jewish view” on homosexuality published in M&G

The Board says it “represents Jews irrespective of their affiliation and sexual orientation”

The Mail & Guardian newspaper this past week (April 19) in an article on gay and lesbian rights, focused on how the various religions viewed homosexuality. Statements were published from representatives of Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, expressing differing degrees of tolerance towards gay people. The “Jewish view” published by the paper from a board employee, which expressed a hard-line view condemning homosexuality outright, had not been officially authorised by the board, which came under criticism from gay and other members of the Jewish community. In a media release, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies said it would like to clarify that the statement given on the Jewish view of homosexuality to M&G, “does not reflect the broad spectrum of opinions within the wide range of Jewish religious institutions on the issue. “Furthermore, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies represents Jews irrespective of their affiliation and sexual orientation.”

Note: The SA Jewish Report will be running a debate in the near future on the question of gays in Jewish life.



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Israeli Embassy celebrates Israel’s 65th in style

The annual Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations at the Embassy of Israel in Pretoria, is a highlight on the Jewish social calendar. Guests were welcomed to the sunny embassy lawn on April 18, to show their support for Israel.

The embassy, in a media release, spoke of the sound of music and the aroma of Israeli-themed food filling the air as everyone enjoyed an afternoon reflecting on Israel and her accomplishments over the 65 years of her existence.

Ambassador Dov Segev-Steinberg and his personnel, together with the multitude of South African friends of Israel, rejoiced in the co-operation between the two countries. In his address, he shared hopes for peace and the “desire to build bridges towards meaningful dialogue with our Palestinian neighbours in order to find resolves based on the principle of a two-state solution”.

On a personal note, he summarised his past five years in South Africa, noting as he prepared to leave his post here, he would remember it as one of his most interesting and enjoyable posts.

Among the many who attended the event were

King of the Zulus Goodwill Zwelithini; Queen Thandi, Queen of Linduzulu Palace; Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, head of the Zionist Christian Church; Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, president of the African Christian Democratic Party; and Ambassador C T Rubushe, Chief Director of Middle East at the Department of International Relations and Co-operation.

Conveying a message from the SA Government, Ambassador Rubushe reflected on the contributions of the Jewish community in South Africa “...many contributed significantly to South Africa’s development... Many [Jews]... took part in the anti-apartheid and liberation struggle...”

Regarding bilateral relations, he praised “the incredible contributions Israel has made to South Africa”, saying: “These valuable projects... are complementary to the objectives of our own National Development Programme.”

King Zwelithini echoed Rubushe’s sentiments in sharing his hopes for further co-operation between the two countries, specifying



Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa, Dov Segev-Steinberg and King Goodwill Zwelithini of the Zulus.

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On the eve of Yom Ha'atzmaut, the entire Yeshiva College campus gathered for an evening of Torah learning. Each age group learnt Torah at their own level, and fun Israel-related activities were offered to the younger children.

Says CEO Rabbi Laurence Perez, “we view the State of Israel in the same way as the Israeli Chief Rabbinate has always viewed it as “Reishit tsmichat geulateinu” - the first signs of the flowering of the Jewish People's ultimate redemption. Thanking Hashem, studying a Torah perspective on the establishment of the State of Israel, and expressing our unequivocal solidarity with the State of Israel and her citizens, is our way of celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut.”

“As part of our Shacharit davening, the school campus comes together to sing as a combined school Hallel, and people from all parts of the Johannesburg community join us for this very moving tribute.”

The YC campus ended the morning on a high – with over a 1000 of our learners and teachers participating in a festive march through the streets of Glenhazel.

“The link between Yom Hashoah (remembering the victims of the Holocaust), Yom Hazikaron (remembering Israeli soldiers who fell in defence of our Land) and Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day) is very strong. Yeshiva College as a campus makes it a focus to mark all three occasions appropriately and with dignity – remembering the holy martyrs of the Shoah, the price we have paid for our Land, and the celebration of simcha and joy of the historic return of our People to their homeland.”



CEO Rabbi Laurence Perez leads the Yom Ha’atzmaut festivities



Singing Hatikva are Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, Gilad Friedman head of Yeshiva Informal Department (Yid) and CEO Rabbi Laurence Perez



YC girls salute Israel’s independence with joyful song and dance

the importance of exchanges in agricultural know-how to develop SA's most rural areas, and the desire for collaboration between the youth of the countries. He praised the Jewish people’s ability to always rise, categorising Israel’s history as one filled with numerous paradoxes and tragedy, but most of all, triumph.

Dr Fanaroff awarded Order of Mapungubwe

Well-known astronomer Dr Bernie Fanaroff (pictured) has been awarded the Order of Mapungubwe (silver), by the President, as a national order to South African citizens for excellence and exceptional achievement.

Dr Fanaroff, an alumnus of Wits University, is the moving force behind the Square Kilometre Array telescope to be erected in the Northern Cape.

Six Wits alumni were awarded National Orders by the President. National Orders are the highest awards that a country can bestow on its citizens or eminent foreigners.



World News in Brief

Sharansky to pursue Kotel prayer plan

JERUSALEM - Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky has been tasked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pursue his plan for a permanent egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall.

Netanyahu and Sharansky met last week and discussed the plan and its progress. It calls for the Robinson’s Arch archaeological site at the southern part of the Western Wall to be used as a permanent space for egalitarian prayer. The Western Wall plaza would be expanded to encompass the additional prayer space. The two sections of the plaza, separated by the Mugrabi Bridge, would share a common entrance. Sharansky unveiled the proposal to New York Jewish leaders.

“One Western Wall for one Jewish people,” he said. “In this way, the Kotel will once again be a symbol of unity among the Jewish people, and not one of discord and strife.” (JTA)

Zev Krengel denies BDS charges against him regarding Lyric concert

Zev Krengel (pictured), president of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, has categorically denied BDS accusations that he was present at and involved in the alleged mistreatment of a protester at last week Monday night’s Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City.

Such claims, he said in a media release, were just one more example of BDS-SA activists seeking to smear the Jewish communal leadership by fabricating malicious and unfounded charges against its representatives.

The accusations, he added, indicated the desperation of the BDS campaigners who were attempting to claim victimhood in light of their unsuccessful

attempt to disrupt a Yom Ha’atzmaut celebratory concert.

Far from his being involved in violent altercations between protesters and security, Krengel said, the complete opposite had been the case.

“In the course of the event, I was in continual communication with the organisers of the protest to help ensure that everything went off peacefully.

“The SAJBD firmly believes in the right to peaceful protest,” he said.

“This is something I have regularly done throughout my 12 years in Jewish communal service; I had been visible throughout the proceedings of the concert.”

Krengel said the Jewish community, like any other, had a



constitutional right of freedom of association, which meant it had every right to celebrate its heritage and special days without fear of intimidation or harassment from outside parties. It was this right that had been trampled upon by radical

anti-Israel activists, he said. The greater public had nevertheless been able to see through BDS-SA’s rhetoric of “peaceful protest” and their transparent strategy of smearing the reputation of individuals as a way of diverting attention from their aggressive and illegal behaviour on the night in question and on previous occasions.

The most obvious proof that he had not “assaulted” the woman, added Krengel, was that he had not been wearing a checked shirt – as was alleged by the “victim”.

Krengel said he had been deeply offended by the outrageous attack on himself as an individual and as a communal leader and was considering his options for legal action in this regard.

World News in Brief

Israeli airlines end a two-day strike after agreement



JERUSALEM - Three Israeli airlines have ended their two-day strike following a deal struck between the Finance Ministry and El Al.

The ministry agreed to fund 97,5 per cent of the airline’s security costs, up from 70 per cent, in order to keep the domestic carrier competitive under the new “open skies” agreement with the European Union. The airlines also agreed to undergo a streamlining process in order to further cut costs.

El Al, as well as Israir and Arkia, last Sunday launched an open-ended strike, hours before the European-Mediterranean Sea aviation agreement was approved by Israel’s Cabinet.

The agreement, which allows European airlines to increase their flights to Israel for five years, could substantially decrease the costs of airline tickets for Israeli travellers to Europe.

Ben-Gurion Airport workers had been set to launch a sympathy strike on Tuesday morning. (JTA)

Friedman finds dictatorships within SA democracy

STEVEN GRUZD

There are two dictatorships nestled within South Africa’s democracy - one that reigns in the suburbs and another facing the poor who live in townships and shack settlements, according to political analyst Professor Steven Friedman (pictured).

The first seeks to silence any opinion that is not criticising the government wholeheartedly, while in the second, those disagreeing with local power holders can quickly be targeted with physical violence.

Friedman was speaking on “The tyranny of the minority: Why much of what we are told about our country is not really true”, at the Union of Jewish Women’s adult education division in Johannesburg on Monday.

He said that from listening to conversations among the privileged in the suburbs in South Africa, one might get the impression that “the governing party is the source of all evil” and the main question was whether one should publicly express hatred for it or ignore it.

In reality, he contended, “the ANC’s influence on lives in suburbs is just about zero”, yet people complain endlessly.

No credit is given for the

social grants that support some 15 million people in the country and stimulate economic activity, nor for the millions now on life-saving anti-retroviral treatment for HIV.

“We don’t have balance, or hear varying voices,” he said, arguing that when views reasonably sympathetic to the ANC were espoused by commentators, they were condemned as government lackeys or propagandists.

Friedman argued that in the second “dictatorship” - in townships, shack settlements and rural areas - traditional leaders, politicians and officials dominated and did not tolerate any challenge to their turf.

They were often in cahoots with local police to enforce their will. “We’re not being told what happens to 70 per cent of the population in South Africa,” he said. News reporting on so-called “service delivery protests” was superficial, and often did not bother to find out the real reason for the community’s frustration. “Often they want government to leave then alone,” said Friedman.

Just simply having a new Constitution and elections, did not instantly create a new national reality, he argued. Patterns persisted, especially around racial issues, and will do



for a long time to come.

Pre-1994 attitudes had not disappeared - witness the reactions when a black pilot was introduced as a flight took off.

He noted that the latest census in fact attested to tremendous progress over 18 years in provision of water, electricity and attendance at schools, although income inequality had stagnated and sometimes worsened. He also urged the audience to find out more about the 70 per cent who were not able

to take part in these debates.

During questions, Friedman was asked for three things he would change in South Africa. He mentioned increased accountability for politicians with real consequences for wrongdoing; serious and sustained negotiation on key national issues by business, labour and government; and the revival of vibrant platforms and outreach processes to bridge the racial divide, many of which ceased after 1994.

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Jewish Report

Do medical ethics encompass human rights?

An intriguing aspect of Prof Cyril Karabus’ ongoing detention in Abu Dhabi - almost nine months now - is the challenge it poses to medical professionals about what stance to take on something not strictly medical, but more about human rights.

It is astonishing that Karabus’ case has yet again been postponed until Monday next week. It was believed he would finally be acquitted on Tuesday this week and allowed to leave. South African papers - including this one - were already planning to meet him - and welcome him - at the airport in Johannesburg or Cape Town.

Professional medical associations, which primarily devote their energy to medical matters, have in this case mobilised to punish the UAE, informing members that working there - often a lucrative exercise – alas, comes with risks. The South African Medical Association (SAMA), the British Medical Association and the World Medical Association (WMA) have all issued statements.

SAMA has advised South African doctors to “be aware of the medical liability risks, if and when practising medicine in the UAE”. The WMA said doctors thinking of working there should “note the working conditions and the legal risks of employment there”.

Individual doctors belonging to other associations, have done the same, for example those belonging to the Health Professionals Council of SA, the South African Society of Medical Oncology and key players in gynaecology – Prof Karabus is a retired paediatric oncologist.

The ball was set rolling in South Africa by gynaecologist Dr Theo Kopenhager, when he publicly announced he was cancelling a talk he was scheduled to give at a conference organised by a Dubai-based company, in protest at Karabus’ treatment.

Do human rights fall within medical ethics? In South Africa during the sixties and seventies, Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town - where renowned heart surgeon Chris Barnard had performed the first heart transplant - was revered as one of the world’s most important teaching hospitals, which doctors and patients from all over the world visited without hesitation, despite it conforming to the rigid apartheid laws.

In the UAE case, should a doctor who decides the Karabus matter is no reason not to attend a Dubai-linked conference, be criticised? Or is it a personal choice where he might say: “I am going to the conference to interact with others in my field and to bring back important medical knowledge for the sake of my patients.”

It is beyond belief that the UAE is willing to take this blow to its image. Even if they now release Karabus, they will be left with the stench of the sorry saga, while other doctors will avoid that country like the plague.

In a Western system of justice, due process is fundamental and we take it for granted, and we assumed the UAE would behave accordingly. Yet they clearly do not regard this as important. In fact, the watchdog group Freedom House, rates the UAE as “not free”.

Is it a result of incompetence, arrogance or sheer ignorance? Or are they simply part of a mindset in that region alien to the Western approach? Not informing Karabus about charges against him in absentia for almost a decade, his arrest, detention and the denial of his right to a fair hearing are an abrogation of his basic human rights.

This is not the first such violation committed by the UAE. In 2009, Eugen Adelsmayr, an Austrian doctor working there, was indicted “for premeditated murder” and condemned to a life sentence which still hangs over him today - although he is no longer in that country. He wrote a book about the drawn-out saga.

Adelsmayr’s case should have rung alarm bells for others. Well, they have certainly been rung now - and they should ring, too, for ordinary travellers who might henceforth opt for other flights which bypass Abu Dhabi.

Could it be that unwittingly, if the UAE’s disregard for human rights actually harms its national interests, Karabus might become a catalyst for moving it - or other countries of a similar ilk - towards the mainstream fold of basic judicial principles, in practice, even if not yet in spirit?

In the meantime, we fervently want to welcome Cyril Karabus home.

At 65, Israel defies economic meltdown

YORAM ETTINGER
JERUSALEM

While most of the world is afflicted by an economic meltdown, Israel demonstrates fiscal responsibility, sustained economic growth with no stimulus package, and a conservative, well-regulated banking system with no banking or real estate bubble.

At 65, Israel’s credit rating is sustained by the three leading global credit rating companies: Standard and Poor’s (S&P), Moody’s and Fitch Ratings. Moreover, the International Monetary Fund commended Israel’s economic performance and has expressed confidence in its long-term viability.

United Bank of Switzerland (UBS) Chairman Kasper Villiger indicated that China, Hong Kong, Brazil, Russia and Israel are the future growth engines for UBS. Deloitte Touche, one of the top four global CPA firms, opined that Israel is the fourth-most attractive site for overseas investors.

The Swiss-based Institute for Management Development ranks the Bank of Israel among the top five central banks in its 2012 World Competitiveness Yearbook for the third year running.

At 65, Israel’s economic indicators are among the world’s best. For example, during the 2009 - 2012 global economic crisis, Israel experienced a 14,7 per cent growth of gross domestic product, the highest among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Israel’s 2012 GDP growth (3,3 per cent) led the OECD, which averaged 1,4 per cent. Israel’s 2012 GDP of \$250 billion catapulted to 120 times that of 1948. A \$1 132-per capita GDP in 1962 surged to \$32 000 in 2012.

Israel managed to reduce its debt/GDP ratio from 100 per cent in 2002 to 74 per cent in 2012, while most of the world experiences a soaring ratio. A 450 per cent galloping inflation in 1984 has been held in check in recent years – 1,6 per cent in 2012.

Israel’s 2012 budget deficit and unemployment were 4,2 per cent and 6,9 per cent, respectively, much lower than the OECD average of 7 per cent and 8 per cent.



Foreign exchange reserves - which are critical to sustaining global confidence in Israel’s economy and Israel’s capabilities during emergencies - expanded from \$25 billion in 2004 to \$75 billion in 2012, 26th in the world and one of the top per capita countries.

At 65, Israel’s robust demography - which leads the free world with three births per Jewish woman - provides a tailwind for Israel’s economy.

At 65, Israel attracts the elite of global hi-tech due to its competitive edge. For instance, the prestigious Shanghai Jiaotong University’s Academic Ranking of World Universities includes four Israeli universities among the top 30 computer science universities in the world. Twenty universities are from the US, four from Israel, two each from Canada and the UK, and one each from Switzerland and Hong Kong.

At 65, Israel leads the world in research and development manpower per capita. With 140 Israelis per 10 000 as opposed to 85 per 10 000 in the US, Israel is ahead of the rest of the world. Israel’s qualitative workforce benefits from the annual aliyah (immigration of Jews to Israel) of skilled persons from the former Soviet Union, Europe, the US, Latin America and Australia, who join graduates from Israeli institutions of higher learning.

In addition, Israel’s hi-tech industry absorbs veterans of the elite hi-tech units of the Israel Defence Forces. Israel dedicates 4,5 per cent of its GDP to research and development, the highest proportion in the world.

Israel’s confronting of unique se-

curity and economic challenges has produced unique, innovative and cutting-edge solutions, technologies and production lines, which have attracted global giants. For example, Google’s Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt considers Israel “the most important hi-tech centre in the world after the US”. He has invested in Israel’s hi-tech industry via his own private venture capital fund, Innovation Endeavours.

According to world-renowned investor Warren Buffett, “if you’re looking for brains, [Israel] has a disproportionate amount of brains and energy”. In 2006, Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway made its first-ever acquisition outside the US in Israel, acquiring 80 per cent of Israel’s Iscar for \$4 billion.

Intel operates four research and development centres and two manufacturing plants in Israel, and it has invested in 64 Israeli start-up companies. Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer calls Microsoft as much an Israeli company as it is an American company, because of the importance of its Israeli technologies.

Some 300 US hi-tech giants have research and development presence in Israel. Many of them invest in - and acquire - Israeli hi-tech companies.

George Gilder, author of The Israel Test and a hi-tech guru, stated: “[Israel] is the global master of microchip design, network algorithms and medical instruments... water recycling and desalinisation... missile defence, robotic warfare, and UAVs... We need Israel as much as it needs us.”

At 65, Israel has become an offshore natural gas producer, which has enhanced its economic viability, reducing its dependency on imported energy, and rendering it a net natural gas exporter by 2017.

At 65, the ongoing wars, terrorism and global pressure are realistically assessed as bumps on the road to unprecedented economic and technological growth. (JNS.org)

• *Yoram Ettinger is a former ambassador and head of “Second Thought: a US-Israel initiative.”*

• *Editor’s note: This column first appeared in Israel Hayom and is distributed with the permission of Yoram Ettinger.*

Jewish groups slam UN official Falk for blaming Boston Marathon explosions on US and Israel

Jewish organisations are calling for Richard Falk of the United Nations to step down following comments in an online essay suggesting US and Israeli policies were responsible for the Boston Marathon explosions.

Falk (pictured) blamed the Boston Marathon explosions on the US and Israel.

Falk, who serves as a special rapporteur for the Palestinian territories with the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), wrote in an article titled “A Commentary on the Marathon Murders” on the Foreign Policy Journal website that the Boston Marathon explosions were “retribution” for the actions of the U.S. military in the Middle East, which he considers part of the “the American global domination project.”

Falk – who last fall issued a report calling



for a boycott of companies doing business with Israel and in 2011 posted an anti-Semitic cartoon on his blog – also blamed Israel for the attacks, writing “[a]s long as Tel Aviv has the compliant ear of the American political establishment those who wish for peace and justice in the world should not rest easy.”

American Jewish Committee Executive Director David Harris questioned the UN’s

judgment in allowing someone like Falk to serve for the international body.

“Given his public record, the question is why Richard Falk still occupies a UN position. Is there no shame?” Harris said in a statement. B’nai B’rith International also called for Falk to be removed from his position. “We once again call for Falk’s removal from his position within the UNHRC. His latest string of inflammatory remarks – whether it be on the Internet or in one of his “reports” to the council – has no place in the United Nations and his continued presence at the UNHRC further undermines the credibility of the system.” The watchdog group UN Watch also sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice urging them to “speak out” against Falk. (JNS.org)

Jewish millennials are showing increased attachments

WAYNE FIRESTONE AND MARK J PENN
WASHINGTON

The older generation always thinks of the younger generation as losing its traditional values, wondering: “Why can’t they be just like us?”

But in a time of expanding globalism, open social networking and greater geographical disbursement, a surprising finding of a poll we conducted shows that Jewish consciousness among millennials - young adults in college and graduate school - is rising, not falling.

As perhaps part of a global trend toward religion in general, we believe the survey indicates the next generation of Jews may be increasingly into being Jewish and following traditions.

Here are the surprising truths. According to a survey of 600 US Jewish undergraduates and graduate students conducted by Penn Schoen & Berland, nearly half of Jewish college students today participate in Hillel events - a 36 per cent increase from 2005.

More than half of the students said they would participate in a Hillel event in the next month - up from only 36 per cent seven years ago. And nearly 75 per cent of students said they viewed Hillel and “Hillel people” favourably, an increase of more than 20 per cent since 2005. The next most important Jewish institution on campus was Chabad, which is also growing in popularity with college students.

The rise in Jewish activism also is tied to strong support for Israel. Fully 78 per cent of Jewish students today say that support for Israel is important to them - virtually the same percentage that says social justice (and having a sense of responsibility for the Jewish people) is

important.

The success of Hillel is based on a six-year effort that started with the sophisticated deployment of early social networking techniques. The idea was to use snowballing student connections as the path to bringing in more students.

Hillel not only seized on this insight, but also took it backward from virtual to real - training and employing nearly 1 000 Jewish students to engage about 35 000 uninvolved Jewish peers on more than 70 campuses across the globe.

In every case, the goal was to help the unengaged students meet, explore and connect to Jewish life on their own terms. It turns out that peers not only can reach students in ways that institutions can’t, but they also can do it creatively, imaginatively and with lasting effect.

Second, Hillel hypothesised that in addition to going broader, it also could go deeper. On 10 pilot campuses, it placed Jewish educators and rabbis trained to engage students in study and conversation, encouraging students to ask the big questions that make college such a potent place for development and growth.

As students progress in their education, they are more likely to participate in Jewish events on campuses, and such participation reaches its zenith among graduate students. And this increase in interest is across Reform, Conservative and Orthodox students, as well as those self-defined as “just Jewish”.

The greater success of Jewish-based organisations on campus is no doubt the result of innovative work by those organisations, but it also signals some real changes going on underneath.

Universalism may have reached its limits, with the reassertion of a greater sense of ethnic and religious identity growing in its place. Social networking makes it easier for groups to come together and find their commonality; threats to Israel and the potential growth of nuclear weapons in the region give an urgency to that connection. Birthright Israel is also giving many an up-close and personal experience.

So, just when we all thought young people were most likely to blend in even further and abandon purely Jewish institutions, instead we see them reasserting Jewish identity, support for Israel and, perhaps most important, seek out connections with one another to feel part of a larger community they can call their own. (JTA)

• Firestone is CEO of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. Penn was formerly CEO of the polling firm Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates, which conducted the survey.



Film actor Woody Allen, who over the years has epitomised the quintessential Jewish man, confused about his identity.

An ancient church has been discovered by Israeli archaeologists near the site of the Ark of the Covenant

TEL SHILOH - Archaeologists have discovered an ancient church in the ruins of the ancient biblical city of Shiloh.

The church, which dates to the fourth century CE, is believed to have been built over the site where the Ark of the Covenant was once housed by the ancient Israelites, Israel Hayom reported.

The church was discovered by accident when archaeological workers, who were digging a drainage ditch for rainwater, came across remarkably well-preserved mosaics.

The city of Shiloh is an ancient biblical city located in the hills of Samaria that was the religious and cultural capital of Israel before Jerusalem. It is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible and it also became a very important centre of worship during the early Christian period. Today the area, known as Tel Shiloh, has become an important site for archaeologists. (JNS.org)

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JEWISH REPORT DIDN’T SHOW NECESSARY RESPECT TO FELDMAN

I find it necessary to express my deep concern that all the Jewish Report could find for last week’s front page was a picture of Isla Feldman on the floor (at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City).

Firstly, she was one of the first to confront the intruders to last week Monday’s Yom Ha’atzmaut function, which is an indication of her dedication to her position as executive director of the SAZF and for this position she should be accorded the (necessary) respect.

Secondly, and most importantly, why should her name be highlighted on the front page so that the BDS now have a name to lay charges (against)?

You found it suitable to put a picture of the protesters on page three. The picture of the ranting and raving Muslims should have been relegated to the back page or left off.

I am sure you are aware that the right hand page of a paper is a prominent page as it is read first. So, why give our opposition this prominence.

Ronny Silbermann
Sandton

We are astounded that our reader saw “disrespect” for Isla Feldman in the front page photograph. It was extremely newsworthy, to show the extent of violence that happened at the event. Leave a photograph of the protesters out? We run a newspaper; our readers have a right to know – and see – what’s going on. - Editor

JEWS MUST TAKE LEAD IN PUTTING AN END TO THESE PROTEST ACTIONS

The picture of Isla Feldman lying prostrate on the floor at a concert at Gold Reef City, as depicted on last week’s front page of Jewish Report, is extremely disturbing to say the least.

I think it is high time that Jews in this country take the lead in putting an end to the type of protest actions that have recently been held, disrupting Jewish events.

Much like Nazi Germany, when Jews were pushed around, the same is happening here in South Africa and we either are taken by surprise or put up very little resistance.

Surely there are Jewish men who are sufficiently interested and capable of attending the various concerts and functions, who can form a Jewish Defence League that can deal with these protesters when they become violent, making it dangerous for these cretins to pursue their violence.

Instead of us being led like lambs to the slaughter, let us take the initiative and make it not worthwhile to meddle ith us.

The problem with the BDS demonstrators is that they have so little knowledge of what they are protesting about, that they don’t know that they don’t know! Therefore, any meaningful attempt at a discourse with them will fall on deaf ears.

The Yossi Reshef concert at Wits is another example where violence perpetrated by protesters, now forms the subject matter of charges “for a possible contravention of the university’s code of conduct”.

I would not hold my breath. Vice Chancellor-in-waiting Adam Habib, is well known for his anti-Israel stance and I venture to suggest that nothing will come of those charges against Tasneem Essop and her bunch.

Personally, I would be more than willing to assist and if necessary, face the consequences of the law. We need to become pro-active.

Nathan Cheiman
Northcliff, Johannesburg

NO, MR BOGACZ, G-D IS ALIVE AND WELL

I refer to the letter in Jewish Report by Yossi Bogacz, (who questioned the existence of G-d).

G-d is alive and well. I’m afraid Mr Bogacz’s dyspeptic outburst at the West Park commemoration was a little wasted on me.

I thought it was the Habonim contingent fervidly crying “Chazak Ve’ematz” which evoked fond memories of my youth.

While nobody is remotely qualified to pass judgement on the faith issues of anyone who survived Europe’s Holocaust, Mr Bogacz would be advised to acknowledge (a) that many believers including Torah giants such as Rabbi Ephraim Oshry and the Klausenberger Rebbe, remained steadfast G-d-fearing Yiddin against the most appalling and inhumane odds and that (b), many of the Baal Teshuvah movements in countries outside of South Africa were initiated by Holocaust survivors.

Michael Golding
Johannesburg

YOM HA’ATZMAUT CONCERT: ‘STOP THE JNF’ ENDORSED OUTSIDE DEMONSTRATION

The events around this year’s Yom Ha’atzmaut concert at Gold Reef City were certainly out of the ordinary. A public demonstration outside the venue raised some fundamental issues relating to Israel/Palestine relations; and a non-violent but direct intervention by several pro-Palestinian activists proclaiming Israel an “apartheid state” took place inside the venue itself. This intervention was met by a physical response from the CSO and a number of Zionist Fed office-bearers and has resulted in assault charges being laid against them by the protesters.

Taking all this into account, Stop the JNF endorsed and participated in the outdoor demonstration seeing it as a call for Israel to embrace a negotiated settlement based on the historic compromises both peoples have to make in order to achieve a just peace.

Enough bloodshed has taken place, enough vicious rhetoric has been ventilated, enough economic misery has blighted the lives of millions of people in the region.

Our Jewish heritage instructs us to reject the sword as an exclusive means to achieve security; history shows that those who rely purely on military means, inevitably fail and bring great suffering to themselves and to those they seek to control.

On this basis we call on Jewish South Africans to exert pressure on the Israeli leadership to heed the international consensus and reopen substantive talks with the Palestinian parties.

It is highly significant that soon after Barack Obama’s historic speech to Israeli youth in Jerusalem (urging them to be bold in pursuit of peace and to recognise the rights of Palestinians) that over 100 mainstream American Jewish leaders endorsed this vision and likewise urged the Israeli government to respond favourably.

We certainly hope that Israel’s leadership does not continue to drag out the current stalemate - one that will surely lead to further wars and to the intensification of Israel’s isolation.

In terms of South Africa’s own negotiated settlement we should bear in mind that Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders were for decades demonised as “terrorists” and anti-democratic “communists” before Afrikaner nationalism and white racism bowed to the inevitable.

On a final note, we would like to state that we support freedom of expression and assembly for all individuals and groups, no matter their opinions. In this sense we are strong supporters of the SA Bill of Rights and our constitutional guarantees.

We furthermore condemn all violence as a response to the exercise of freedom of expression. Such responses only breed more violence.

Tzedek, tzedek tirdof! Let us above all seek justice.

Allan Horwitz
Spokesman for Stop the JNF
Johannesburg

‘UNDERWHELMED’ BY ROB DAVIES’ RE-LABELLING CONCESSION

I want to comment on the story in last week’s Jewish Report, “Welcome outcome after long deliberation on labelling issue”.

Too little too late. That’s my reaction to the news that Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies has decided to adopt the technical trade requirements when it comes to the labelling of imported goods originating from Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

I say too little too late, because the damage has already been done. A few days before Pesach Terry Crawford-Browne who is well known for his anti-Israel stance, included a few words in a letter a Cape Town daily in response to a piece by Ben Levitas, chairman of the Zionist Federation in Cape Town, stating that Spar had joined the BDS campaign and had pulled stocks of Jaffa fruit (oranges) from its shelves.

How true this is I don’t know, because I very seldom shop at a Spar. If Crawford-Browne’s claim is correct, then we should boycott Spar.

Woolworths also stocks produce from Jaffa and when I popped into the store at Sunset Beach (near Milnerton) a few days ago, attached to a plastic bag of Jaffa citrus was a label that said “imported goods”. Perhaps Woolworths also supports the BDS?

Brian Josselowitz
Milnerton

APOLOGIES FOR JEWISH RELIGIOUS VIEW EXPRESSED IN MAIL & GUARDIAN

In a feature dealing with attitudes towards homosexuality within the various religions, that appeared in the April 19 issue of the Mail & Guardian, I was quoted giving the Orthodox Jewish perspective and identified in my capacity as Associate Director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

I was in error in commenting on the issue since the SAJBD (as affirmed in this week’s Above Board column) does not take any particular position on questions of religious doctrine.

I apologise for any misunderstanding my comments may have caused in this regard.

David Saks
Johannesburg

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‘Memories of Muizenberg’ exhibition is heading for London



Some happy snaps from bygone years, supplied by the community who holidayed in Muizenberg and comprising an important component to the Muizenberg exhibition.

ROBYN SASSEN

Having shattered expectations in terms of popularity, the Memories of Muizenberg 1900 - 1965 exhibition, mounted in Cape Town in 2010 and Muizenberg and Johannesburg in 2011, opens next month in London.

“It was reprinted in Israel and was shown there in Herzlyia last year this time,” says Joy Kropman, the exhibition’s curator who brought it to life nearly six years ago.

“It was a joint project I embarked upon with the late Professor Jocelyn Hellig, and Hazel Cohen, convener of the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre in Johannesburg, in 2007. Jocelyn very successfully put together the magnificent ‘Seeking Refuge’ exhibition, which dealt with South African Jewry with German roots; the Muizenberg project was designed and exhibited similarly.”

Consisting of some 25 panels dealing with different aspects of the history and culture of the popular holiday town of Muizenberg near Cape Town, which was defining for many SA Jews from the late 19th century until about the 1970s, the project’s database had to be created from scratch.

“The exhibition is dedicated to Jocelyn who passed away in 2009,” adds Kropman. “With Yvonne Jawitz, Hedy Davis and Jonty Peters, we were a team who brought the project to completion and tirelessly worked on the photographs, texts and captions.

“While the whole project is digitised and might look simple once it is done, it doesn’t just happen,” she laughs, commenting on the hard team work necessary for such a project.

“The initiative to bring it to London was driven by Ivan Kaplan, Saul Issroff and Leonard Weinreich, former South Africans now living in London and David Bloom who works at Telfed in Israel.”

The exhibition opens on May 21 and runs until June 6 at Ivy House, North London. It features a talk by Andrew Caplan on his research findings into the migration of SA Jews to London and how it has affected religious and national identity. Visit www.ljcc.org.uk.

World News in Brief

Canadian Jewish News to halt publication

TORONTO - Canada’s flagship Jewish newspaper, The Canadian Jewish News, is folding.

The newspaper, which has a circulation of approximately 40 000, announced on Monday that its final print edition would be on June 20. The closure will mean the loss of about 50 jobs.

“I never dreamed that I would be writing this,” CJNI President Donald Carr wrote on the paper’s website on Monday, announcing the end of publication. “No nightmare of mine envisioned it.”

Carr cited “the ravages that printed newspapers and magazines have been experiencing across the world.

“The digital age, in which news and commentary are retrieved instantly on smart phones, on computers and on all kinds of new devices, has overtaken the printed word,” he wrote.

Founded in 1960, the paper was purchased in 1971 by a group of community leaders closely allied with the Canadian Jewish Congress.

It was not immediately clear whether the online edition would continue. The CJNI was distributed in Toronto, with a Montreal edition. There are smaller, regional Jewish publications across Canada, but the paper was seen as national and independent.

The closure will leave The Jewish Tribune, published by B’nai Brith Canada, as the community’s sole non-regional Jewish publication. (JTA)

Budapest anti-Semitism rally draws tens of thousands

BUDAPEST - Tens of thousands of protesters marched in Budapest against anti-Semitism, as Hungarian police prevented a neo-Nazi demonstration for the third time in two weeks.

The march last Sunday against anti-Semitism was part of the annual March of the Living, which usually draws a few thousand people who commemorate the Holocaust with a solemn walk along the Danube River.

This year tens of thousands showed up with Israeli and European Union flags in what many said was a tour de force against ideas promoted by the ultranationalist Jobbik Party and neo-Nazi fringe groups.

In parallel, police banned a group of extreme-rightist bikers from holding a rally in front of the city’s main synagogue during the March of the Living event. The biker group had been refused a permit earlier this month for a rally under the slogan “Give gas” - a possible reference to the extermination of Jews during the Holocaust.

Last Saturday, police officers in Pecs, in southern Hungary, detained 18 people who police said belonged to the Pax Hungarica movement and participated in a rally in honour of what would have been Adolf Hitler’s 124th birthday on April 20. They were charged with disturbing public order, according to a report by the MTI Hungarian news service. (JTA)

New York teen charged with hate crime in subway arrest

NEW YORK - The arrest of a New York teenager for harassing a kippah-clad Jewish man on a subway led to a melee that was shown on YouTube.

Stephan Stowe, 17, was charged on eight counts, including aggravated harassment as a hate crime, in the April 15 incident in Brooklyn.

According to a Daily News report three days after the incident, Stowe and a group of friends approached the Jewish man and greeted him with the traditional Muslim greeting “Assalamu Alaikum”.

When the Jewish man did not respond, Stowe said the two were cousins. The Jewish man said they were not and called on Stowe to leave him alone.

Stowe responded with ethnic slurs; the Jewish man then took Stowe’s photograph with a cell phone.

“I am going to kill you right now,” Stowe said as he took the phone and deleted the photo. “They should have killed all of you,” he added, apparently referring to the Holocaust.

Police attempted to detain Stowe at the Eastern Parkway stop when onlookers attempted to intervene. One of the onlookers, Sheniqua Joseph, 22, was arrested for attempting to obstruct the arrest of Stowe.

A bystander filmed the melee on a cell phone and uploaded it to YouTube. (JTA)

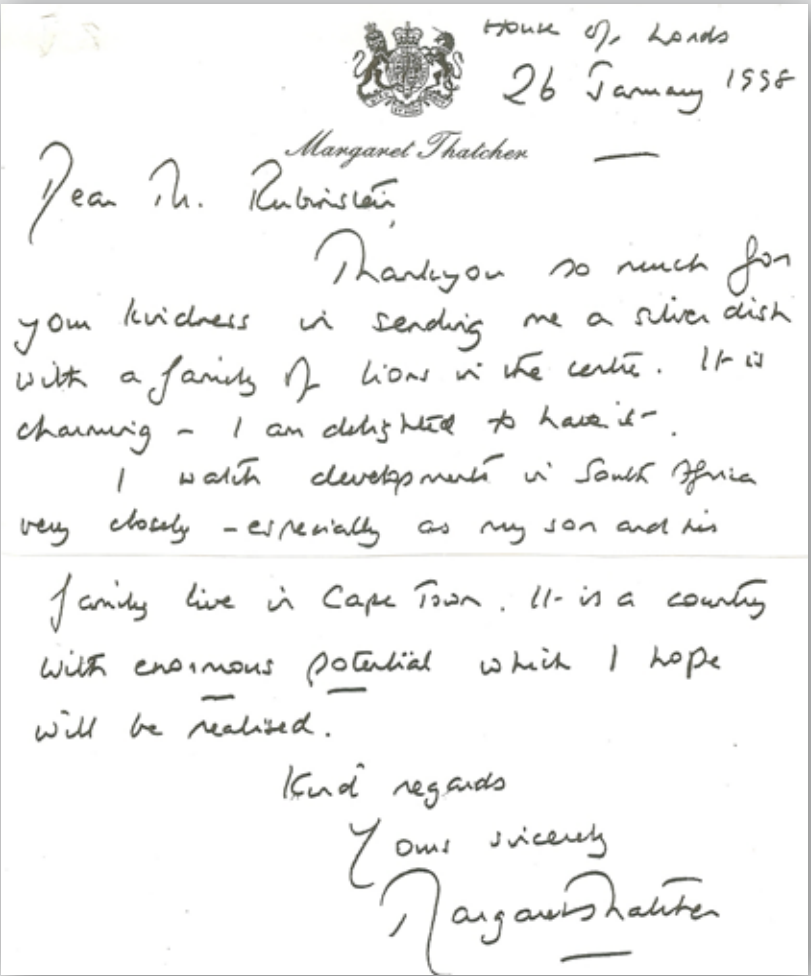
Thatcher’s warm response to Rubenstein

With the recent death of former Prime Minister of England, Margaret Thatcher, memories of her era are recalled.

Leon Rubinstein of Florida on the West Rand, at the end of 1997 wrote a letter to Margaret Thatcher thanking her for what she had done for South Africa while she was prime minister of England. As a token of appreciation he enclosed a small gift.

To his great surprise, Thatcher personally wrote back to him in January 1998, thanking him for his letter and gift and stated that “South Africa is a country with enormous potential”.

Her letter is reproduced here.



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The embodiment of a joyous sense of rule breaking

Show: “Thinking in Paint”, Gallery 2, Rosebank, (011) 447-0155
Until: May 4

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

Walking into the gallery, you could be forgiven for feeling you’ve entered a time warp. The space is a pristine white box, celebrating abstract work which enjoyed status a generation ago. Yet, there’s nothing dated in these new works by some of the country’s most respected.

On April 10, 1934, arguably one of contemporary South Africa’s most important art activists, Bill Ainslie, was born. His thinking birthed the Johannesburg Art Foundation.

Fiercely pro-abstract, Ainslie’s voice echoed those of influential US critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg

Fiercely pro-abstract, his voice echoed those of influential US critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg, who believed art should be made for its own sake. In 1989, Ainslie died in a car accident. In a sense, this show ponders what South African art would have been had he lived longer.

‘Thinking in Paint’ is by four stalwarts in the industry - Gail Behrmann, Ricky Burnett, David Koloane and Jenny Stadtler - each influenced by Ainslie. The result is about the internal dialogue of work not trying to “look like” anything other than what it is.

It’s art which also embodies a joyous sense of rule-breaking; which instead of disrespecting the medium, reflects on its holiness.

It’s hard to look at Behrmann’s soliloquies and see them as paint on canvas. You get goose-bumps as you approach these muscular pieces, replete as they are with a sense of urgent fire. They’re like looking at cosmic windows into a

world unseen and hold their corner of the gallery with earnestness that’s never precious.

Burnett, respected as curator and teacher, presents a suite of four paintings which touch red with a bruisedness like ripe fruit. They feature shards of poetry by William Blake, Wallace Stevens and Emily Dickinson.

“O Rose thou art sick,” says Blake through one, as Dickinson’s “An ear can break a human heart//As quickly as a spear” reverberates elsewhere.

The most powerful is “The Song” in which dots of paint you may not expect to see undiluted, are cast buoyantly across the surface. The words, which snatch and grab at your sensibilities as you look, are not all legible but this doesn’t hurt the reading of the work.

“O Rose thou art sick,” says Blake through one, as Dickinson’s “An ear can break a human heart//As quickly as a spear” reverberates elsewhere.

Alongside Burnett’s pieces are several by David Koloane, characteristically blending an energy-driven charcoal line, with colours frisky and dirty.

He engages night rhythms in a busy, busky city and while some slip off into obscurity, others hold that boogie-woogie status of traffic lights and hooting cars in the middle of a metropolis, without being specific, allowing their sense of abstraction to carry the noisy messy disruption.

Stadtler’s Lotus Eater is on the gallery’s right wall as you enter. Her use of unmodulated colour hits you like a slap in the eye; the work joyously engages you loudly, bringing a cacophony of Chappies bubble gum wrappers and a miscellany of textures together.

On paper, the exhibition seems small. As you leave, with the works’ diverse harmonies singing in your head, you realise something about the enormity of expression, wit and guts splayed in real painting.



“Streetwise”, David Koloane’s work in mixed media on canvas.

Subotzky’s work tosses you between hilarity and horror



Mikhael Subotzky’s Kwable and Yaovi Ahotor, 2007. From I Was Looking Back, 2012, wall installation.

Show: “Retinal Shift”, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, (011) 631-4467
Until: June 15

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

He speaks of his city with palpable love. You look at his elderly one-toothed face and experience such a flow of sincerity, you love him. Griffiths Sokuyeka is a guide at Grahamstown’s 19th century Observatory Museum, which contains a camera obscura that gives visual access to the city and its surrounding townships.

The museum is one of Grahamstown’s few all-year-round tourist venues. A filmed tour of it and through it, a virtual tour of the whole morass of city, history, politics and gossip that is Grahamstown, conducted by Griffiths and Moses Lamani, is central to Mikhael Subotzky’s 2012 Standard Bank Young Artist exhibition, on the Johannesburg arm of its national tour.

The work, “Moses and Griffiths”, a paean to Grahamstown, is impeccably shown on four monitors. Its material is spliced sensitively into concatenations of value, shifting from mirth to eeriness.

There are similar shifts elsewhere in this extraordinary show of three installations and several stand-alone pieces. On the gallery’s left, 100 photographs, some with smashed glass mounts, drawing from Subotzky’s oeuvre over the years, hang.

Collectively entitled “I was looking back”, the installation comprises quickly imbibe-able mini-essays about vision. It has resonance which hums with Pieter Hugo’s unforgettable 2006 series Looking Aside, which forayed into the worlds of blindness and albinism, contemplating beauty, but Subotzky’s

project differs: it tosses you between hilarity and horror with the flick of an eyeball, leaving your head spinning with diverse emotion.

Before you leave, however, the exhibition’s title work grabs you by the eye. It’s a self-portrait, essentially, but one made by an optometrist, revealing the artist’s left and right retinas captured photographically with diagnostic equipment.

It’s a weird, anatomical image, recognisable if you’ve been in that chair and had that bit of equipment look into your temporarily blinded eyes. It’s a startling liquid orange image, but is as curiously invasive and personal as showing a uterine scan.

Along the right side of the gallery is a less successful, but equally curious project. Entitled, “Who’s Who”, it comprises scanned mug shots from 11 books from selected years from the Who’s Who in Southern Africa series. They’re presented in a digital slideshow; the images change together. It parades mostly white men without context, and quickly parches the curiosity.

The gallery features a remarkable little exhibition about fire in Africa, curated by Barbara Freemantle, downstairs. It too teeters between hilarity and earnestness; Johannes Segogela’s sculpture of two devils braaiing a hapless victim in conjunction with an image of drought by David Goldblatt, an exquisite smoke drawing of a lost child by Diane Victor and a range of magnificent fire-blackened traditional African tools against a YouTube compilation in which teenaged boys set their hair alight, resonates with cheekiness and accessibility without being irresponsible.

Subotzky’s catalogue is on sale at the gallery for R400, with essays by critics Sean O’Toole and Anthea Buys, a transcript of “Moses and Griffiths” and a memory trigger to these astonishing photographs.

Arts Briefs

Joseph’s and Scoville’s works will benefit athletes with disabilities

“Priceless Imperfection” and “Zara’s Dirty Pearl and Rough Diamond Jewellery” selected art works and handbags made by well-known Johannesburg-based painter Helen Joseph and South African-born California-based jewellery designer Zara Scoville, will be on show and for sale on Sunday April 28 at 88 Houghton Drive, Houghton, between 14:00 and 17:00. Achilles International Inc, a prominent non-profit organisation based in over 65 locations worldwide, offering support to athletes with disabilities, will benefit from the proceeds of the sales. Call Greka 082-572-0371 or Zara 082-368-1450 for further information and to RSVP.

Jersey Boys’ run extended by two weeks

Showtime Management, SA producers of Jersey Boys, the Broadway hit musical that has taken Johannesburg by storm, has announced a two-week extension of the show’s season at Teatro, Montecasino, owing to overwhelming public demand. Jersey Boys must close on Sunday, June 9 in time for its Cape Town season at Artscape which opens on June 19. Jersey Boys tells the true story of how four kids from the wrong side of the tracks became one of the greatest success stories in pop music history. The Four Seasons: Frankie Valli, Bob Gaudio, Tommy DeVito and Nick Massi, wrote their own songs, invented their own sounds and sold 175 million records globally - all before they were 30! Visit www.jerseyboyssa.co.za for more information.



KDVP learners win 2 top positions on Junior Council



Photo: Lauren Segal

Amy Stous and Joshua Broomberg.

ELIZABETH LEAVER (HOD ENGLISH)

We would like to congratulate Joshua Broomberg and Amy Strous, our KDVP representatives on the 2013 Johannesburg Junior Council, for their success in the recent Council elections.

At an induction ceremony held at Parktown Boys’ High School on March 19, Joshua was elected as Chief Whip, while Amy won the coveted position of chairman of the Outreach Committee.

As Chief Whip, Joshua is one of six executive members who are responsible for organising all aspects of the Council year. He co-ordinates the smooth operation of the Council, as well as leading Council growth (in terms of new schools) and maintaining discipline.

The Outreach Committee is involved with community service and seeks to improve the lives of disadvantaged people across the broader Johannesburg community.

As chairman, Amy will initiate new projects and collections. The Committee’s main event is the annual Johannesburg Junior Council Kids Carnival which treats over 500 orphans to a day of fun and activity.

The Committee also organises fundraising, collections of food, clothes, blankets, stationery, books and regular visits to orphanages.

Over the years, KDVP learners have made a major contribution to the success of the Johannesburg Junior Council. Ryan Canin and Saul Musker both served as mayor, while Julia Chaskalson is the outgoing deputy mayor for 2012.

The Council is made up of 37 schools and 74 pupils from across Johannesburg, and runs as an NGO under the supervision of a governing body. Every year, the Council holds a number of events, ranging from youth marches to conservation drives.

Minnie Bersohn celebrates Israel’s 65th



Photo supplied

MICHELLE VINOKUR

The Junior Group children at Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School celebrated Yom Ha’atzmaut by decorating the number 65 - Israel’s birthday - with icing and biscuits.

Pictured are Jayden Sarkin; Megan Sochen; Gabriella Behr; Gabriella Salomon; Aaron Levin; Matt Angel; Matt Fanaroff; and Robbie Behrmann.

Building together, dancing together - the Orange Farm experience

TOVA GOLDSTEIN

The grade 11 learners of King David Linksfield and Victory Park, took part in an incredible experience in conjunction with the DIJE (Division of Informal Jewish Education) and Habitat for Humanity, when they went to Orange Farm south of Johannesburg and built

four houses for four beneficiaries.

Alongside the township volunteers, the learners built houses from scratch, including putting in pipes, ceilings, walls, etc.

It was an uplifting experience, and the learners got to know all about hard work, gratitude for what they have, and a strong sense of community.

Sitting together during the lunchbreak and sharing lunch with the people who live there, listening to the stories of the beneficiaries and hearing about their struggles, and teaching hundreds of children a new dance and singing and dancing down the streets of Orange Farm, are just a few of the incredible memories we took from the experience.



Photo: Tova Goldstein

Eve Kollenberg; Reason, the beneficiary of the house; Nicole Sacks; and Jonti Strimling, building the outside walls.

ADVERTORIAL

ORT SA TEAMS UP WITH SAZF FOR MARATHON CAMPAIGN 2014 NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM

ORT SA has achieved incredible success with marathon campaigns for fundraising since 2010.

The idea of runners taking on a massive physical challenge in the name of charity is not a new concept but most runners who have run with ORT SA will concur that their marathon experience has been life changing and memorable .

Ben Swartz, Vice-Chairman, SAZF and Greg Kinross, Chairman, JNF SA are two of these runners. Ben and Greg have participated in two of ORT’s campaigns since 2010.

It was in Paris this year that the idea of running a more inclusive marathon while promoting the State of Israel, both within the Jewish community and beyond, was born. And what better setting than the Jerusalem Marathon, 2014?

“ORT SA acknowledges the good work of other non-profit organisations and to accommodate this, this time, a portion of each individual’s funds raised can be donated to a charity of the participant’s choice,” says Nicci Raz, fundraising manager .

The idea behind ORT SA’s marathon campaigns is to inspire people to take on the challenge of running marathons and at the same time raising

funds for a worthy cause.

The proudly South African team and their supporters will enjoy a unique experience in Israel over the marathon weekend, created for them by the SAZF team, which is guaranteed to be unforgettable!

Details will be released soon, so watch out for information on how to sign up. The participants will be able to choose from the 21km and 42km (full marathon) distance.

“The SAZF is proud to be associated with ORT SA and to embark on such an exciting project for 2014. ORT SA pioneered the marathon fundraising campaigns in our community and this project will be the first of its kind for SAZF,” says Swartz.



A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

A day in my diary



ChevrahKadisha
AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE

Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

It was the end of another long day of varied encounters. As I checked through my diary one final time before heading for home, it occurred to me that by sharing the diverse aspects of a single day with you, our partners, you might be surprised by the mixture of corporate and communal challenges this welfare organisation faces.

I started my day at 07:00 with a treat - davening in the Sandringham Gardens Shul. It's a beautiful, intimate setting and

inspiring to be with our regular minyan. One member, Myer Mervis from Golden Acres, celebrated his third barmitzvah, 96th birthday, there last month.

It's a short walk from the shul to breakfast in the main dining room, but with over 700 residents on this campus, friendly people stop me along the way for a chat. Over oatmeal and eggs I get feedback from the residents and a real sense of how we, and they, are doing. Thank G-d, most are very content.

A protest march is starting at 09:00 outside the main entrance and I go there to ensure that, as planned in meetings over the preceding days, our CSO security and the police are in place.

These are off-duty, outsourced care-workers

presenting complaints to their employer (they work with us, but not for us). The care and safety of our residents is paramount and we have ensured that a full complement of on-duty care-workers are inside, tending to them.

Everything is under control so I return to my office for a meeting with the head of our residential Mental Health Services. We house 80 people on site and today need to discuss the management of two complicated cases: one person with bipolar disorder, the other, schizophrenia.

I meet with our new COO to plan maintenance around the new telephony system we are implementing, aimed at improving communication and reducing costs.

EuroChai in London is hosting a banquet in a few weeks to raise funds from ex-South Africans for us and other local beneficiaries. They have requested a promotional video from us and I watch and approve the final draft.

An hour spent on the phone and e-mail allows me to make bereavement calls, chat to a volunteer who is experiencing frustrations, and catch up with correspondence - staff and community e-mails.

Just before I leave to inspect progress at Brixton Cemetery where we now have full-time security, strong fencing and no vagrants, I spend some time collating and e-mailing comprehensive Board packs to our Board members for our upcoming Board of Governors meeting the following week.

Finally, an impromptu meeting with a community member seeking direction in a sensitive family matter, which I refer to our Social Services Department.

And then, this column...

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Mazeltov to ChaiFM



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

informed of our activities and other interesting developments life.

This includes Steven Gruzd's weekly "Board Talk" show every Friday 12:00 - 13:00 and a weekly update each Thursday, usually given by National Director Wendy Kahn.

In addition, Board representatives and guest speakers are interviewed on a regular basis. Congratulations to Kathy Kaler and her team for all their excellent work in providing our community with this invaluable resource, which we hope will only go from strength to strength.

Confronting Internet hate speech

In bygone times, the mass posting of anti-Semitic literature was far more difficult than it is today, entailing making multiple copies, laboriously addressing envelopes and laying out a substantial sum for postage.

Today, anyone with a computer and Internet access can, with minimal effort and even more minimal expense, disseminate as much offensive literature to multiple recipients as he or she likes.

Sadly, if predictably, there has been no shortage of individuals taking advantage of the latest

We are delighted that ChaiFM, Johannesburg Jewry's feisty community radio station, has been honoured with several prestigious awards at the recent MTN Radio Awards.

Since its founding some five years ago, the station has provided a vibrant news and discussion forum on matters of Jewish interest. For the SAJBD, it is now an important communications vehicle through which to

keep our constituency

technology to propagate their warped world views. One of the most egregious offenders has been a certain Snowy Smith, who over several years has been bombarding members of both the Jewish and general community with rabidly anti-Semitic postings.

The sheer persistence of his campaign and the growing number of those offended by it, prompted the Board to institute proceedings in the Equality Court. Smith has indicated that he is completely unrepentant regarding his actions, and indeed has gone on to distribute further hate mail.

Ultimately, however, he will not be able to avoid answering for his actions, and the same applies to anyone else who seek to defame the Jewish people in this way.

The SAJBD and Jewish pluralism

As has been emphasised before, the Board strives to be as inclusive as possible when representing the Jewish community.

It recognises that within the community, there is a broad range of political, religious and cultural viewpoints and lifestyle choices. For this reason, we will not take a position on, for example, questions of religious doctrine, nor will we criticise or endorse a particular political party.

It was therefore unfortunate that a comment on Orthodox Jewish attitudes towards homosexuality was provided to the Mail & Guardian by our Associate Director last week. He has since been taken to task and has acknowledged his error.

A message on our website clarifies that the statement on the Jewish view of homosexuality does not reflect the spectrum of opinion within the wide range of Jewish religious institutions on the issue and that the SAJBD represents Jews, irrespective of their affiliation and sexual orientation.

• Listen to Steven Gruzd on Jewish Board Talk on 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00.

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

A column of WIZO South Africa

We are free because Israel is there

In the Jewish World, April becomes a see-saw of commemorative events and emotions that are deeply embedded in our national psyche.

Yom Hashoah makes us realise that, as the years go by, the importance of passing on the personal testimonies and stories to the next generation, must not be underestimated... l'dor v'dor... Lest we forget. Yom Hazikaron is a painful reminder of the existential threat that still faces Israel and our hearts go out to the families in Israel who have suffered loss and pain defending the Jewish Homeland.

And then close on its heels comes Yom Ha'atzmaut... an occasion to dance and wave blue and white flags and celebrate the realisation of ancient dreams come true.

It lifts our spirits and renews our earnest desire to be part of the miracle that is modern Israel. We WIZO women took active part in realising this dream through our projects that responded to the great needs of the women and children who created the State of Israel.

In 65 years we have witnessed desperate battles for survival and the ingathering of exiles from the ravaged countries of pre- and post-war Europe.

We have seen the Jews arrive from Arab lands, Ethiopia and Russia, in streams that have enabled the country to thrive and grow



WIZO
South Africa
Tamar Lazarus
President

with new blood, new ideas, new possibilities... and like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, Israel has enabled the desert to flourish and all of mankind to benefit from her intellectual acumen and ingenuity.

Unfortunately the work is not complete, there are still too many poor people, too many who need education and peace is not in sight, so we continue to assist wherever help is needed. Neve Amiel Merchavim, a youth aliyah village, in the Jesrael Valley, has been a beneficiary of WIZO SA for many years. This month it saw their much needed Cultural Centre reopen its doors, providing a clubroom, cafeteria, home-theatre space, learning and computer room as well as a fully-equipped gym.

The pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are in sore need of recreational facilities. We are very proud of having provided Neve Amiel with the popular petting zoo as well as dormitories for soldiers who have graduated from the school and have no home to return to on weekends.

With Yom Yerushalayim approaching, we give thanks to the Almighty for having enabled us to be the blessed generation that can celebrate the unification of Jerusalem.

We are privileged to live and practise Jewish life in freedom because our beloved Israel is there. Chag Sameach once again.

This column is paid for by the WIZO South Africa

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ESCOJIDO Annette
Our very dear and special friend Annette passed away in Israel on Thursday April 18. Her love, devotion, tenaciousness and indomitable spirit, will be sorely missed. She loved deeply, people and animals alike. Rest in peace. Love always, Jodi, Maurice, Aliza, David, Alter and Hannah Karpes.

MEMORIALS
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What's On

Today, Friday (April 26)

- UZLC hosts Tuli Qanya who will talk on “My Poland ‘March of the Living’ Experience”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria, 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Saturday (April 27)

- Beit Emanuel in Parktown, is hosting a weekly series of talks in its adult education programme, in its boardroom every Saturday morning after the Shabbat morning service and before the Talmud study session. Times: From 11:15 to 12:15 and Talmud study at 12:15. No cost. Today, Dr David Bilchitz will talk on “The Kaddish Symphony: Blasphemy or Pro-found Theological Exploration?”

Saturday evening (April 27)

- Shuls of the North West celebrate Lag B'Omer at Greenside Shul. Time: 19:30. Cost: Adults R80, children under-13 R50, under-6 free. Price incl meal and cold drinks, music, fun and entertainment for the kids. Cash bar available. Contact: (011) 788-5036.

- WIZO Tzabar hosts a Lag B'Omer

evening at the Ernest Ullman Recreation Centre, Alma Road, Morningside Manor Time: 19:00 (Motzei Shabbat). Cost: R100 including light supper, baked potatoes and marshmallow over the bonfire. Secure parking. Contact: Ayala 082-412-2269 or Graciela 082-925-0924.

Sunday (April 28)

- Temple Israel in PE hosts its Lag B'Omer - 3rd Annual Leo Baeck 5km Memorial Run/Walk & Fête at Temple Israel, 7A Upper Dickens Road, Central, Port Elizabeth. Entries open 09:00. Race starts 10:00 with a lucky draw and an auction. Enquiries: Yonah Blackman (041) 373-6642, 08:00 - 13:00 Monday to Friday.
- Second Innings hosts Shirley Firth, former actress and director, who will speak on “Shirley’s Rag Bag”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Monday (April 29)

- UJW adult education division hosts Aubrey Matshiqi, political

analyst, who will talk on “2014 Elections - Political Realignment and the State of Democracy in South Africa. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (April 30)

- UJW adult education division hosts Estelle Sher who will present “Beethoven - An Overview”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (May 1)

- Hyde Park Shul at Summer Place hosts Rabbi Mendel Lipskar who will talk on “Man Search for G-d? G-d Search for Man? Or both? Why Do We Pray? Does G-d Really Need our Prayers? The Power and Effect of Prayer.” Time: 19:30.

Friday (May 3)

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

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

- Orchid WIZO Florist, for chuppahs in shuls or gardens; canopy, drapes and floral arrangements our specialty. Daily deliveries of floral and fruit arrangements as well. Contact: (011) 728-4513, after hours: (011) 728-2769.

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

- Johannesburg Children’s Home is appealing for shoes and takkies for children and teenagers. Contact Edna or Hylton Segal (011) 970-4266.

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

- The Selwyn Segal Gift Centre has a wonderful selection of well priced gifts for all occasions. Visit them Monday to Thursday from 08:30 to 16:00 and Friday till 14:00 Phone (011) 640-6413 or (011) 640-5171 Website: **www.selwynsegalgifts.co.za**

- Join WIZO every Thursday for a “Lunch & Learn” shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz, 13:00 -

14:00 at Beyachad. Information: Joyce, (011) 640-2416.

- Stellenbosch Hebrew Congregation has a Friday evening service every week in shul, starting at 18:45. Contact (021) 886-5257.

- The Yiddish Academy offers weekly basic, intermediate and advanced classes on Monday evenings at 19:30, Tuesday mornings at 10:30 and Thursday evenings at 19:30 at the RCHCC, Glenhove Road, Houghton. Conversational groups. Details: e-mail **yiddishacademy@gmail.com** or call Hazel Cohen on (011) 728-8088.
- Supervised bridge with Jeff Sapire Tuesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (intermediary) and Wednesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (advanced), at the Clive M Beck Auditorium. Booking: Hazel or René, (011) 728-8088/8378. E-mail: **hazelc@greatpark.co.za** or **renes@greatpark.co.za**

- Beis Midrash Chofetz Chaim is offering a second ma’ariv minyan every weekday evening (Monday - Friday) at 21:00, cnr Elray and Michel Streets, Raedene. Open to broader community. Don’t fret if you need a later minyan. Secure parking provided.

- Sunday Scrabble Club meets every Sunday at 10:00 at Zahava’s, Grant Avenue, Norwood, off 9th Street. Cost R5. Players of all strengths welcome. Larry 082-888-5355.

- WIZO’s Wize Buys in Raedene, requires nearly-new clothes, shoes, kitchenware (pots and pans, cutlery, crockery) bric-a-brac, etc. Phone Sandy (011) 645-2515 for goods to be collected, or deliver to WIZO office at Beyachad, Raedene.

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Time for the Maccabiah to take sport seriously

ROCKING THE BOAT

Jack Milner

I have been able to attend the Maccabiah in Israel on two occasions, the first, in 2001, which was the on-off-on again Games.

It was jeopardised because of the Intifada waged by Israel’s neighbours but “encouragement” from the US resuscitated the event after it had been called off, although in the end it was a shortened Games.

At the same time, South Africa played a Davis Cup tie against Israel in Ramat Hasharon and I also covered that event. One of Israel’s best-ever players, Amos Mansdorf, captained the Israeli team in that tie and in a talk to him he made an interesting observation. The Maccabiah, he said, “is not a sporting event. It’s a political event”.

I didn’t quite agree with him at that point until I attended the 2005 Maccabiah. It was a fully constituted Games with all the bells and whistles and I covered the event from start to finish. Halfway through the tournament I got to fully agree with Mansdorf.

And therein lies the dichotomy. From

Gymnastics Gold Medallist Aly Raisman, will be a guest of honour at this year’s Maccabiah.

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SA JEWISH REPORT
Sport
26 April – 3 May 2013

The opening ceremony of the Maccabiah – always a wonderful, moving experience.

Israel’s point of view the Maccabiah exists to show Jewish solidarity to the world and hoping that as many participants as possible will seek aliyah afterwards.

Most of the athletes, however, look at the Maccabiah as a serious sporting event and many of them include it on their CVs later in life.

The truth is that there needs to be a middle path. Solidarity with Israel is important; youngsters are allowed to travel around the country and see some of Israel’s magnificent attractions. This is fundamental. Having a good time is vital, but being able to have your sports contribution taken seriously, is not negotiable.

The participants need to be reassured that they are being treated fairly and on an equal footing with players from other countries. That, sadly, has not happened in the past and while one remains hopeful it will change this year, I think that is unlikely.

The cost of attending the Maccabiah goes up steeply every four years and it is becoming more difficult for athletes to come up with the money. One has to compliment the many members of the Jewish community who go out of their way to assist those who cannot afford it.

This year apparently around 9 000 athletes from 72 different countries are expected to participate in the Games, far exceeding the record set four years ago. The 19th Maccabiah will get underway on July 18 with an opening ceremony at Teddy Stadium and will end on July 30.

Among the stars at this year’s Maccabiah will be American swimmer Garrett Weber-Gale, who won two gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, with Olympic gymnastics gold medallist Aly Raisman a guest of honour.

Maccabi Tel Aviv coach David Blatt and 1992 Barcelona Olympics silver medallist Yael Arad, were on hand at Kfar Maccabiah sharing their past Maccabiah experiences as the preparations for this summer’s Maccabi Games gather pace.

Blatt and Arad were speaking at a media conference attended by Guiora Esrubilsky, president of Maccabi World Union, Yair Hamburger, chairman of MWU, and Amir Peled, chairman of the Maccabiah.

“The athletes in the Maccabiah not only try to lift themselves to new heights, but they also try to lift each other,” said Blatt, who won a gold medal with the US basketball team at the 1981 Games.

“The Maccabiah isn’t just about com-

peting or recording a result; it’s about co-operation.”

Arad echoed Blatt’s sentiment. “When I first competed in the Maccabiah in 1985 I didn’t do so well, but I can still remember how excited I was to take part,” he said.

“Eight years later I lit the flame at the opening ceremony and that is a moment I will never forget.”

I have been lucky enough to experience the feeling of walking into the stadium for the opening ceremony with the South African team. It is an enduring memory - from the atmosphere on the night to the trading of kit which the South American teams appear to have down to a fine art.

But hopefully by now the Israeli authorities have opted for a serious sporting event over a holiday camp for Jews.

Referee all matches fairly, investigate all incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct without a bias to one particular team, player or country and play the ball, not the man.

It is vital that all participants have a good time and experience the joy of being in Israel, but let the main focus be on sport and sportsmanship.

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