

Stocks, property or gold?

Experts debate the options

DAVID SAKS

So, where do you invest your hard-earned money in these uncertain economic times? At the Chabad Miracle Drive “Great Debate”, on Tuesday evening at the Sandton Sun, three experts in different financial fields, argued the case for their particular area of involvement – Stocks, Property or Gold.

The respective pundits were David Shapiro, Marc Wainer and Alan Demby. The whole was very efficiently moderated by Ivan Epstein, co-founder and CEO of the Softline Group.

Unlike so many community panel “discussions”, which generally consist of little more than a series of isolated speeches followed by questions and answers rather than a genuine give-and-take debate, the exchanges were fast-moving and to the point.

Amidst all the good-natured banter, with each speaker trying to outdo the other in witty put-downs at the expense of the other’s position, there were plenty of useful insights for the large, enthusiastic audience to take away with them.

Coming out to bat first for the Property option Wainer, the CEO at Redefine Properties Limited and Redefine Properties International



Alan Demby Rabbi David Masinter Mark Wainer David Shapiro

Photo by Ilan Ossendryver

Limited, first clarified that it was commercial rather than residential property that he was dealing with.

Here, the returns had been consistently strong over many years, in the worst of years at least not registering a loss and overall consistently outperforming the JSE.

Demby, who is executive chairman of The Gold Group, said that gold, which traditionally strengthened in times of unrest, had been appreciating at remarkable speed, the previous year touching on \$1 950 an ounce.

Among its intrinsic advantages, it was tax efficient and maintenance free, as well as being by far the most popular of the precious metals in the global market. Kruger Rands, some 60 million of which had now been sold, was one of the top-300 brands in the world. A Kruger Rand bought at R35 in 1970 was now worth R16 000.

The beauty of the stock market, said David Shapiro, was that for a few hundred rand, one could become a partner with the likes of such eminently successfully businessmen as Brian Joffe of Bidvest, while sitting back thereafter and allowing Mr Joffe to do all the work and the worrying.

While recognising the reliability of commercial property, this constituted a very small part of the greater All Share Index. The world’s richest men had always been in equities.

In the discussion that followed, each speaker sought to defend his position while pointing out the shortcomings of his counterparts.

With gold coins, one had total control at the end of the day, said Demby. With shares, it was all very well when the market was strong, but what happened when

things went pear-shaped?

Regarding property, what happened when premises could not be sold, or when transfer problems arose?

Wainer conceded that property growth yields were not going to “blow the lights out”, yet the growth they provided was steady and dependable. Going the share market route was inherently risky, and more akin to taking a trip to the casino.

Shapiro said there was a lot of energy still left in the world economy, with an exaggerated focus on Europe’s problems often obscuring the ever-increasing consumer demands coming from India, China and Brazil.

In thanking and summing up, Chabad’s Rabbi David Masinter said that from the Torah point of view, it was advisable not to keep all one’s eggs in one basket.

Israel warns of retaliation for rocket attacks

“If we have no choice and the fire will continue, then they clearly will be hit harder and nothing is out of the question,” Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told Army Radio. “We will do whatever is necessary to stop this.”



Hoffman’s arrest at Western Wall galvanises liberal Jewish groups

Hoffman said. “If the Wall belongs to the Jewish people, where are the Reform, Conservative, secular?”

SAKS: Beware accepting all scientific pronouncements as ‘gospel’

“So complete has been the perceived triumph of scientific materialism over anything smacking of theism, that today, those attempting to defend the latter even along strict scientific lines, are routinely dismissed out of hand.”



NY debut for Israel Philharmonic on its short US tour

Veteran double-bassist Gabriel Vole says playing for the IPO is not purely about playing music “but about solidarity and making music together”.

Bloom dissects Justice Richard Goldstone’s ‘no-win’ situation

MampoerShorts, the brainchild of professor of journalism, Anton Harber and partners, can be read in one sitting, and aim “to promote SA’s top writers”.

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17:56	18:48	Durban
18:14	19:06	Bloemfontein
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18:12	19:06	East London

KASHRUT ALERT

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What happened to altruism?

If you listen, says Hashem to Avraham, then you will be rewarded with children, with money and with fame.

Does that sound like the great Avraham? What happened to altruism? Every action has a motivation - sometimes positive, sometimes negative and sometimes a mixture of the two. If someone is doing a spiritual action in order to obtain some beneficial material consequence, is their motivation brought into question?

A realistic and supportive Torah system allows for, and even encourages ulterior motives! In fact it's advisable. Doing it for secondary reasons, say the sages, will bring a person to be motivated by the primary reason.

So, you like the kichel and hering at shul? Nu, that's okay. Come anyway! With time, your motivation will be upgraded. There will probably always be some ulterior motivation, but its ratio to more wholesome inspiration will adjust

as you mature spiritually.

That's fine. It's good. Go with it! We're human. The Torah encourages us to be real. Doing otherwise is unwise. But yes - keep check on whether there has at least been some shift over time.

Nevertheless, in the case of Avraham, with reference to the first command from the A-mighty to the father of the Jewish people - it seems a little uncomfortable to read the first verses of our Torah which seem so heavily laden with personal gain?

Clearly the righteous Avraham, visionary builder of a nation like no other, was motivated by the greater good. Why, then, does Hashem find it necessary to offer and record in the Torah such lucrative physical benefits?

If we can answer this question, then we can also make some sense of how we can better relate to material gain, even to nachas from our children and to fame, in a spiritually health manner.

Is it possible to see those

physical benefits not just as the carrot to motivate us to do something intrinsically good? Is it possible that obtaining those blessings from Hashem can have a spiritual function in and of themselves?

Avraham was certainly altruistic! He was motivated by the cause itself - by spreading the glory of G-d, and by benefitting his descendants and all of mankind. And we can do the same if we view physical gain - children, money and fame, as Avraham was promised, and which we all seek - not as reward, but as resources.

Here's the secret: Hashem was not telling Avraham that if he buckled down and listened he would be rewarded. Rather, he was assuring him that this was Avraham's path to maximum achievement, and ultimate fulfilment. He illustrated this to him by outlining all those resources that would become available to him as he set out to follow this path of greatness.

And so it turns out that all



PARSHAT LECH LECHA
Rabbi Dani Brett
Ohr Somayach Cape Town

those things with which Hashem blesses us should not be viewed as carrots on a stick, but rather as the food that turns into energy to enable the donkey to march on. And then all those physical things in our world - be they money, houses, cars, shul brochas, family or even the more ephemeral ones like fame and inspiration - become resources which enable us to achieve greatness too.

Oh, and yes, then, when things aren't quite as we might have hoped or chosen, we can more easily accept that Hashem has illustrated that for us, in this instance, alternative resources are more what we need.

Altruism. Materialsim. The key is to make them not enemies, but partners!

Community Briefs

Dianne Kantor and Ronnie Aizen at Our Parents Home ball.



Photo supplied

Our Parents Home, Sandringham Gardens, have a real ball!

The annual Sandringham Gardens and Our Parents Home "Honour the Aged" balls are always a highlight on the residential calendar, commemorating October 1, the International Day of the Older Person. The aged homes said in a media release that this special day affords the homes the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the wisdom and experiences of their residents. At Our Parents Home, the ball featured a "Roaring 20s" theme with over 200 residents participating. Sandringham Gardens' ball was a dazzling black and white affair held on October 10. The décor was stunning and the music was performed by Sonic Entertainment. – CELESTE EVERITT.

Remembering the glory days
and camaraderie of The Arc

The Old Arcadians Association last week held a reunion for all former Arcadians in their old home, "Arcadia" in Parktown, a property built by Sir Lionel Phillips in the early 1900s, now a National Heritage site. Jules Gordon, chairman of The Old Arcs Association, addressed the function. He recalled the glory days of the Arc and "the Arc spirit and bond" through all the generations of people who grew up as one "really big family". He celebrated several Old Arcs, now legends in business, the professions, and in sport, and also those who had served The Arc for many years.



Photo: Anne Brest

(Sitting) Lou Nerwich; Benny Gavson; Ekkie Litvin; and Loraine Grevler. (Standing) Effie Segal; Barney Segal; Sidney Levin; Barney Myers; Zummy Isenberg; and 98-year-old Solly Jossel.



Soloist Rabbi Ilan Herrmann; Mark Samowitz; and Adam Davis.

Soul Simcha concert highlights soul of Jewish music

Rabbi Ilan Herrmann's opening song at his Soul Simcha concert recently hosted in a capacity-filled marquee in Glenhazel, was a prelude to more surprises from the rabbi of Lions Shul, at his debut singing performance in this initiative which he organised under the umbrella of Soul Workout. Highlights of Rabbi Herrmann's performance included his leading of the children of The Yiddish Folk Kids Choir. Herrmann created this concert in collaboration with established soloists Adam Davis and Mark Samowitz and supported by the band, Zenith. It also included the Johannesburg Jewish Boys Choir, featuring a stand-out performance by soloist Avrami Nossel. - ALISON GOLDBERG

jewish report

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Israel warns of retaliation for rocket attacks

**OWN CORRESPONDENT
JERUSALEM**

More than 60 rockets and mortar shells fired from Gaza hit southern Israel on Wednesday, striking several homes and injuring three. Both Pres Shimon Peres and Defence Minister Ehud Barak have warned of retaliation. Barak did not rule out sending tanks and troops into Gaza to quell the attacks.

"If we have no choice and the fire will continue, then they clearly will be hit harder and nothing is out of the question," Barak told Army Radio.

In an interview with Israel Radio, Barak said: "If we need a ground operation there will be a ground operation. We will do whatever necessary to stop this."

Peres angrily denounced the barrage of rockets fired at Israel, saying: "There is no circumstance under which they will fire upon us and we will sit on our hands."

When asked whether a new reality was establishing itself in the south, Barack answered: “No, we haven’t got used to this. But there are bad people in the area who want to hurt us, and our citizens.

“The situation is much better than it was 10 years ago, and today we have Iron Dome - which is very important to note, some rockets were intercepted last night,” said Barak. (The Iron Dome missile defence system intercepted seven rockets aimed at Ashkelon.)

“The fact that terrorists succeed in harming us once in a while doesn’t mean we’re not organised.”

He added that Israel killed 15 terror leaders in Gaza over the past week in response to the mounting rocket attacks.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that Israel would not long suffer fire on its citizens and anticipated a further escalation of violence unless the Palestinians ceased their attacks.

Hamas' military wing, the Al-Qassam brigades, and the Popular Resistance Committees, both claimed responsibility for the rockets.

Four Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza sites that the military says are used for launching the rockets at Israel. The Palestinian Ma'an news agency identified the dead as members of terrorist organisations.

Between late Tuesday night and late Wednesday morning Israel Air Force planes hit four of what the Israel Defence Forces said were rocket launching sites,



Israel's Iron Dome defence system near the Israeli town of Ashdod has intercepted a volley of rockets fired by terrorist groups from the Gaza Strip area. (Flash90/JTA)

as well as a tunnel used for smuggling terrorists into Israel, according to statements issued from the IDF.

The rockets and mortar shells began falling on southern Israeli communities late on Tuesday night and continued through the day on Wednesday. The explosives scored direct hits on at least five private homes; three Thai workers also were injured, two of them seriously,

Schools have been closed in much of southern Israel, with the Home Front Command telling residents living within 16 km of Gaza to remain near bomb shelters.

The escalation on Israel's southern border came after a border attack on an Israeli patrol near the security fence with Gaza on Tuesday morning left a soldier from the Givati Brigade with a serious injury. Captain Ziv Shilon reportedly lost the palm of his hand, or alternatively one arm. He remained in a serious condition at the Soroka Medical Centre in Beer-sheba.

Southern Israel residents say they feel abandoned, defenceless and angry at a country that prioritises certain com-

munities over others. "Our lives are like a game of Russian roulette. How long will this so-called luck last?" asks one resident.

Wednesday's rocket barrage has left residents questioning the readiness of their community bomb shelters.

“We’re just waiting for the next ‘Colour Red’ alert to sound,” Mickey, a local resident, told Ynet. “We know it’s coming, we just don’t know when or where it will hit. We have 15 seconds to get to a bomb shelter but the chances of making it are slim, so we just take the kids to a room with no windows and use it as a protected space. It’s a bit like Russian roulette.”

Opposition Leader Shaul Mofaz
denounced Prime Minister Benjamin Ne-

tanyahu for not acting decisively against Hamas.

“The government under Prime Minister Netanyahu has been stuttering for four years,” he said. “They need to put Hamas in their sights.”

Labour leader Shelly Yacimovich, on the other hand, threw her support behind Netanyahu.

"I am behind Prime Minister Netanyahu and understand the complexity of the situation, which requires military action and maintaining restraint," Yacimovich said. "It is important for me to strengthen the south in their difficult hour. The IDF is doing an excellent job and we trust it wholeheartedly," she added.

World News in Brief

Israeli debate of political party heads waiting for Bibi's answer

JERUSALEM - Leaders of Israel's major political parties accepted an invitation to an American-style debate, except for Likud leader and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The debate sponsored by the Citizens' Empowerment Centre is scheduled for January 1 at Tel Aviv University, according to the organisation's website.

“We all - left and right, religious and secular, Jews and Arabs - have a clear interest in knowing exactly who we choose and why,” the Citizens’ Empowerment Centre said on its website.

Party chairmen Shelly Yachimovich (Labour), Shaul Mofaz (Kadima) and Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beiteinu) reportedly have agreed to participate, according to the Israeli media. Yair Lapid, chairman of the new Yesh Atid party, also has accepted. Lieberman said he would participate if Netanyahu agreed to join the debate. Netanyahu had not yet responded, according to Ynet. (JTA)

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Gerald Jack Horwitz: A golden visionary

ISAAC REZNIK

It is with deep sorrow that I write this obituary for the late Gerald Horwitz (pictured) obm, who passed away peacefully after along illness on September 20.

Gerald was a well-known and much respected attorney. He was, however, much more than an attorney - he was widely respected for his role in the Jewish communal affairs.

He was a most dignified and caring mensch who only thought of the welfare of others. He had a

vision and dream of Golden Acres.

He was president of Sandringham Gardens for two terms, 1984 - 1989 and 1993 - 1996.

He was one of those who were instrumental in having the name of Witwatersrand Jewish Aged Home changed to Sandringham Gardens, as he felt that there was a stigma attached to the use of the word “old” and this caused many a senior citizen of the Jewish community to feel uncomfortable when being admitted to the home.

His “golden” vision was for a retirement village to be built on

the same grounds of Sandringham Gardens. This became a reality during his second term as president of Sandringham Gardens.

A competition was launched for a name for the retirement village and during his annual visit to Muizenberg for the December recess, he visited Cape Town; the railway station, was called Golden Acres.

Immediately Gerald decided and chose the name Golden Acres for the new retirement village in Johannesburg.

So much can be written and said about his many other contribu-

tions in the Jewish community; he has left a void in the community that can never be filled. He will be remembered for many generations to come.

The lounge at Golden Acres was named in his honour for the many years of loyal and dedicated service to the Jewish community.

Gerald Horwitz was laid to rest in Jerusalem.

He was a most wonderful family man, and is survived by his children, grandchildren, sister, family members and many friends. May his memory be for a blessing.



Photo supplied

Cape Community stalwart Simon Jocum dies

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Veteran community leader Simon Jocum, an honorary life vice-president, a two-term past chairman of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies and former national vice-chairman of the Board, passed away on Friday night at the age of 81. He devoted a major part of his life to communal service.

Jocum, jovial and empathetic, usually sided with the underdog, abhorred bigotry and defended freedom of speech.

Although having reached a top level of leadership in Progressive Judaism, he had strong links with Orthodoxy, developed through his longstanding friendship with the late Av Beth Din, Rabbi Professor Eugene Duschinsky.

Born in Cape Town, Jocum was educated at Muizenberg High School and studied accountancy at the University of Cape Town.

Although having had an Orthodox barmitzvah, he was mentored by the late Rabbi Dr David Sherman, who urged him to broaden his communal activities.

Jocum was elected to the council of Temple Israel and rose in the ranks to become its president and later chairman of the SA Union for Progressive Judaism. This was followed by his presidency of the SAUPJ and his election to the executive and board of governors of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. He was a trustee of Temple Israel.

Jocum served on the Cape Town Interfaith Forum and the IUA-UCF executive. He was honoured for his service by the Cape Board at its annual conference in 2001.

Jocum entered the business world in 1949, becoming managing director of Peerless Shirt Manufacturers, a position he held till 1998.



He was chairman of the Cape Clothing Manufacturers’ Association, president of the National Clothing Federation of South Africa, chairman of the Clothing Industry Training Board of South Africa and chairman of the Textile, Clothing and Retail Advisory Council of South Africa and an honorary life vice-president of Cape Clothing Association, after serving 10 years as chairman.

Jocum’s talents extended to civic matters and politics. He was a member of the Green and Sea Point and Camps Bay Ratepayers Associations and chaired the Green Point branch of the former Reform Party.

His sporting activities encompassed chairmanship of the Glen Tennis Club and foundation membership of the Glen Country Club.

Jocum leaves his wife Pola, daughters, Renata and Nadine, three grandchildren and a brother, Hyman.

World News in Brief

Study: No anti-Semitism, anti-Israel push at most college campuses

WASHINGTON - Ninety-seven per cent of US and Canadian college campuses report no anti-Israel or anti-Semitic events, and the campus-based anti-Israel divestment effort has failed, according to a new study.

The American-Israeli Co-operative Enterprise released the findings of its new study, “Israel and the Campus: The Real Story,” on Tuesday. Mitchell Bard, the AICE’s executive director, and Jeff Dawson, the private organisation’s campus liaison, authored the report.

Student Jewish groups are beating back such efforts, according to the authors, because of professional guidance provided by campus Hillels and numerous other Jewish organisations, while the anti-Israel efforts are largely student-led.

Bard and Dawson tracked 674 anti-Israel events at 108 US and Canadian universities during the 2011–12 academic year. A third of the incidents took place on 10 campuses; four were in the University of California system. Several of the campuses, the report said, had strong pro-Israel groups and could not be characterised as “hostile toward Israel”.

Two anti-Israel groups - the Muslim Students Association and Students for Justice in Palestine - were responsible for most of the episodes.

While two American universities did adopt divestment resolutions as part of

the anti-Israel boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign, several others were defeated. No American university has divested from Israel and prominent campus presidents have said they would oppose such efforts.

“Rather than weaken the relationship between US colleges and Israel, the BDS movement has largely backfired and ties are stronger than ever and continue to grow,” the authors wrote.

The report also said that while a 2011 AICE survey with The Israel Project found that “a shocking 78 per cent of Jewish students reported witnessing or personally being subjected to anti-Semitism”, the new report found the figure “inconsistent” with their findings.

They noted that a recent survey by the Institute for Jewish & Community Research found that 43 per cent of Jewish students saw anti-Semitism as a problem - “a significantly lower, but still a disturbing figure.”

Recommendations in the new report include teaching about Israel “warts and all,” so that students can confidently discuss its complex environment; creating Taglit-Birthright Israel trips for high school learners modelled on the popular free 10-day trip for those aged 18 - 26; and building more long-distance learning programmes between Israeli and American Jewish students. (JTA)

Emir of Qatar makes landmark visit to Gaza

JERUSALEM - The emir of Qatar, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, became the first head of state to visit the Gaza Strip since Hamas took over in 2007.

Al-Thani was greeted by a Palestinian honour guard as he entered Gaza on Tuesday from Egypt. He is

heading a humanitarian mission to launch reconstruction projects totalling \$250 million, according to Reuters, and pledged another \$150 million in projects during the visit. The emir was scheduled to speak at the Gaza City stadium. Thousands of security guards secured his visit. (JTA)

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Hoffman’s arrest galvanises liberal groups



Photo: Women Of The Wall

Israeli police arresting Anat Hoffman after she said the Shema Israel prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on October 16.
BEN SALES AND NEIL RUBIN
TEL AVIV

Last week’s episode was hardly the first time Israeli police stopped activist Anat Hoffman while she was leading a women’s prayer service at the Western Wall in violation of Israeli law.

But this time, police actually arrested her and the incident appears to be galvanising liberal Jewish groups in the US and Israel.

In the United States, the Union for Reform Judaism called for a police investigation and expressed its dismay to Michael Oren, Israel’s ambassador in Washington. The United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism announced a global “Shema flash mob” for this week - a nod to the prayer Hoffman was reciting when she was arrested.

In Israel, the Israel Religious Action Centre, which Hoffman leads, launched a petition to the Supreme Court requesting that the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, which runs the Kotel, change its decision-making process to include non-Orthodox Jews. “There is no voice around that table for women, for the paratroopers who liberated the Wall, for the variety of pluralist voices,” Hoffman, who is also chairman of Women of the Wall, told JTA. “We want to dismantle

this body. If the Wall belongs to the Jewish people, where are the Reform, Conservative, secular?” For now, however, there is no co-ordinated strategy to challenge laws governing Israel’s holy site, which bar women from praying while wearing a tallit or tefillin, or from reading aloud from the Torah. In a 2003 Israeli Supreme Court decision, those rules were upheld on the ground that “local custom” at the Wall did not allow for such practices.

So with Women of the Wall intent on continuing its practice of organising a women’s prayer service at the site every Rosh Chodesh - the beginning of the Hebrew month - another incident likely is not far off.

Hoffman’s arrest during the Rosh Chodesh service on the evening of October 16, garnered more attention than previous incidents in which Hoffman was detained but not arrested. Hadassah, which was holding its centennial celebrations in Jerusalem, had sent some 200 women to pray with Hoffman, giving a significant boost in numbers to the service, which totalled about 250 women.

After Hoffman was arrested, she claims Israeli police chained her legs and dragged her across the floor of a police station. She also claims that police ordered her to strip naked,

and she spent the night in a cell without a bed. She was released the following morning after agreeing to stay away from the Kotel for 30 days. Israeli police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld said Hoffman’s claims were “not accurate”.

As the incident received wide coverage in the American Jewish media, the condemnations of Hoffman’s arrest poured in.

Hoffman says she wants the courts to allow her group to pray for one hour per month at the Wall, and ideally wants the Wall’s council to allocate some time for prayers without mechitzah - the divider that separates men and women. She sees an opening in the Supreme Court’s reliance on “local custom” as the basis for upholding the current rules. The Israel Religious Action Centre’s petition aims to change who defines “local custom”.

Alternative services, like those of the Reform and Conservative movements, are allowed at Robinson’s Arch, at the Kotel’s southern corner and not adjacent to the plaza.

Shari Eshet, director of the National Council of Jewish Women’s Israel office, said legal initiatives were the best way to effect change on the issue.

“With all of the screaming and yelling and American Jews banging

on the table, at the end of the day this is a land with a court system,” Eshet said. “We need to find another way to bring this back into the court system.”

Leaders of some religiously pluralistic American Jewish groups admit that their efforts to date on this issue have not worked. Some hope that Hoffman’s arrest will galvanise their constituents anew.

In Israel, groups working for religious pluralism face a dual challenge: They are fighting legal

and legislative battles on a range of issues, and most Israelis are not motivated to join the fights - especially when it comes to the Western Wall.

“Israelis view the Wall as something not relevant to day-to-day life,” Hess said. “What could have been a national symbol to connect Jews from all over the world is now only an Orthodox synagogue.”

Hoffman says, “The Western Wall is way too important to be left to the Israelis.” (JTA)



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Corruption, corruption, corruption...

Amidst the gloomy talk in this country, reinforced by the downgrading of South Africa’s credit rating by Standard & Poor and Moody’s, one topic crops up in most conversations: corruption.

As if to remove doubt, a just-released survey by research company TNS found nearly 80 per cent of people living in the major metropolitan areas believe senior politicians in government are corrupt; 70 per cent felt corruption was just as bad in the private sector.

Corruption seems to have become endemic. Some people now build a bribery factor into calculations for business. Ordinary individuals who hate corruption, when confronted with the choice of paying a bribe - say to a metro policeman for a traffic offence - will often do so just to be done with the matter rather than hassle with paying fines, going to court, etc.

About 15 years ago South Africa was the darling of the world after its transition to democracy in 1994. What happened to Nelson Mandela’s rainbow nation and legacy?

The influential business journal The Economist’s front page this week was headlined: “Cry the Beloved Country - South Africa’s Sad Decline”. The story said President Jacob Zuma had “drifted and dithered, offering neither vision nor firm government”.

There is often a deep sense of entitlement among government officials. Former ANC spokesman Smuts Ngonyama is notorious for saying: “I didn’t struggle to be poor.”

Among The Economist’s recommendations about Zuma was: “Pledge to make public all performance contracts for ministers in his Cabinet and undertake to remove non-performing ministers. Good, clean governance was essential to ensure investor confidence...”

Jewish businessmen play a major role in the economy and the negative view obviously also affects them. Foreigners regard investing here as risky.

An irony, however, is that some Jewish and other entrepreneurs see the gaps or defects due to government failures and lack of effective governance, as opportunities for innovative responses and plunge in creatively with new businesses, organisations and so on.

Is the negativity the harbinger of an irreversible downhill slope for South Africa, as some say? But, then, South Africa has been through protracted bad times before and bounced back. During apartheid we never knew when or how it would end - possibly in a bloodbath. We came through in a way that was an inspiration to the world. We need visionaries again. Another Mandela?

Is there a future here for young Jews or other distinct smaller population groups? It is essential, especially for a minority like the Jews, to continue building and doing our bit. Jews do not share the sense of entitlement. We must respond creatively to change things.

One person cannot fix everything, but our public protector Thuli Madonsela is a glimmer of light. All credit to her for being prepared to take on politically volatile cases, like the excessive use of taxpayers’ money by Zuma on his personal estate, Nkandla, and various ANC-related deals. Forty eight per cent of people in the TNS survey felt Madonsela was “doing a good job”.

In “normal” countries, it is a matter of course that the public protector investigates any suspicion of corruption. But here one immediately ponders if this will endanger her, or the powers-that-be will sideline or discredit her.

Government should strive to show the electorate how trustworthy they are to hold the reins of power. But 42 per cent of people in the survey felt government often ignored Madonsela’s findings. Only half felt the government is really attacking corruption.

TNS spokesman Neil Higgs said: “...the perception that the government often ignores rulings of the Public Protector, [is] an untenable situation.”

What a sad indictment! The electorate of this country - including the Jews - must wake up and demand better.

Scientific pronouncements not ‘gospel’



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Most people now accept unquestioningly the notion that there is an irreconcilable and unbridgeable gulf between “religion” and “science” (sometimes tellingly replaced by the respective terms “faith” and “reason”, with all that implies).

It is also by now commonly assumed that in the quest for dispassionate, objective and intellectually rigorous answers to the great questions of existence, the science side of the debate has emerged victorious by a knock-out.

Stereotypically, religious belief is now assumed to have been an essentially regressive, obscurantist phenomenon that for a long time impeded the onward march of scientific discovery.

Historically, it has been defined by such events as the confrontation between Galileo and the Inquisition or the Scopes Monkey Trial.

So deeply-entrenched is this mindset that proponents of any particular religious belief are by definition regarded as being incapable of mounting a coherent, logical argument in its favour that can stand up to rigorous scientific scrutiny. Conversely, scientists are assumed at all times to conduct their work along scrupulously methodical, logically impeccable and solidly evidence-based lines.

So complete has been the perceived triumph of scientific materialism over anything smacking of theism, that today, those attempting to defend the latter even along strict scientific lines, are routinely dismissed out of hand.

The very fact that scientists admit to having religious beliefs of some kind, would seem to be enough to discredit anything they might have to say, as if their basic reasoning must have been somehow twisted and subverted from the outset.

For this reason, it is de rigueur for scientific critics of Darwinist orthodoxy to hasten to declare their atheist credentials up front, lest they be accused of “creationist” or “Intelligent Design” tendencies and accordingly dismissed without a hearing.

The converse situation, in which dogmatic, knee-jerk atheism on the part of the scientific establishment can likewise act as a serious retarding force in the advancement of knowledge, is seldom considered. This is beginning to change, but it will evidently be some time before serious inroads are made into what David Klinghoffer has called the “sealed-shut intellectual fortress of the Darwinist worldview”.

I have just finished reviewing a compelling new book on this subject, Genesis and Genes by one of our community’s emerging intellectual lights, Yoram Bogacz. A Johannesburg rabbi and educator with a background in chemical engineering, the author provides a persuasive challenge to the tendency of uncritically accepting the prevailing scientific thinking as, if one can use such a term, “gospel”.

While many members of the public “entertain fantasies of scientists as apolitical creatures, ensconced in their laboratories and isolated from the corrupting effects of power”, the reality is of course that scientists, like all people, are heavily influenced by the context - political, economic, professional or ideological - in which they work and by their own worldviews.

That being said, Genesis and Genes is by no means “anti-science”, but rather, as Rabbi (Dr) Dovid Gottlieb points out in the preface, is an argument for “caution and the careful evaluation of the latest scientific conclusions for their appropriate degree of credibility”.

The reason why the author has involved himself in the debate, is that in order to challenge anti-religious scientism, it is crucial to also address the culture of docile conformism and “obsequiousness to scientific authority” within which it has been allowed to flourish.

The “big issue”, of course, is current

evolutionary theory. This, the author has little doubt, is hopelessly flawed and destined, like so many other failed scientific orthodoxies over the centuries, to be transformed radically in the future, no matter how much the intellectual establishment tries to keep the genie in the bottle.

Proceeding along rigorous lines of enquiry, he argues that the evidence in support of it as currently accepted by many (although not all) scientists, falls well short of what is required to put it on a truly sound intellectual foundation.

Encapsulating an important theme of his book, Rabbi Bogacz declares: “When Torah sources clearly and consistently describe a position about the physical universe, then that is the Torah position, whether one finds it conveniently modern or not.”

Nor is it incumbent on adherents of Orthodox Judaism to always feel the need to find ways of reconciling their religious tradition with current scientific thinking. This relates to another important aspect of Genesis and Genes, namely that it does not seek to demonstrate, as a number of recent works have done, an emerging harmony between Torah and science. Indeed, the book in many ways is very critical of how this is sometimes done.

One example is the comparatively recent theory that the classical Torah sources “support the view that hominids took eons to evolve until, finally, they were infused with a divine soul and made human”.

The author concludes, after carefully examining each of the relevant sources, that this notion is dubious at best.

Genesis and Genes, shortly to be published by Feldheim, is an impressive work of critical scholarship and a noteworthy contribution to the growing literature of Torah-and-science. As a stand-alone history of science alone - and an erudite, consistently readable one - it deserves a wide and serious readership. In the meantime, I recommend visiting Rabbi Bogacz’s website: www.TorahExplorer.com.

Israel features prominently in final debate

WASHINGTON - The US-Israel alliance and the need to keep Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon were major themes in the final presidential debate.

Both President Barack Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney, said on Monday during their foreign policy debate that they would stand with Israel in an attack by Iran.

“Israel is a true friend,” Obama said when debate moderator Bob Schieffer of CBS News asked the candidates whether they would see an attack on Israel as an attack on the United States. “It is our greatest ally in the region. And if Israel is attacked, America will stand with Israel.”

Romney concurred. “I want to underscore the same point the president made, which is that if I’m president of the United States, when I’m president of the United States, we will stand with Israel,” Romney said at the debate at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. “And if Israel is attacked, we have their back, not just dip-

lomatically, not just culturally, but militarily.”

Along with Iran, China, Afghanistan, Syria and Pakistan, Israel was among the most mentioned countries. Obama, who has faced attacks from Romney on his approach to Israel, was the first to mention Israel when he outlined at the beginning of the debate how he was dealing with the unrest roiling the Middle East.

“It is absolutely true that we cannot just beat these challenges militarily,” Obama said, “and so what I’ve done throughout my presidency and will continue to do is, No 1, make sure that these countries are supporting our counterterrorism efforts; No 2, make sure that they are standing by our interests in Israel’s security, because it is a true friend and our greatest ally in the region.”

Romney later accused Obama of distancing the United States from Israel.

“I think the tension that existed between Israel and the United States was very unfortu-



nate,” Romney said in arguing that he would better stand by US allies.

Obama countered that during his presidency, military and intelligence co-operation with Israel was “unprecedented”.

Israel returned as a topic in a heated exchange when Romney reminded Obama that he had not visited the country during a 2009 Middle East tour.

“By the way, you skipped Israel, our closest friend in the region, but you went to the other nations,” Romney said. “And by the way, they noticed that you skipped Israel.”

Obama responded by noting he had visited Israel and US troops abroad as a candidate

- a reference to criticism of Romney for not visiting troops during his campaign travels abroad. He attacked Romney for organising a fundraiser during his own Israel trip in July.

“And when I went to Israel as a candidate, I didn’t take donors, I didn’t attend fundraisers, I went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum there, to remind myself of the nature of evil and why our bond with Israel will be unbreakable,” Obama said. (JTA)

Hating Goldstone: the Jewish Community Against the Judge by Kevin Bloom (Parktown Publishers, trading as MampooerShorts)

REVIEWED BY GEOFF SIFRIN

In this long-form journalistic piece, well-known South African author Kevin Bloom, whose book *Ways of Staying* won the 2010 South African Literary Award for Literary Journalism and was shortlisted for the Alan Paton Award, tackles head-on the bitter saga of the Goldstone Report and the motivations and plight of the man - Mr Justice Richard Goldstone - who chaired it.

Bloom presents viewpoints from key figures on different sides about the mystery as to why Goldstone - a proud Jew, a respected member of the SA Jewish community and a committed Zionist and member of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem's Board of Governors - was willing to take on, in 2009, the chairmanship of the UN commission of inquiry into the Gaza war of 2009, Israel's Operation Cast Lead.

It was a commission which pro-Israel supporters claim was biased against Israel from the outset and would inevitably produce a report slamming it.

The report ultimately said Israel could be guilty of serious human rights abuses during the war, a finding which enraged Jews worldwide and Israel as being absolutely wrong and unjustified. It led to Goldstone becoming a pariah among large parts of the Jewish world, and particularly his own South African Jewish community, where he went from being one of its most admired sons to its most hated, branded as a traitor.

The mystery is articulated succinctly by Jules Browde, a respected human rights lawyer who during apartheid in the 1950s fought

to keep alive the legal practice of Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo.

In an interview with Bloom, Browde said “...There is no doubt he made a mistake. It was a no-win situation. If he had found that Israel was not to blame in any way it would have been said of him, ‘What else could be expected from a Jew?’ On the other hand, as it turned out, having found that Israel’s actions were unjustified, it was said of him that as a Jew ‘he should not have joined the ranks of the enemies of the State of Israel.’”

A large part of Bloom's work deals with what happened to Goldstone in the aftermath of the publication of the report, as the wrath was unleashed on him of pro-Zionist Jews everywhere, including respected world legal figures like Alan Dershowitz - who called him an "evil, evil man", a "moser" who betrayed his own Jewish people.

Attempts were made to discredit him by showing him up as a man whose primary motivation during his career was self-aggrandisement, a cause for which he was prepared to serve even in the vile racist system of apartheid.

Goldstone was appointed a judge in the 1970s when Jimmy Kruger was the minister of Justice and Police in the Cabinet of Prime Minister John Vorster. Kruger is notorious for his comment, when confronted with the death in detention of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko: "It leaves me cold".

“Exposes” on Goldstone’s apartheid-era role were published in the Israeli and international press, giving ammunition to discredit his report as the work of a man with a highly suspect personal agenda - it was said that he

The most dramatic episode in the “crucifixion” - as implied in Bloom’s book - of Goldstone was an intended picket organised by the SA Zionist Federation at Sandton Shul in Johannesburg, where Goldstone was to attend the barmitzvah of his grandson.

Bloom interviews SAZF Chairman Avrom Krengel about the intentions of the picket, news of which created an international furore and showed the SA Jewish community in a very negative light.

The picket was ultimately cancelled, Goldstone attended the barmitzvah without hindrance, and a meeting was organised between him and the SA Jewish community leadership in which the latter expressed their outrage to him about his report.

Bloom's piece ends with another mystery: Why did Goldstone, in an opinion piece in the Washington Post of April 2, 2011 issue a "retraction" – as Bloom calls it - of the report? Was the personal pressure on him just too much to bear? Did he hope that by doing so he might regain some respect from Jews worldwide, who were calling him a traitor?

Krengel commented: "You would have to think long and hard to find a Jew who has done more damage to his people." He had clearly suffered greatly from the attacks on him; asked by businessman Brian Joffe

whether, given all that had happened, he would do it again, Goldstone said only if he did not have a family. Or was his retraction a genuine change of mind based on the rational analysis of a fine legal mind?

Bloom interviews key figures on both sides of the argument, painting a fascinating picture of the minefield which accompanies how and by whom Israel may be criticised, and the role of left-wing and right-wing Jews and supporters or opponents of Zionism. For people familiar with all this who followed the Goldstone saga closely, there is nothing new in Bloom's piece. For the ordinary person, however, it is a useful guide to the complexity of the issues.

The format of the “long-form journalism” published by

MampoorShorts is the brainchild of professor of journalism at Wits, Anton Harber and his partners. The works are longer than journalistic articles, but shorter than conventional books, ranging in size from 10 000 to 20 000 words.

They are long enough to go into some depth in the topics they address, but can be read in one sitting. Mampoer Shorts aims “to promote South Africa’s top writers”. The works can be bought via the publisher’s website for a fee of \$3, of which \$1 goes to the writer in royalties.



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David Kramer, the original co-creator of the award-winning musical.



Photo courtesy: www.yoursaphox.co.za

ROBYN SASSEN

Currently on the boards at Montecasino in Johannesburg, is the double-Olivier award-winning District Six musical Kat at the Kings, created by David Kramer and the late Taliep Petersen in 1995. It's hot from its first revival season at the Fugard Theatre in Cape Town. Kramer explained: "As it's a musical, the audience should have a joyous experience but this particular musical has a dark edge, because of Taliep's murder in 2006, and also because of it being set in the

apartheid era. A revival makes you look at a show differently." Saul Radomsky (pictured inset), set designer for the original and current productions, commented on the road "Kat" has travelled since 1999. "When I was commissioned to design Kat, censorship was powerful. Johannesburg and Cape Town were culturally poles apart. My awareness of the atrocity of District Six was unformed. "I was living in London at the time. Interacting with Coloured cast members was verboten. I came from the 'cushie' side because of the colour of my skin. But I worked hell for leather, in order to understand the community from the inside out." The lead is Danny Butler who was juvenile lead when it debuted. This season, he celebrates 1 000 performances with the show. The rest of the cast is new. "They bring their own District Six stories - like their predecessors," says Kramer. It's about Kat Diamond, a Coloured teenager in 1950s District Six who develops his career from the streets to recording studios. Kat forms the a cappella group Cavalla Kings with his buddies, blending American doo wop tunes and rock and roll influences

with local sounds. The show's back story is equally powerful. Kat is based on the life of Salie Daniels, who starred. "He died suddenly in 1999, just before the show debuted on Broadway," says Kramer. "This revival, dedicated to Taliep, was motivated by the Fugard Theatre. It started performing there in May, and has played to capacity audiences for 18 weeks. It's nice to know something has this kind of longevity and can mean something to the next generation," he adds. "In 1999, at the West End, it won two Laurence Olivier awards - Best New Musical and the whole cast won Best Actor. It played from Vegas to Europe. As we went, we 'tweaked' it, to explain things about what Coloureds were and so on," Kramer adds. Says Radomsky: "It is the same show, but more developed. In my design, there was much more 'tsatskerai' than there is now. This is a pared down approach." "And then, Taliep's tragic death." Kramer takes a breath. "It's the first time Kat's been performed since. I'm really proud we are able to remember him in this way. I think people should see it again, even if they saw



Photo by Jesse Kramer

Carlo Daniels (with headphones) records music with Dean Bailie, Zak Toerien and Grant Peres – and Amy trout on piano in a “Kat” Scene. it in 2005. It's an SA classic." Radomsky concurs, "It's like 'Fiddler on the Roof' for Jews." • Kat and the Kings is at Pieter Toerien Theatre, Montecasino, until November 18; it transfers back to the Fugard Theatre in District Six, November 24 until January 19.

Baleful images leave you uplifted, also damaged



Photograph: Robyn Sassen

Portrait of the Artist's Mother, oil on canvas, by Miriam Stern. Exhibition of work by Miriam Stern Where: Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre, Oaklands, (011) 728-8088 When: until November 4

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

This bar-raising Miriam Stern exhibition shimmers with what gave 20th century European art the courage to express the horror of its time. Her draftsmanship is fierce; she wields tools of specificity and colour with acuity in her celebration of giants like Dutch master Rembrandt van Rijn, French Romantic painter Théodore Géricault, and Dutch American abstract painter Willem de Kooning. The show is muscularly dark; its pinnacle is a painting of the artist's mother, which pummels you into awareness of who this artist is, and how capable. Rather than a sentimental reflection, this is an unflinching gaze at a strong, ageing woman, captured with uncompromising urgency. Stern has donated 11 drawings in charcoal and Gesso, to Johannesburg's Holocaust Centre. Like those neighbouring them, they're splinteringly legible as poisonous places of confinement, but they lack specifics and thus, cliché. The looser, more startling paintings in this exhibition are placed near the gallery's entrance. Your focus is grabbed by the intricacy and dark depth of Stern's drawings as you enter the space; but the paintings are curatorially positioned to be seen again, after the Rembrandt portrait, after the Shoah pieces, after the portrait of the mother. They collectively fit under a "doll" rubric. The idea of a young girl's plaything and a broken female body is pinned with a jagged, furious brush to a bitter narrative straddling representation and abstraction. These baleful images implacably cast in the embrace of unequivocal competence leave you simultaneously uplifted and damaged.

Reaching to the heart and soul of earth and society

Exhibition: Concerning Preciousness by Lynda Ballen Where: David Krut Projects, Parkwood, (011) 447-0627 When: until November 3

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

Johannesburg Art Foundation veteran Lynda Ballen, engages the concept and history of mining in an exhibition that at first glance seems sedate. It grows on you, almost surreptitiously. By the time you leave the gallery, your head reels from the depths to which you've been plummeted and how you have been encouraged to think. With a focus hotly relevant to this city, now, the work is also about much more. Reading the writings of 16th century scientist, Georgius Agricola, known as the father of geology, Ballen allows her gaze to shift from horror to preciousness, to conservation.

But it is the unforgiving technique - paper, handcrafted from discarded drawings and exhibited on the frames on which it is made - and your own gesture of really looking at and reading the drawings, layered as they are with nuance, pattern and word, that makes you realise what a tumult of issues they seethe in; how stirring they are, and how contemporary, reaching as they do to the heart and soul of earth and society. Ballen, with scalpel-sharp thinking, never stooping to sensationalist drama, guts preconceptions so flawlessly, you might believe the work rests only on copies of 16th century landscape prints, but look more carefully. It is the push and pull of strings through, behind and in support of the drawings, and the presence of embedded substances which sparkle and darken them, that strengthen the ideological grounds on which



In Their Proper Abiding Place (2012), an ink drawing on reconstituted pigmented archival paper laminated over twine they stand, keeping the moral horror of the show conceptually taut.

Arts in Brief

Come and look at ‘Ground Xero’ at Art in the Forest Established ceramicist and gallery curator Anthony Shapiro, invites the public to an exhibition entitled "Ground Xero" at Art in the Forest, a Bauhaus-style residence turned studio gallery, built in 1956, at Constantia Nek, Rhodes Drive. Essentially a mixed media exhibition, inspired by xerophytes – plants which have learnt to adapt to life in a waterless environment – and clay and wooden sculpture, including work by John Shirley, Dale Lambert, Madoda Fani, Loren Kaplan, Marion Fuchs and Shapiro himself, it showcases objects from architectural planters to botanical art and is open from October 27 until December 20. (021) 794-0291 or visit www.lightfromafrica.com

‘Mom and Me’ sees Judy and daughter Kim on stage Last April Judy Page, one of our stage's dearest, warmed the cockles of your heart speaking and singing of her rich life on stage and off and her career spanning several decades. This month, she performs opposite her daughter Kim Kallie in "Mom and Me", a revue about what they have in common: children, dogs, husbands and each other. Now, after many years, they will be sharing a stage, in collaboration with Johan Laas at the Foxwood Theatre, 13 Fifth Avenue, Houghton, Johannesburg, on October 28 at 15:00. Tickets include high tea after the production. Call Clive Rodel: (011) 486-0935.

Loren Kaplan has created new body of bell works In 2009, ceramicist Loren Kaplan created a set of six basalt clay bells, entitled "The Bells of Forgiveness". They were accepted as part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection. Motivated by a need to make vessels that symbolically create meaning by holding something in the boundary of their form, even though they are physically and literally empty – they are about potential – Kaplan has created a new body of bell works, which she is exhibiting from November 29, at motmot, 44 Eleventh Street, Parkhurst. A variety of Kaplan's other ceramic pieces will also be on display. For further information visit www.lorenkaplan.co.za

NY debut for Israel Philharmonic on its short United States tour

**TOM TUGEND
LOS ANGELES**

Few can chronicle the changes in the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra better than Gabriel Vole, a veteran double bass player.

Vole represents the third generation of his family to perform with the orchestra. His maternal grandfather, the Polish-born violinist Jacob Surowicz, was a co-founder and was followed by Gabriel’s father, Leopold, whose son inherited his love for the double bass. In addition, Gabriel’s mother, Sarah, and uncle Maurice filled in occasionally.

‘When I signed up in 1967, there were maybe three or four women in the orchestra. Now I’d say they make up 40 per cent or more of the members.’

The biggest change, Vole says, is the number of women.

“When I signed up in 1967, there were maybe three or four women in the orchestra,” Vole said. “Now I’d say they make up 40 per cent or more of the members.”

Vole and the IPO, led by music director for life Zubin Mehta, on Thursday kicked off a five-day concert tour spanning four American cities with a performance at Carnegie Hall in New York, before moving on to Palm Springs, California, Las Vegas and Disney Hall in Los Angeles on successive nights starting this Sunday.

Complementing the IPO’s tour is the release of the film “Orchestra of Exiles”, which documents the struggle to establish the orchestra in 1936

and to rescue German Jewish musicians from Nazi persecution.

The Carnegie Hall concert included the New York premiere of “Mechaye Hametim” (Revival of the Dead), a choral symphony by Israeli composer and conductor Noam Sheriff that is dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust and the builders of Israel.

Also at the famed venue, Chinese pianist Yuja Wang, 25, an audience favourite for her musicianship and fashion statements, played in Felix Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No 1 in G Minor.

In the other venues, Wang will perform in Chopin’s Piano Concerto No 1 in E Minor. The programme for all four concerts features Schubert’s Symphony No 3 and Brahms’ Symphony No 1.

Over its 76 years, the IPO has undergone many transformations.

Vole noted that the orchestra early on comprised mainly refugees from Germany and a large Polish contingent, rounded out by a smattering of Russians, Hungarians, Romanians and some native Israelis.

“At that time, the rehearsals, the correspondence, everything was in German,” Vole said in a phone interview with JTA.

That lasted until the 1950s, when an increasing number of native-trained musicians joined. An influx of talented musicians

A number of players from North and South America also have entered the ranks, and the main working languages now are Hebrew and English.

from the Soviet Union came in the 1970s and ‘80s, and they now make up about half of the 100-piece orchestra.

A number of players from North and South America also have entered the ranks, and the main working languages now are Hebrew and English. The latter is mainly to accommodate many of the Russians, who understand English better than Hebrew.

Vole tells the story of Gustavo Dudamel, now the effervescent conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, leading the IPO in 2008 and 2010 and once setting a rehearsal for late Saturday afternoon. Some religiously observant players did not show up until after the end of Sabbath.

When Dudamel asked about their absence, a violinist gave a one-word explanation: “Shabbes”.

The conductor grew extremely agitated and shouted: “Chavez? What does this have to do with Hugo Chavez?” Dudamel was referring to the president of his native Venezuela.

Vole says playing for the IPO is not purely about playing music “but about solidarity and making music together”.

The love affair between the orchestra and the India-born Mehta is passionate and long standing. He knows the musicians and their spouses by their first names, and will converse in Yiddish with Russian newcomers.

“Zubin’s identification and involvement with the orchestra is complete, and so is his identification with Israel,” Vole said.

The founder of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, a precursor to the IPO, was Bronislaw Huberman, and the documentary “Orchestra of Exiles” is a tribute by filmmaker Josh Aronson

The founder of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, a precursor to the IPO, was Bronislaw Huberman.

to Huberman’s single-minded dedication and perseverance.

A native of Poland, Huberman was a musical child prodigy who relentlessly driven by his father became a world-renowned violinist. Disillusioned by the First World War, Huberman quit at the height of his fame to broaden his education at the Sorbonne in Paris and became an ardent advocate of a pan-European union.

With the rise of Hitler, and seeing worse to come, he set about forming a world-class orchestra in a yet largely barren land, far from the coffeehouses and opera houses of Vienna or Budapest. In 1936, facing a critical shortfall of \$80 000 to launch his venture, Huberman enlisted an amateur violinist named Albert Einstein, and together they raised the sum at one benefit dinner in New York.

For the orchestra’s inaugural concert under the great Italian conductor and ardent anti-fascist Arturo Toscanini, 100 000 buyers - in a total Jewish population of 400 000 - vied to buy the 2 000 available tickets.

Among those paying tribute to Huberman, and demonstrating their own virtuosity in the film, are violinists Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zuckerman and Joshua Bell.

“Orchestra of Exiles” opens today in New York and on November 2 in Los Angeles.

The New York and Los Angeles concerts include fundraising galas featuring receptions with the artists and dinners hosted by the American Friends of the IPO. (JTA)




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Photo: Shai Skiff

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FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES ‘TOTALLY MISSES THE MARK’

This past Motsei Shabbos I went with my wife and son to see the new play, From the Mouths of Babes, at the Market Theatre.

I was surprised, to see a mixed audience of Jews, non-Jews, blacks and religious Muslims. I was surprised because the play revolves around Jewishness and our Jewish roots in South Africa and has three young Jewish women as the main and only characters.

In my opinion the show totally misses the mark. The singing of Jewish and religious songs was interspersed with stories often using crude and vulgar language, and at one point singing a song to Jesus. If this is meant to be funny, it really isn’t.

It just doesn’t gel. In fact, it is distasteful and unnecessary. At worst it is a chillul Hashem, and at best it portrays a poor image of Jews and Judaism in general.

I could not imagine Muslims, for example, undermining their religion and

performing like this on stage. There are other ways to humour an audience without self degradation of ourselves and our nation.

My honour as a Jew would not allow me to sit through this embarrassment, so my son and I walked out, possibly to the dismay of some politically correct individuals in the audience.

Unquestioningly these girls have great talent. They together with other Jewish actors have the ability and potential to reach a large mixed audience and to powerfully convey our truth as a unique nation worthy of Hashem’s expectations of us as a “light unto the nations”.

I don’t believe that any self-respecting Jew left there feeling that we had been well represented.

**Dion Fransman
Johannesburg**

ALL ABOUT JEWISH CHARITY – AND HELPING ANIMALS IN DISTRESS...

Letters from Martin Behr and Joel Goldstein (on Dr Blumenthal’s op-ed piece in the Jewish Report of October 19) reflect divergent views but nevertheless are interesting in the Jewish approach to charity. My view is that every Jew who can afford to help his fellow-Jew, is obligated to do so. Rather than help non-Jews, the Jew should rather give more to his community.

The government in this country (and their cadres) are helping themselves without giving any thought to those who are less fortunate and unable to help themselves. In fact, virtually no help is given by government to its own people, yet these souls are the same people who vote the government into power and support legislation against Israel and its products. My take on charity is this: I help Jewish charities as much as I can. Thereafter, I donate to animal rescue and other charities, what I have left over.

Goldstein is perfectly correct when he says that we, as Jews, try to find favour with other organisations that do not appreciate what is being done for them. I believe that my approach is correct, and if one reads the Shema prayer: “And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be sated”, one gleans just how important animals are in the context of Judaism, the theory being that one’s own animals are to be fed before feeding oneself.

If one accepts that concept, it becomes clear that we as Jews are first and foremost obligated to help Jews who are in need. Thereafter, we are not obligated to anyone who is not Jewish.

Nathan Cheiman, Northcliff, Johannesburg

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OUTREACH INITIATIVES PURELY FOR SAKE OF TIKKUN OLAM

I’d like to offer an alternative perspective to Dr Ivor Blumenthal’s provocative opinion piece, “Jewish philanthropy: Is it charity or merely reparations?” (SAJR October 12).

For the past year, I have conducted over 50 interviews for the SA Jewish Board of Deputies’ “Jubuntu” project, exploring Jewish contributions to broader South African society in the fields of education, skills development and job creation.

The project was initiated following a call to action to the Jewish community by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe in August 2011 at the SAJBD’s Biennial Conference, and it seeks to highlight successes, draw lessons and describe models that can be replicated.

In contrast to the insular, “Jews-first, Jews-only” approach promoted by Dr Blumenthal, there is a remarkable array of Jewish individuals and organisations pouring their energy into improving the lives of other South Africans, often based on generous Jewish financial contributions.

It has nothing to do with currying favour or assuaging guilt, but a genuine belief in the power of people to improve the country by their efforts. The beneficiaries certainly do not harbour the “jealousy, deep-seated hatred, mockery and marginalisation of the Jewish community” as Dr Blumenthal claims, but truly value the work being done.

Interventions span the range from early childhood development by the likes of Afrika Tikkun and Ububele to in-school mentorship by the Chevrah Kadisha’s Second Innings, matric teaching at the Mitzvah School, Renalelona’s healing through the arts to adult education by OSSAC, and educating prisoners through Readucate and many more.

These initiatives provide role-models that we as a community should justly be proud of. Their motives are neither guilt nor glory as Dr Blumenthal asserts, but are sincere efforts at tikkun olam and improving the lives of others, in whatever small way.

In fact, for South Africa to succeed, we need much more Jewish investment in good causes, not less.

**Steven Gruzd, senior researcher and diplomatic liaison
SA Jewish Board of Deputies**

ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS ARE MUCH OF A MUCHNESS

I would like to respond to the article (Jewish Report, October 19), “Supporting Israel’s media strengthens its democracy”, written by Ori Nir from Washington.

As a person who lived most of my life in Israel, I truly, and unfortunately, fail to see a great deal of differences between the different Israeli newspapers. And I don’t see any significant justification for the existence and state sponsorship of so many Israeli newspapers.

They basically express the same so called neo-liberal opinions, in favour of the different US “post”-Cold War administrations.

The only Israeli newspaper which, in some way, was different from other Israeli newspapers, and not always “politically correct”, was “Davar”, which existed during the years 1925 - 1996. Its closure was, in some sense, a loss to free Israeli journalism and pluralism.

And I don’t remember any outcry when it closed down.

So, why the fuss now over papers such as Haaretz and Maariv? I just fail to get it. But I would certainly be glad if “Davar” reappears.

**Avner Eliyahu Romm
Sea Point
Cape Town**

TZEDAKA: JEWISH COMMUNITY’S NEEDS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE

I agree with Dr Ivor Blumenthal in his advice that the Jewish community should support its own rather than allocating precious funding to the greater South African public.

Jews should be a “light unto the nations”. To me this means behaving like a mensch and treating people respectfully.

I am not suggesting that we ignore the wider South African public; I drive around with food and drink in my car to give to people on the street and elsewhere.

I donate clothes and baby food to abandoned black babies. If I know of a need I try give in the best way I can. I believe (however) larger donations should go to Jewish causes.

Tzedaka, is meant to go first to one’s closest family, then to the greater Jewish family/community. When they are all taken care of and there is left over, then with pleasure give to the wider community.

But the Jewish community is in great need. Just this past Friday a financially strapped friend of mine told me that the Jewish school her children have been attending for years, have notified her that they are completely cutting her subsidy! She will get NO financial assistance towards her children’s Jewish education.

She doesn’t know what to do at this late stage of the year and it came as a total surprise. She’s been to the Chev (remember: no Jew gets left behind?) and they will not help her. And she was not the only one. There were 20 to 30 sets of parents crying on this particular morning at the school. Are people aware of this? That Jewish schools and the Chev are turning away Jewish people who need financial assistance?

Is this what we want? I can only imagine that this situation has arisen because the schools and the Chev are strapped for money. They have huge expenses that they are battling to pay and there are casualties in this process of consolidation.

Getting back to being a “light unto the nations” and “tikkun olam”: We can’t solve the world’s problems. We can’t even solve South Africa’s problems, as much as we may desire to.

Another way that we can be a “light” is to be an example to others in showing them the priority of giving in order to take care of their own.

I’d really be proud if blacks looked to the Jewish community for guidance as to how they can set up schools, medical services, food schemes, etc, for their own people. And there are many of them in a position to do so. Let them follow our example of giving and helping others. May they too start with their own.

**Michele Engelberg
Johannesburg**

UJW ‘DISMAYED’ AT BLUMENTHAL’S STANCE ON GIVING OF CHARITY

I refer to the article (Jewish Report October 12) by Dr Ivor Blumenthal concerning assistance/charity to others who are not of the Jewish persuasion.

We would like to place on record that The Union of Jewish Women of South Africa is totally dismayed at Dr Ivor Blumenthal’s suggestions of reducing or withholding assistance/charity given to non-Jewish causes.

We at the Union, since 1931, have been involved in the Jewish and broader community, as stipulated in our constitution.

We feel that as South Africans and Jews, we have an obligation (tikkun olam) towards our disadvantaged people, irrespective of race or colour and many people whom we help, would be bereft without our assistance.

We don’t expect thanks, because our satisfaction comes from the success of our projects, both in South Africa and in Israel and the blessings that are heaped upon us from grateful recipients.

**Margot Segal
National President, Union of Jewish Women of SA
Johannesburg**

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Tribute to communal involvement of our ‘elder statesmen’



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

Last week, this newspaper reported on the 80th birthday tribute function held in Cape Town for Eliot Osrin in recognition of over 50 years of service to the Jewish community. Also honoured was his wife, Myra, whose multifaceted communal work includes taking the lead in establishing the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. In the course of my involvement in the establishment of the Durban Holocaust Centre, I benefited from her advice.

I was in attendance at this inspiring function, and in the course of it met many of Cape Town Jewry’s most eminent communal leaders, past and present. Among them was Simon Jocum, a long-serving member and past president of the SAJBD Cape Council, as well as a long-serving national vice-chairman of the Board. Sadly, Simon passed away shortly afterwards, having been involved in Jewish communal activities to the very end.

Eliot and Simon exemplify what is undoubtedly one of our Jewish community’s greatest strengths, namely the continued involvement of its “elder statesmen” and the invaluable supporting role they play behind the scenes for the new generation of communal leaders and professionals.

Having given so much to the community in years gone by, they could justifiably have taken a back seat and left it to incoming leadership

to shoulder the burden. Instead, they continued to be involved, usually in unofficial capacities, often having generously stepped aside to allow a younger generation to take office.

I could list a number of communal veterans who have been of enormous assistance during my term of office, and my predecessors would undoubtedly do likewise. For obvious reasons, one should resist the temptation to single out specific individuals in this context, but suffice it to say that in every major Jewish centre countrywide, one will find outstanding men and women who have given and continue to give outstanding service to their respective communities.

All communal leaders are essentially caretakers of a legacy pioneered by those who preceded them, stretching back all the way to the very founders of organised Jewish life in South Africa.

We endeavour to add our own chapter to that legacy before passing the torch on to the next

generation. As we approach the end of the secular year, many young people are poised to begin a new chapter in their own lives as they prepare to leave their school or university years behind them. In doing so, we hope they will find time amidst all the challenges they face to make themselves part of this country’s diverse Jewish life, whether in its religious, Zionist, cultural, educational or social welfare aspects.

The wealth of dedicated and talented young leaders that now hold office throughout our organisations bodes well for our community’s future. However, we can never afford to become complacent and must do all we can to encourage and facilitate the inclusion of young adults.

• Listen to Steven Gruzd on Jewish Board Talk on 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00-13:00. Repeats Sundays, 11:00-12:00.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD



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Visit to Afrika Tikkun an eye-opener forKDL learners

AMANDA BLANKFIELD

King David Linksfield Primary and High School groups visited the Afrika Tikkun Uthando Centre in Braamfontein on October 17.

This was the culmination of a book drive started four years ago by Doron Haberer. The book drive was continued and expanded by Cassie and Tarryn Forman. The books were donated to the Uthando library for use by the children and youth from Hillbrow, Berea and Braamfontein in

Johannesburg.

When the group of 60 arrived, they brought with them 1 000 sweets to hand out to the 459 children and youth at the centre, bringing much joy and excitement.

Parents who are dedicated to outreach work at Afrika Tikkun, Tessa Forman and Hayley Haberer, and the group of teachers who accompanied the group, were amazed by the holistic model the centre follows to ensure children are given the opportunity to become productive citizens after their schooling.



TA Primary kids collect gifts for Divote



Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, stands with the children of the Primary School, who display some of the gifts they have collected for Divote.

CHANI ZWICK

Divote, a Jewish chesed organisation working within the community for the past 10 years, has formed a partnership with Torah Academy Primary School.

The goal of Divote is to be able to give as many Jews as possible the opportunity to show support to children in Israel who have been affected by acts of terrorism, and to be able to bring some happiness and joy into their lives.

The biggest project currently is one where the organisation hands out backpacks which are embroidered with the wording, “This comes with love and support from the South African Jewish community”.

These bear the name of the child and are filled with gifts such as clothing, stationery, toys and other items. Letters of support from the children of Torah Academy, who collected the gifts, were put into each bag

Jewish Interactive awards true Jewish wizardry

Jewish Interactive has presented Chad Rayd from King David Victory Park Primary School and Leah Gluckman and Simona Stone from Herzlia Constantia Primary School, with Kalahari.com gift vouchers for being three of six runners-up in their first international digital homework competition.

Nicky Newfield and Corinne Os-sendryver from Jewish Interactive, also presented certificates to all the participants from the two schools.

The first prize of an iPad was won by Adam Hart of Wolfson Hillel Primary in London. His entry, an interactive 3D pop-up ebook - is available for viewing on their site, www.jewishinteractive.net, as are many other entries from around the globe.

Jewish Interactive describes itself in a media release as a “global collaboration” founded last year in South Africa and the UK, with a branch now in New York, that unites Jewish educators, curricu-

lum developers, informal Jewish organisations and learners with cutting-edge gaming and elearning technology, to bring Jewish learning into the 21st century.



Jewish interactive Award winner Chad Rayd from King David Victory Park.

Shmuly’s Mesivta feat recognised



STORY AND PHOTO BY RABBI MOTTI HADAR
PRINCIPAL TA BOYS’ HIGH

Shmuly Kesselman, a grade 9 Mesivta learner at Torah Academy Boys’ High School, learned the entire Talmud Masechta (Tractate) Makkos, 48 pages, and repeated it off by heart, eight pages at a time, to his teacher and rosh Mesivta, Rabbi Reuven Finkelstein.

This was done in Shmuly’s own time over the course of a few months, as part of a Mesivta competition.

Torah Academy is very proud of Shmuly’s huge achievement and wishes him success in his continued learning.

Shmuly is pictured with his teacher, Rabbi Reuven Finkelstein.

KDS grade 7 science fair a huge success



Angie Sevel; Lauren Urdang; and Kira Miller.

LAUREN URDANG, GRADE 7

King David Sandton recently held their very own science fair. The learners were asked to get into groups of three or four and come up with an experiment to present at the fair for their peers.

Their ideas were all different and extremely creative. They spent weeks preparing their experiments and making colourful posters for the fair.

On September 21 - break-up day - the pupils were excited to show off their creations. They set up in the school hall and got ready for the crowds of learners excited to have a look at all the unbelievable experiments.

The atmosphere was electric. Everyone was so full of energy; their experiments ranged from explosions, to chemicals, to volcanoes and even fire breathing!

It was a day to remember and will go down as a day of enjoyment for everyone involved. All the learners want to thank their science teacher, Linda Fine, for organising the unforgettable day.

Lucy and the Hex comes tops in band jamming competition



RONEL ZEFF

A tough battle of the bands and DJs took place on Sunday night October 14, at King David High School Linksfield in which DJs and bands, supported by Chai FM, jammed in aid of Generation Earth, a project to raise awareness of green issues among learners.

Kicking off the battle were Adena Prissman on vocals and Oren Blass accompanying her on guitar. “Eclipse”, made up of Jonny Judin, Dylan Rendel, Cliffy Gruber and Jarred Hodes, followed suit. “Lucy and the Hex”, who are Dean Salant, David Wein, Gav Rubin and Matt Schomburg, were up next to rock the stage. Each band was allowed a cover, a song choice and an original.

Ari Emanuel, MC of the evening, then introduced an ad hoc beat box challenge which saw DJ Beats (Jason Berkowitz) taking charge. The DJs on the decks were Rael Lowenthal and Zach Nudelman, who got the crowd dancing on the stage, Dylan Kaler , who impressed with a smooth flow of lounge sounds, and Jason Berkowitz, who pumped up the evening with his mixing of “Gangnam Style”.

The judges, Ari Kellman, former TV presenter, voice of Vuzu and programming manager of 101.9 Chai FM, Rikki Brest, actress, DJ, drummer and model, and Jonny Birin, musician and studio owner, were very impressed with the quality of all the performers. They awarded the title of winning band to Lucy and The Hex, who win the opportunity to record two songs at the Jonny Birin studios, and the title of winning DJs to pair Rael Lowenthal and Zach Nudelman. Soul Candi sponsored a beginner’s DJ course as a prize.

Congratulations to Yakira Amoils, grade 11 learner at King David High School Linksfield and chairman of Generation Earth, for spearheading this event.

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Keeping it kosher

“Kosher” is a word widely used in communities both Jewish and not. It seems that no one can come up with a more descriptive way of signifying order and a state of wellbeing - that things are honest, above board and transparent.

But anyone who keeps kosher will testify to the huge amount of effort involved in maintaining a kosher condition. It’s easy to initiate (well, maybe not so easy), but requires vigilance and determination to sustain.

It occurs to me that for the Chev, corporate governance generally, and compliance with the rigorous government requirements surrounding non-government organisations specifically, are additional ways in which we must keep it kosher.

Most people are familiar with the challenges of corporate governance, but not many are aware of the complexities of NGO accreditation.

Within the Chev group we have seven divisions registered as Non Profit and Public Benefit Organisations. These are impressive statuses, or, to continue our kashrut theme, “hechshers”.

But like licenced NGOs everywhere, we are required to invest enormous time and energy fulfilling the conditions needed to



Partners in Chessed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

maintain these endorsements.

Apart from being mandatory, they are essential to our ability to operate and receive subsidies and they grant permission for us to collect and dispense funds for the benefit of our community and to issue 18A tax exemptions to our donors.

So, what does this compliance entail? Comprehensive annual NPO reports are submitted by all seven divisions to the Gauteng Provincial Government. In addition each entity must present the Department of Social Development with detailed business plans.

Based upon these, service level agreements are entered into every year. Meticulous six-monthly progress reports are compulsory as well as monthly statistics and audited financials for each division. It’s a big job!

Considering its intricate processes and broad scope of significance, it’s no wonder that keeping “kosher” has achieved a relevance far beyond the borders of Jewish communities. And at the Chev we don’t mix meat and milk either!

May our partnership continue to thrive!

• Please feel free to communicate with me on feedback@thechev.org.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

Community Briefs

WIZO conference spotlights ‘Facing the Future’

Next Sunday, November 4, WIZO SA hosts its 34th Triennial Conference, “Facing the Future” at Killarney Country Club, Johannesburg, with Tova Ben Dov (pictured), World WIZO president, as guest of honour. The conference features a WIZO Avivs session: “The Fresh Face of the Future”, a panel discussion: “Faces of Israel in the Media”, a workshop, “Becoming your Personal Best” and a focus on WIZO’s beneficiaries. The official opening is in the evening, with key-note speaker Tony Leon, recently back from a two-year stint as SA Ambassador to Argentina. All sessions are open to the public; booking is essential. Sandy: (011) 645-2548.




Sappi supports Kadimah’s ‘Casual Day’

Each year, Sappi’s Head Office Employee Wellbeing team selects one Casual Day beneficiary. This year, Kadimah, a division of the Chevrah Kadishah’s Protected Employment programme was chosen; and they were requested to submit their wish list.

An industrial sandwich press, heavy duty staplers and staples, hammers, various pliers, strippers, screwdrivers, industrial sewing machines and outdoor furniture, were all delivered to help this adult-protected employment workshop continue its great work. More than 100 people, unable to cope in the open labour market, either because they are mentally, intellectually or physically disabled or have histories of substance abuse, are employed at Kadimah. – CELESTE EVERITT

Sandringham Gardens hosts shiur in honour of Gerald Horwitz

Rabbi Baruch Grosnass speaking at a breakfast shiur held in honour of the late Gerald Horwitz obm, during Chol Hamoed Succot in the Sandringham Gardens succah, called Horwitz a Jew with a great heart. Horwitz, who passed away in early September, served two terms as president of Sandringham Gardens and was the driving force behind the building of Golden Acres, and in fact established its name. Sandringham Gardens said in a media release. Horwitz was “a big personality with a big heart, a Jewish leader of excellence; the interests and needs of the community were always foremost in his mind”.



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King David Victory Park Primary School is an independent co-educational Jewish School for pupils from Grade 1 to 7. We invite applications for the following post which is available from 1 January 2013 or soon thereafter.

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The successful applicant will be a suitably qualified professional with integrity, innovation and passion for teaching primary school children.

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- An ability to run a media centre or experience in working with Educational Ipad apps would be a distinct advantage.

The remuneration package for the post will be commensurate with experience. Please submit a letter of motivation with a full Curriculum Vitae and details of three contactable referees to Miss Alanda van Staden, PA to the Headmaster: vanstadena@sabje.co.za

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Tableview, 7441
Email: rose7@telkomsa.net
Not later than December 15, 2012

Great cities of the world: St Petersburg

Peter the Great’s ‘Window to Europe’ has included a Jewish presence in the city since its founding.

IRVING SPITZ

After the Tsar, Peter the Great, returned from a tour of Europe in 1698, he realised Russia needed to import European technology and culture to catch up to the West. In 1703, he founded the city of St Petersburg on the Baltic Sea, as an outlet to Europe. It was built on marshy ground on the banks of the River Neva by conscripted peasants and prisoners of war. Thousands perished in this endeavour.

Peter brought in architects from Europe and compelled all his dignitaries to build a home there. Within 20 years, he had constructed a major city. No buildings except for churches were allowed to stand higher than the Tsar’s Winter Palace, a tradition still maintained today.

The initial style was baroque. This was succeeded by rococo which then gave way to neoclassicism. Because of its palaces and churches on the canals, St Petersburg is often called the Venice of the North.

In 1712, St Petersburg became the capital of Russia and the seat of the Romanov dynasty. Here the struggle against the ruling class began, culminating in the 1917 Bolshevik revolution which led to the abdication of the last Tsar and the establishment of the Soviet regime.

The capital reverted to Moscow and after Lenin’s death in 1924, the city was renamed Leningrad. The city was blockaded by the Germans for 900 days during the Second World War in one of the most destructive and lethal sieges in history. Today, St Petersburg is Russia’s second largest city with almost five million inhabitants.

My first trip to Leningrad occurred in 1984 under the com-

munist regime when I visited the Refuseniks, Jews who were refused permission to emigrate. The city was drab and the people depressed.

This current visit was like landing on another planet. Nevsky Prospect, the main thoroughfare and the centre of the city, is bustling and lined with elegant hotels, restaurants, European fashion houses and boutiques.

With its numerous bridges, canals, churches and palaces, St Petersburg is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The most magical time to visit is May to August during the White Nights. The sun never really sets and there is a persistent twilight.

A key tourist site is the Peter and Paul Fortress, on a small island in the Neva River, where Peter commenced building his city. The island is dominated by The St Peter and St Paul Cathedral. Its

architecture represented a break with traditional Russian churches and its single gold spire attains a height of over 120 metres. The Tsars and their families are buried in this church.

For much of its history, the Peter and Paul Fortress functioned as a prison. Opponents to various regimes were interred here. The prison also housed the

writers Dostoyevsky and Gorky and politicians including Trotsky and Lenin’s brother.

Palace Square has been the scene of many dramatic moments in Russian history. In the centre is the Alexander Column, cut from a single block of granite; on the pinnacle, an angel trampling a snake.

The Winter Palace is a mixture of baroque, rococo and neoclassical styles. Its magnificent salons, decorated in jasper, malachite and other precious materials, were the private apartments of the Romanov family.



View of St Isaacs Cathedral.

Within the Winter Palace is the Hermitage, one of the greatest repositories of art in the world. Catherine the Great began the enterprise by buying many European collections. Today the inventory contains over 2,5 million objects.

There has been a Jewish presence in the city since its founding. Many Tsars, however, prohibited Jews from settling in the city. Exceptions were Catherine II and Alexander I and II who permitted wealthy Jewish merchants, industrialists, scientists and physicians to settle there.

Today St Petersburg has a vibrant Jewish community of some 80 000. Religious and educational facilities centre in the Grand Choral Synagogue which was consecrated in 1893 - the second largest synagogue in Europe, its architecture based on a Moorish style.

The National Library of Russia contains 20 million items. The Jewish Karaite leader, traveller, merchant and archaeologist, Avraham Firkovich (1786 - 1874), amassed an enormous number of Hebrew, Arabic and Samaritan manuscripts during his travels.

The Library purchased Firkovich’s collection, which today forms the core of its trove of Hebrew manuscripts, one of the world’s largest.

Of the 18 known dated handwritten Hebrew manuscripts

published before 1020, 12 are in this Library. The most celebrated is the Leningrad Codex, the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible using the masoretic text, dated to 1009.

Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin and Shostakovich among other composers, lived in the city and many are buried here. There are three resident opera companies. The most well known is the Mariinsky directed by Valery Gergiev.

Ballet has a rich tradition in St Petersburg where it occupies a special place in the cultural life, more popular than opera. Here, the great choreographers, Petipa and later Diaghilev worked with dancers like Pavlova and Nijinsky. I attended a spectacular production of Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake with the Mariinsky’s principal ballerina, Yekaterina Kondourova and Yevgeny Ivanchenko as Siegfried.

Philharmonic Hall in St Petersburg was where Tchaikovsky

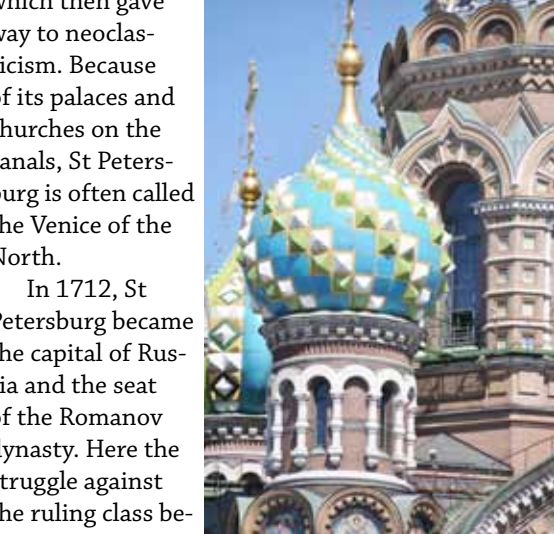
his sixth symphony a few days before his death. In 1942 during the Nazi siege on Leningrad, Shostakovich’s seventh symphony, The Leningrad had its premiere.

I was privileged to attend a memorable performance of this symphony in the same hall on the 70th anniversary of its first performance by the St Petersburg Academic Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alexander Dmitriev.

At all musical events, there were many young people and even children in the audience. The rich musical tradition of Russia has been maintained.

It was difficult to gauge what the Russian people thought of the current situation in their country. People in general, however, seemed reluctant to discuss politics, but I did detect much disenchantment with the present regime.

Perhaps the most telling remark came from someone in the tourist ministry: “Not everything was bad under the Soviet regime,” she remarked wistfully to me.



Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood.



View of the Winter Palace.

Tips for when you visit Russia

- If you’re holidaying in Russia and hold an SA passport, you need a Russian visa, which costs about R640. The Russian Consular General is in Cape Town: (021) 418-3656; the Russian Embassy is in Pretoria: (012) 362-7116.
- It is advisable when you visit Russia to update your vaccinations for tetanus, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and particularly if you plan on hiking or camping, tick-borne encephalitis.
- The best time of year to visit Russia depends on what you want to see and do. The land mass is enormous, embracing 11 time zones on two continents, with a range in temperature between 30 degrees Centigrade and minus-30 degrees Centigrade. The period of the year known as White Nights in St Petersburg, occur in early July, when the sun never fully sets.
- Russian is spoken in St Petersburg in the main; a small percentage speak Finnish or Estonian, but generally, you can get by in English.
- The Russian currency is the rouble, which at the time of going to press, will cost you R3,60.
- Traffic in Russia is on the right hand side.
- Electricity in Russia is at 220v, at a frequency of 50Hz. There are two types of standard Russian plugs: ones with two dual round pins and others with two dual round pins and grounding clips on either side.
- It is not safe to drink tap water in Russia, particularly in St Petersburg, where the pipes are as old as the city itself, and the water improperly sanitised. While it is not necessary to rush to the hospital if you accidentally get water in your mouth while showering, it is advisable to drink only bottled water, which you should also use to brush your teeth. Be careful of ice and frozen vegetables.
- St Petersburg is two hours ahead of Johannesburg.

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What's On

Today, Friday (October 26)

Greenside Hebrew Congregation invites you to celebrate Shabbat with them from 17:45 to 20:00. There will be perogen, snacks and schnapps. All welcome. Information: tel and fax (011) 788-5036. E-mail: info@greenside-shul.co.za.

UZLC hosts David Batzofin who will speak on “Changing Horses in Midstream”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

Sunday (October 28)

Jewish and Israeli live music with Roni Lea singing/keyboards and African lead guitarist Temi Oladejo. Venue: Kosher Mi Vami Glenhazel. Time: 12:30 until 15:30. No entrance fee. Information: Tel: (011) 440-4933.

RCHCC starts a series on memory. A documentary “In Search of Memory: The Neuroscientist Eric Kandel”, will be shown. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net, or visit www.greatpark.co.za

Northfield Shul hosts Hugh Raichlin who will speak on “The Jews of Japan”. Venue: Northfield Shul, 51 Northfield Avenue, Glenhazel. Time: 19:30. Cost: R70 per person (incl refreshments). Booking essential: E-mail rozannesack@gmail.com or SMS Rozanne on 082-469-6610.

The Lewandowski Chorale hosts a fund-raising concert to raise funds to buy air tickets for some of its choristers who are unable to do so themselves. The choir has been invited to participate in the Tri-Star Festival in Berlin in December. Venue: Redhill School Auditorium, 20 Summit Road, Morningside. Time 15:30. Seating is limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. A 33 per cent advance booking discount. Tickets can be purchased at the door if available for R150. Contact: Di Golding, chairman Lewandowski Chorale, 082-338-4462.

Monday (October 29)

UJW is hosting Nadine Lemmer, manager Arthritis Foundation Johannesburg branch, on “What, Who & Why of Arthritis”. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273 3044. Donation: R20.

Tuesday (October 30)

RCHCC repeats the documentary “In Search of Memory: The Neuroscientist Eric Kandel”, first shown last Sunday. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

WIZO Forum invites you to an informative morning with Michael Judin (legal perspective) and David Shapiro (financial perspective) on “The Money’s Running Out!” - how to ensure it doesn’t run out before you do. Time: 09:30. Venue: Beyachad. Cost: R40.

Contact: Sandy: (011) 645-2515.

WIZO Etgar Annual Golf Day at Kyalami Golf Course. If you would like to play please contact Marion on 083-326-3791.

Wednesday (October 31)

UJW CT adult education division hosts Dr Raoul Scholtz will talk on “The Art of Ophthalmology”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555.

UJW is hosting Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, formerly of the Dept of English, Wits, on the second lecture on a course on Thomas Hardy’s “The Mayor of Casterbridge”. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273-3044. Donation: R20.

Balfour Park Parkinson’s Disease Support Group meets in the boardroom, Randjes Estate, Randjeslaagte Road, Highlands North. Karyn Casey, a speech therapist, will speak on the problems associated with speech and swallowing in Parkinson’s Disease, and therapy to overcome some of these problems. Information: Rosemary Burke, (011) 640-3919.

RCHCC is hosting the second in the series on memory. Dr Ryan Fuller (specialist psychogeriatrician) will speak on ”Memory Problems from a Medical Perspective - What is Cognitive Impairment and Dementia and How is the Diagnosis Made?” and Dr Jonathan Moch will speak on: “Special Emphasis on Building Resilience in Close Family Mem-

bers of Loved Ones with Alzheimers” Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net, or visit www.greatpark.co.za

Great Park Shul invites you to “Building a Relationship with Your Toddler” - a parenting workshop with Dr Ronel Duchen. Starts 19:30. Cost: R30 pp. Bookings essential. Contact: Goldie, 072-832-2001; goldiesimpson@gmail.com

Second Innings has arranged a guided tour to the Voortrekker Monument. It’s wheelchair-friendly and wheelchairs are available. Meet the bus at 08:45 in front of Golden Acres. Cost: R120 includes the bus and the tour. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Thursday (November 1)

WIZO CT Bnoth Zion, hosts the launch of Rahla Xenopoulos’ book “Bubbles”, the fictional account of what might have been the life and death of Bubbles Schroeder, whose murder was never solved. Venue: Grand on Beach, Granger Bay. Time: 17:00 for 17:30. Bookings: (021) 464-6729. Donation R150.

Friday, (November 2)

UZLC hosts Don Krausz, who will speak on “My Holocaust Experiences”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Is Nadal next on the Armstrong slide?



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

“Where there’s smoke, there’s fire”, my mother always used to warn me and that is probably why I’ve not scoffed at all the doping stories that keep coming out of the woodwork. After all, if there is enough smoke, that woodwork eventually smoulders away and you are generally left with the truth.

Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson was probably the first major dope cheat that caught the attention of the public and after that the flood began. We had Chinese 3 000m athlete Wang Junxia, who set four world records in six days in September 1993. She knocked 23 seconds off the 3 000m world record and broke the record three times in three days, twice in heats.

Her success, according to her first trainer, Ma Junren, came as the result of drinking a natural concoction of turtle blood and caterpillar fungus - and hard training.

Under coach Mao Denzhen, Wang won a gold medal in the 10 000m and a silver in the 5000m in Atlanta in 1996. Her success, according to her first trainer, Ma

Junren, came as the result of drinking a natural concoction of turtle blood and caterpillar fungus - and hard training.

Immediately after the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Wang disappeared into obscurity. While there was a load of speculation, nobody ever managed to prove Wang was taking something stronger.

American sprinter Marion Jones set the athletics world alight in the late 1990s and then she too was tainted in a doping scandal.

All of these athletes have one thing in common. They all fervently denied they were ingesting any illegal substances. So, when Lance Armstrong refuted all the allegations made against him by L’Equipe in France, it actually meant very little.

He was just following a trend adopted by so many other guilty charlatans. Cycling had been tainted for many years and if one searches the Internet, one will find that there have been more than 300 positive dope tests in the professional sport since 1980.

The most relevant exposé came with “Operation Puerto”, the code name of a Spanish police operation against the doping network of Dr Eufemiano Fuentes, which started in May 2006 and resulted in a scandal that involved several of the world’s most famous cyclists at the time.

The police found a list of names - of cyclists, and a few other sports - who were involved in the doctor’s doping circle. German cyclist Jan Ullrich was on the list but, at first denied involvement before he was totally exposed and banned from the sport. A few others followed.

But while all of this was going on, the Armstrong story tenaciously continued. More revelations from the French press, more denials from Armstrong. The American threatened to take them to court, but that never happened. The World Anti-Doping Agency got involved and by August this year Armstrong said he would no longer fight the drug charges.

With all the ensuing fanfare, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down around him and he has finally been stripped of his seven titles and could face attempts to reclaim much of the fortune he has amassed over the years.

The most relevant exposé came with “Operation Puerto”, the code name of a Spanish police operation against the doping network of Dr Eufemiano Fuentes.

If one looks at it objectively, in a sport that is so heavily tainted, why should people have been so shocked at the Armstrong revelations? Considering the number of discovered dopers, can you imagine how many there were that actually got away with it? The figures are probably staggering.

But that brings us to another issue. During Operation Puerto, the names of other sportsmen were on Dr Fuentes’ list. They did announce that two of them were tennis players. However, a judge in Spain quickly sealed list so that the names could not get out.

Nevertheless, there have been leaks and the French are suddenly having a go at another sportsman - iconic Spanish tennis star Rafael Nadal.

It has been claimed in some quarters that former world No 1 was among the names on the list, but he has heatedly denied this.

But it keeps cropping up. French TV station Canal Plus’ show “The Puppeteers”, put together an animated skit of Nadal drinking something that gives him an enormous amount of energy.

The Spanish Tennis Federation has threatened to sue them and the French TV Channel welcomes the threats.

Nothing has happened. Nadal has threatened legal action. Again, encouraged by the French, nothing has been forthcoming.

The ATP Tour, which governs tennis, has not got the best of records when it comes to cleaning up the game when it involves top-10 players.

Anyone who read Andre Agassi’s autobiography will know they did nothing when he tested positive for “recreational drugs”. Czech Petr Korda tested positive at Wimbledon in 1998, just six months after winning the Australian Open.

Six months later someone leaked the information to the press and it was not until the players threatened a boycott of the 1999 Australian Open over the Korda affair, that the ATP finally imposed a ban.

In the end you have to decide whether Nadal’s protests are genuine, or whether he is just blowing smoke, hoping he can keep the fire at bay.

Anton Marcus leads SA team

JACK MILNER

Champion jockey Anton Marcus (pictured) will captain the South African team to take on an international squad in the annual Avis Coach Charter International Jockeys’ Challenge at both Turffontein and Greyville.

The South Africans lost the event last year and will be going all-out to reclaim the trophy. Marcus will have former South African and Mauritian champion Jeff Lloyd, Gavin Lerena, former SA champion Piere Strydom, Anthony Delpech and Muzi Yeni, with S’manga Khumalo the reserve.

Opposing them will be a team comprising Richard Hughes, Jimmy Fortune, Tom Queally, Jamie Spencer and Seamie Heffernan. Brazilian Joao Moreira gives the team a more international flavour.



KDHCVP salutes top cricketer Lee Gruskin



Photo: Prestige Photographic Services

PETER TRUSCOTT

Lee Gruskin, one of King David Victory Park High School’s top cricketers for the past five years, has ended his cricketing career at the school on an amazing high.

Lee recently took part in the Gauteng Under-19 Area Cricket Festival. He had an exceptional tournament, scoring over 230 runs in four innings, averaging over 100, as he was not out in two innings.

The school is very proud to announce that he was selected for the under-19A team to represent Gauteng at the Coca-Cola Week in Potchefstroom in December.

Lee’s selection is extraordinary, taking into consideration that he is the first Jewish player from a King David school to achieve this remarkable feat.

This puts him in the top seven under-19 white players in the province.

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