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Friday, 04 March 2011 / 28 Adar I, 5771

Volume 15 Number 8

Goldstone balances Gaza report and Israel's right to self-defence

SEE PAGE 5

Susanne Bier leads us to a better world

Danish film director Susanne Bier, who studied for two years at the Hebrew University and the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, took the best foreign-language film Oscar at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles last Sunday, for her film "In a Better World". This is a story of conflicted family relationships. Bier's forebears fled persecution in Nazi Germany and Czarist Russia. **SEE STORY PAGE 9.** (PHOTOGRAPH: SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)



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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

The accounts of the tabernacle – and the 2010 stadia

PARSHAT PEKUDEI
Rabbi Ilan Raanan
Bnei Akiva Shul, Johannesburg

PAUL, THE football predicting octopus passed away in Germany; barring the odd U2 concert our Fifa World Cup stadia are perhaps white elephants; many of the jobs created have disappeared; the trophy ended up in Spain...

All that wonderful excitement has become but a pleasant memory and the world sporting focus has shifted from soccer in South Africa to cricket on the Subcontinent. Were we to conduct a survey of the World Cup accounts, from Fifa 2010 to ICC 2011, what “change” have we been left with?

Rabbi Shimon in the fourth chapter of the Ethics of the Fathers, teaches us that there are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of Priesthood and the crown of Kingship. Yet the crown of a Good Name transcends all three!

The Maharal of Prague in his commentary on Pirkei Avot asks: Four crowns are mentioned - so why does Rabbi Shimon say there are only three?

Maharal understands that the crowns mentioned are accessible to all of us: the study of Torah, the concept of responsibility as represented by the notion of “priesthood” and the good governance over our own bodies in terms of keeping Hashem’s commands as represented by the concept of “kingship”.

Were we to conduct a survey of the “Accounts of the Tabernacle” as this week’s Parshat Pekudei does, we would find four vital pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle that symbolise our four crowns.

The “Aron” housing the “Luchot” of the Decalogue represents Torah; The “Mizbeach” used for sacrifices represents Priesthood; the “Shulchan” upon which the special bread was placed represents Kingship; The “menorah” that illuminated through the burning of olive oil represents a “Good Name”.

Maharal points out that while the first three pieces of furniture had a “zer”, a crown-like border, surrounding their upper surfaces, the menorah didn’t. He suggests that this indicates there is a notion of limitation in each of the three individual areas of Torah, priesthood and kingship, as represented by the “zer” capping each of these pieces of furniture.

Yet when we combine these three elements to create a good name for ourselves, the sky is the limit. We are like the flames of the “uncapped” menorah ever leaping upwards.

This is why Rabbi Shimon mentions only three crowns but goes on to enumerate four: the three are finite but the fourth - infinite!

An “audit” of our World Cup accounts certainly does reveal significant left-over “change” the good name South Africa was left with; foreigners who visited South Africa for the first time discovered that lions don’t roam the streets; we have running water and electricity; and crime isn’t as bad as it is made out to be.

They spread their positive views of the country to others. Investment in South Africa has picked up and hopefully the tourism sector will continue to benefit from the good name of South Africa that was promoted.

While the world focus for now has shifted the spotlight to the Subcontinent and we hope they too will create a good name for themselves as we watch the Cricket World Cup progress, the focus of the “Umpire Supreme” above remains unchanged, keeping a close watch on the “runs” each and every one of us generate, towards crowning ourselves with a good name over the course of our life’s innings!

Marlene Bethlehem; Edna Freinkel; Sylvia Glasser; and Natalie Knight.

WIZO honours four women of worth

RITA LEWIS
PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

THE FOUR winners of the annual WIZO Awards were announced last week at an emotional ceremony held at Beyachad. They are Marlene Bethlehem for her efforts in outreach; Edna Freinkel for helping to educate the masses; Sylvia Glasser for bringing dance to so many; and Natalie Knight for her contribution to art.

In her opening address, Joyce Chodos of WIZO said that every Friday night we recite Ayshet Chayil, A Woman of Worth. The four honorees “had enriched and uplifted the general community in many ways”, she said.

The problem of choosing only four recipients (out of so many worthwhile candidates) was extremely difficult as there were numerous names forwarded - each one a success story of a lifetime of excellence.

After much soul searching by Chodos’ small group of women, the four were chosen.

Each of those honoured was given the opportunity to address the gathering of some 120 women.

Wearing a magnificently embroidered yellow and black outfit, Bethlehem said she wanted “to speak from the heart” quoting Ben Zoma who said: “Who is honoured? Those who give honour.”

She said it was a privilege to be sitting at the same table with such special, fellow-honorees.

“Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society was my alma mater,” she said. “However, tennis was my racquet.” (She played tennis on the international circuit for three years and won many medals including three golds at the Maccabi Games).

Bethlehem spoke of her obligations and involvements as chairman of various organizations, including being senior vice president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture based in New York – the first and only South African to hold this position.

She spoke of her relationship with the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris who had told her: “You have to look for the good” (in people).

Her biggest achievement, she said, was her relationship with Nelson Mandela. She was with him when he laid a wreath at Yad Vashem and recalled how she could not get him to leave the memorial for the one million children who died in the Holocaust.

Freinkel said she had to thank Hashem for her success as well as her late husband Lionel, her children, staff and Readucate’s administrators.

All her inspiration, she said, came from her mother who had initiated the technique she was using to teach illiterate, mostly black people, to read and write.

“We were often snubbed because of our teaching methods and told that ‘one can’t teach like that’. After my mother died I wanted to give up everything.”

However, she realised that her talents

should be utilised and her calling fulfilled and she found the inner strength to continue – with the encouragement of her late husband.

For many years it had been her dream to bring literacy to the masses. In achieving that, she had since been responsible for over 60 000 South Africans of all races, in townships, in prisons, in schools etc, now being able to read, and in many cases also to write.

She said we were all teachers. “Our children are watching us. Our servants are watching us, as are our friends.

“We must not forget that “Teaching is a joyous privilege’.”

Glasser said that it had been a long and lonely journey before she was to become artistic director of Moving into Dance Mophatong.

However, she was always supported by her husband who believed she could do anything and Maureen Freedman “who was always by my side” helping her run a performing arts training course with bursary students – mostly from economically deprived backgrounds.

Although she always wanted to be a dancer, the Jewish qualities of caring for the oppressed, influenced the direction of her life.

Several of the dances she choreographed such as “For Whom the Bell Tolls” 1986 and “African Cassandra” 1989 were explicit statements against the apartheid system.

Black dancers would often come to sleep over at her home.

At one time she was teaching about 40 children in the suburbs, but thought about the thousands in the townships and decided to start a dance teachers course - in the process changing the lives of thousands of children.

Natalie Knight, attorney, playwright, owner of a well-known art gallery, theatre critic and researcher into African cultures, quoted Andy Warhol as saying: “Everyone is entitled to their fifteen minutes of fame.”

She congratulated WIZO on choosing “these four women, all of whom are involved in helping Israel”.

Knight opened her gallery in 1981, where she exhibited the work of top international artists as well as struggling black artists, enabling them to achieve national and international recognition.

She closed the gallery in 1995 to become Shomeret Shabbat and currently runs Natalie Knight – the Art Source.

She said she used to think she had achieved everything herself, but one day realised that everything was predetermined on high.

“It is important to build a strong brand,” she said, remembering the years when no-one was interested in African art. Everyone should all be involved in the art of our country.

She has continued to be a driving force in the research and documentation of South African cultures documenting the art of the Ndebele for international museums.

Her last showing was “Symphony of Soweto” - the works of Ephraim Ngatane displayed at the Standard Bank Gallery.

their abilities.

The principle is “teaching how to fish” rather than just handing out money. It aims to uplift the lives of these children and of those around them, by equipping them with the tools necessary for sustainability, success and self-growth.

Atlas Finance’s founder and chief executive, Jack Halfon, feels that “Grow your Life” fits in perfectly with the vision that he has for Atlas Finance and its role in South Africa.

“For us, empowering future entrepreneurs of South Africa and uplifting their families, is another way we’re living by our key value of ‘from our family to yours’.”

‘Grow your Life’ teaches young ‘how to fish’

RITA LEWIS

AT THIS year’s Miracle Drive function, Atlas Finance, a family-owned micro finance company made a donation of R200 000 to Chabad House to be used for a project “Grow Your Life”.

MaAfrika Tikkun in forefront of this centre of excellence

STAFF REPORTER
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN
OSSENDRYVER

THE NEW R10 million community and youth centre partly in Alexandra township, funded by MaAfrika Tikkun, is not just another building. “It is a sustainable gift to the entire Alexandra community, a place of stimulation and progression for the children and youth of Alexandra,” Marc Lubner, chief executive of the organisation said at the official opening on Wednesday.

Part of the building is being used as a nursery school and has been named the Ronnie and Rhona Lubner Child Youth Centre, to commemorate the generous contribution made by Ronnie and his wife Rhona.

This is a 1 600m² centre of excellence which also houses a modern early childhood development (ECD) centre for 200 children and a child and youth programme offering access to on-line information to ensure first-world learning opportunities, as well as access to sport and recreation activities.

The organisation caters for children with learning difficulties, offering specialised education and a well-equipped toy library.

The 400m² sports centre caters for indoor sports with an astroturf playing surface, the first of its kind in the township, mainly thanks to

MaAfrika Tikkun.

The project is a joint MaAfrika Tikkun and Phutaditjaba project which is run by Alexandra community leader, Linda Twala.

Funding for the R10 million project was provided by businessman Ronnie Lubner and his wife Rhona - who are now based in the UK - the National Lotteries Distribution Trust; the Gauteng Department of Social Development; and the international Belron Group - the world’s largest vehicle glass repair and replacement business, run by Gary Lubner.

The Lubner family, under the chairmanship of Bertie Lubner and chief executive Marc Lubner, are actively involved in running MaAfrika Tikkun.

Other sponsors – from large corporates to schools - have assisted in equipping the facility with everything from computers and internet connectivity, to toys.

The Ronnie and Rhona Lubner Child Youth Centre was built neighbouring Alexandra’s landmark Phutaditjaba Centre which was established in the 1970s by Annie Twala, mother of Linda Twala, to care for the aged and disabled in the impoverished area.

MaAfrika Tikkun initially became involved with Twala and Phutaditjaba in 1998 when floods in the township resulted in many people who had lost their homes turning to the centre for shelter.



Above: Rhona and Ronnie Lubner, who contributed generously to the centre, play with the kids.



Right: CEO of MaAfrika Tikkun, Marc Lubner, with Miss South Africa, Bokang Montjane, with some of the children.

MaAfrika Tikkun offered emergency disaster relief, through to elderly care – and the relationship subsequently flourished.

This was formalised in 2004 when MaAfrika Tikkun worked with Phutaditjaba to extend its services to caring for the youth and their caregivers.

A feeding scheme was established which today provides daily meals and sandwiches to over 400 people every week day. It also trains and monitors 15 community caregivers and 10 youths. A formal youth development programme has also been established.

All staff are employed from the local community in line with MaAfrika Tikkun’s policy of pro-

viding employment and skills development in all six under-resourced communities in which it operates.

The original Phutaditjaba facilities were cramped and unsuited to the effective implementation of MaAfrika Tikkun’s Holistic Circle of Care Model which is aimed at empowering children in deprived communities to grow up into well-rounded, productive adults.

A decision was taken to expand the community centre in 2007 and fundraising started in 2008.

The new Ronnie and Rhona Lubner Child Youth Centre’s ECD facility now caters for 200 children aged between two and six, while the formal after-school child and

youth development programme has some 200 primary and high school participants.

This number is to grow to over 400 youth participants who are able to access the services offered at the centre to complement their formal schooling.

The focus of the child and youth development programme is to support activities such as sport, dance and art, that promote discipline and encourage personal growth; and it offers life skills training, including career guidance as well as a variety of “soft-skills” learning experiences.

A total of 100 people who are local Alexandra residents, are to be employed at the centre.



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Israel loses one of its finest journalists in Jerrold Kessel

OWN CORRESPONDENT
JERUSALEM

CNN COLLEAGUES have been paying tribute to the network's former Jerusalem correspondent Jerrold Kessel (pictured), who died last week Thursday at age 65 after a long battle with cancer. Kessel was a tireless reporter in a troubled part of the world and one of Israel's leading English-language journalists.

"Jerrold worked for CNN for 13 years from 1990 to 2003, during

some of the most spectacular highs and lows of the Middle East and was one of the network's regular reporting faces from the region," said Jerusalem Bureau Chief Kevin Flower. "He was a passionate journalist and a guiding force for many he worked with."

After leaving CNN, Kessel co-produced independent TV programmes, wrote a book about football and wrote a sports column for Haaretz. His funeral took place last week Friday in central Israel.

Kessel was born in South Africa - he retained his South African accent - and moved to Israel as a young man. He was a widely published print reporter who worked for the Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio before joining CNN as a field producer, then correspondent and deputy bureau chief.

He led CNN's viewers through events ranging from the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians, to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli elections and the intifada.

A portly man with a fuzzy white beard, Kessel's appearance and warm manner gave no hint of his inner intensity. He was known to colleagues for his seven-day-a-week commitment to the story, voluble personality and insider's knowledge of Middle East events.

An avid reader, Kessel's passions were for history, literature, Israeli politics and sport.



Not only was he a mine of sporting information, he was also a fine player of a wide variety of games, with exceptional hand-eye co-ordination. Not obviously athletic, his agility on a squash court or behind the stumps on a cricket field was of a totally unexpected order. Woe betide the opponent who underestimated him!

"Jerrold was an expert on the Israeli-Palestinian story, and managed to explain the complicated politics of the Mideast on our air for so many years," said Parisa Khosravi, CNN's Senior Vice President of international news-gathering.

CNN Anchor Jim Clancy, a former Beirut correspondent well-travelled through the region in his own right, said he also benefited from Kessel's experience. "Jerrold always went out of his way to help others understand the context of the story and shared his knowledge and his sources unselfishly."

Kessel's encyclopaedic knowledge of the region made him a favourite of CNN producers when news broke. As the network scrambled to figure out the story, Kessel could vamp on air as long as needed.

He is survived by his wife, son and four grandchildren.

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HUGH RAICHLIN
ATTORNEYS NOTARIES & CONVEYANCERS



Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, Rabbi Pinchas Zekry and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, at the foundation stone ceremony at Izinga.



Rabbi Pinchas Zekry and his grandson Lior, add concrete to the foundation stone for the aron kodesh of the new shul at Izinga.

A new exciting Jewish development in Umhlanga

LAUREN SHAPIRO
PHOTOGRAPHS: MARCELLO MAFFEIS
DURBAN

WHEN RABBI Dr Pinchas Zekry looked out over hectares of sugarcane four and a half years ago, he saw a shul, a school, and a community centre.

Like Adam, who was created to see from one side of the world to the other, said Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, so we are called upon to look with a broad vision to the future.

"The Durban Jewish community, through the outstanding visionary leadership of Rabbi Zekry, are showing us the courage to look to the future, to build, new worlds."

On February 28, several hundred people gathered on the levelled ground to celebrate the unveiling of the foundation stone for the new Jewish development at Izinga, in Umhlanga, just north of Durban.

Guests included the Israel's Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, Chief Rabbi Goldstein, Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, Rosh Yeshiva Gedola Rabbi Avi Goldfein and chazan of Sydenham Shul, Yudi Cohen.

Chief Rabbis Metzger and Goldstein, Rabbi Zekry and Dr Jonathan Beare, unveiled a plaque to commemorate the occasion. In a touching gesture that represents the continuity of the community and indeed of the Jewish people as a whole, Rabbi Zekry and his one-year-old grandson Lior, together added concrete to the foundation stone.

"The community opens a new page today," commented Chief Rabbi Metzger. He then blessed Rabbi Zekry, the community, and the munificent benefactors who made the project possible.

The project management team comprises: Rabbi Zekry (chairman), Julian Beare (project development), Mary Kluk (marketing), Lew Heilbron (community liaison), Mr Justice Philip Levinsohn (legal adviser) and Gaynor Lazarus (education).

The initiative responds to a natural migration of corporate and residential developments along the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal in recent years.

Following a general trend of enormous

growth in cluster communities and concurrent business developments in the area, the new Jewish development at Izinga promises to provide a secure home and magnificent Jewish lifestyle in an environment of unparalleled natural beauty.

A natural diversity of coral reefs and tropical fish make it one of the top scuba diving and snorkeling destinations in the world. The KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board promotes a flourishing - yet safely controlled - marine life, while the nearby Beachwood Mangroves Nature Reserve fosters natural bird- and wildlife.

Economically, it is a rapidly developing area with several new communities and retail developments having been established in recent years. Gateway Theatre of Shopping (the largest shopping centre in the southern hemisphere), with its world-class retail outlets, supermarkets, cinemas, theatre, recreation and sporting facilities, ensures that every resident will find something to suit their taste.

Izinga Estate is just a 15 minute drive from the new King Shaka International Airport, appealing to families looking to relocate while retaining business interests or familial obligations in other cities, or families looking for a holiday home.

The new 20 000 square metre development itself, will include a 300-seater shul, a Jewish day school, a mikvah, a library, a gym and tennis courts, as well as an auditorium and state-of-the-art kosher function facilities for smachot.

The committee is also looking into the establishment of a kollel to provide learning facilities for families and adult scholars.

Tongaat Hulett has secured sites alongside the centre for purchase by the Jewish community. Leading realtors Remax and building developers Lorber Projects are offering several development opportunities, including Plot & Plan and freehold sites, as well as a sectional title development.

Construction is on schedule for completion by the end of November this year.

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Goldstone defends Gaza report, Israel’s right to self-defence

DAN PINE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
(JEWISH NEWS WEEKLY)

IN A RECENT speech at Berkeley on international law and human rights, Mr Justice Richard Goldstone (pictured), author of the controversial UN report on the 2009 Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, delivered a strong argument for Israel’s right to self-defence. Goldstone, who spoke under the auspices of the University of California, Berkeley’s Institute of International Studies, paired any references to Israeli culpability with an equal condemnation of Hamas and said Israelis who were subject to rocket attacks from Gaza deserved an investigation. In his 30-minute lecture on “International Law and Human Rights: The Search for Justice”, Goldstone, whose report accused Israel of war crimes, said: “Victims of thousands of rocket attacks in Israel are entitled to investigations.” Addressing the Gaza war and the resulting fact-finding mission, Goldstone said:

“This was the first time the UN looked into illegal acts from Gaza terrorists. It was the first time Hamas was condemned by UN bodies.” That wasn’t good enough for Israel or its supporters, who roundly condemned the Goldstone Report, alleging bias and shoddy investigative work. Goldstone defended his commission during a nearly one-hour question and answer session, saying he was limited in staff, time and resources. He also expressed dismay that Israeli government and military officials had refused to co-operate with him. “I pleaded with them to meet with me,” he noted, referring to letters he wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others. “I had nurtured the hope that the Israeli government would take this opportunity to have a UN platform to put its version into the commission. It didn’t.” Similarly, Hamas didn’t respond to any inquiries and requests from the commission. Goldstone said he had wanted to meet with the militant group to find out how it

justified rocket attacks on civilians. Though officials refused to co-operate, Goldstone did talk to Israelis and Gazans during his fact-finding. As part of the investigation, he went to Gaza. “I challenge anyone to go there,” he said, “and not be personally moved. It was awful to see the thousands of houses destroyed.” That said, he added: “Israel has a right of self-defence to protect its citizens against attacks. If more rockets had landed on kindergartens, the consequences would have been quite horrendous.” On the other hand, he stressed that the evidence strongly suggested that Israel had committed some war crimes. He cited the case of the al-Samouni family, relocated on January 4, 2009 by Israeli soldiers to a safe house, which was bombed the next day, killing 21 men, women and children. The Goldstone Report caused a firestorm of criticism in pro-Israel circles, some of it ad hominem attacks on Goldstone. He said those attacks were “very hurtful to me and my family”.



He ended his speech by expressing the hope that Israel would someday more thoroughly investigate its own actions during Operation Cast Lead. “I have sufficient confidence in Israel’s legal system to conduct such an investigation,” he said. “On the other side, groups like Hamas are less likely to do such investigating.” For a man so widely vilified and lionised, Goldstone is unimposing in person: stolid, soft-spoken and sartorially correct in a pin-stripe suit. There were no protests before or during the event.

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

CHARLIE SHEEN DEMANDING APOLOGY FROM ADL

NEW YORK - Actor Charlie Sheen is demanding an apology from the Anti-Defamation League for saying that his rant against the executive producer of his hit TV sitcom was "borderline anti-Semitism". A letter from Sheen's attorney, Marty Singer, demands a retraction because, it says, Sheen's only intention was to "address the man rather than his television persona", the TMZ website reported on Tuesday. Sheen, in a radio interview on February 24 and in a letter posted on the TMZ website, called the "Two and a Half Men" executive producer Chuck Lorre a "contaminated little maggot", said he was a "clown" and "stupid", and referred to him several times as Chaim Levine. Lorre's given name is Charles Michael Levine. "By invoking television producer Chuck Lorre's Jewish name in the context of an angry tirade against him, Charlie Sheen left the impression that another reason for his dislike of Mr Lorre is his Jewishness," Abraham Foxman, ADL's national director, said in a statement last Sunday. "This fact has no relevance to Mr Sheen's complaint or disagreement, and his words are at best bizarre, and at worst, borderline anti-Semitism." Singer's letter points out that Lorre referred to himself by the name Chaim on a vanity card in February, in which he also reportedly writes about "a lifetime of distancing himself from Judaism". The letter also says the ADL should denounce Lorre for acknowledging his "disdain for the Jewish religion". Sheen went on the defensive over the weekend, saying his statements were not anti-Semitic. He said in his letter to TMZ that he was "referring to Chuck by his real name because I wanted to address the man, not the bulls**t TV persona." "So you're telling me, anytime someone calls me Carlos Estevez, I can claim they are anti-Latino?" Sheen continued, referring to his given name The CBS network on February 25 cancelled filming of the final four episodes of the popular sitcom starring Sheen and could cancel the show all together. (JTA)

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SOCIAL SCENE

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Helen Heldenmuth, Ros Basserabie and Patricia Flaum strut their stuff.

Making light of a ‘heavy’ subject

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

SOME THREE hundred people attended a fundraising event for Emunah at the HOD hall recently, where guests were offered a morning of Jewish humour and song second to none.

The three “Salon Soiree Girls”, Helen Heldenmuth, Ros Basserabie and Patricia Flaum, put on a show entitled “My Fat Lady” where all three were dressed in gym clothes in which they would “attempt” (in song and rhyme form) to show how they were going to lose their excess weight - or at least moan about the fact that it was not going down.

Considering that most Jewish women of their age group are experiencing the same problems, people in the audience could really relate to this issue - especially when it was so humorously put across in rhyme and song by the three talented entertainers.

Although the melodies stayed the same, the words of “My Fair Lady” were cleverly adapted to the weight-losing

efforts of the three Salon Soiree Entertainers. So the song, “We’re getting married in the morning” became... “We’re getting weighed on Monday morning. Oy vey we’ve really got to cheat...”

The “All I want is a room somewhere” became, “All I want is to lose some weight. At over 50 it’s getting late”.

“I could have dined (danced) all night” followed and “I have often been down this road before” (was sung to the tune of “On the street where you live”).

The skits and songs on weight loss were followed by songs by two other vivacious singers, Lindy Brest and Lorri Strauss, whose voices brought the house down.

Shooby Doo’s Mark Samowitz, pianist and entertainer Bryan Schimmel as well as singer Len Kay did their bit - though not related to weight loss.

Their presence was the cherry on the top of the morning as the laughter and merriment caused by the humorous skits, the joy from the singing and the takings for the morning going to swell Emunah’s coffers, made for a really joyous occasion.



Ros Basserabie the “granddaughter” and Helen Heldenmuth the “bobba” swap stories of their lives.



Heather Raff welcomes the gathering.



Shoshana Wolfson with Zelda Lees and Jill Bilchitz enjoying the show.



Mark Samowitz and Len Kay serenade Helen Heldenmuth while Bryan Schimmel accompanies them on the keyboard.



Lindy Brest who sang the Zionist Federation’s winning song, “Stand United as One”, with the composer Patricia Flaum.



Mary Kahlberg and Fruma Schwartz.

COMMUNITY BUZZ

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JOHANNESBURG

The story of Jewey Cooke (continues):

“This was now 1907. Cooke lived in a block of flats for married men in the centre of Johannesburg. A widow did his washing and she would send her teenage daughter to collect the washing and later deliver it back, washed and ironed. Cooke was regularly visited by his friend, Jack Silverstein, also a bachelor and who was the proprietor of the Texas Café in town.

“One day Cooke spoke to the girl about a ‘little hanky panky’ and afterwards gave her a sixpenny coin which had been dipped in rolled gold so that it looked like a gold Kruger rand, worth about ten shillings at that time.

“The girl went to a shop run by a Chinese man and bought some articles and gave him the coin in payment. The Chinese man immediately spotted the fraud and started screaming at the girl and threatened to call the police.

“The girl went to a police station and laid a charge of rape against Cooke and also against Silverstein who had been present when she had arrived to deliver the washing, but had left soon afterwards.

“A detective was sent to arrest Cooke and Silverstein and found them at Silverstein’s shop. The policeman presented Cooke with a warrant. Cooke could not believe it.

““You call that rape? Why the kid went of her own free will,” he said. ‘And the little so-and-so told me proudly that she was the means of a man getting seven years for the same sort of thing.’

“Cooke said that the girl was a prostitute who supplemented her income and also that, failing payment, she was a black-mailer.

“Nevertheless, Cooke was charged and consulted Harry Morris for his defence. Morris was a new lawyer on the block (and in time was to prove one of the greatest legal practitioners who graced South African courts).”

To be continued.

BULAWAYO. (THEN RHODESIA)

From Shulamit Kagan:

“I arrived in Bulawayo in 1950 as a young bride with my husband who was an old ‘Bulawayian’. A few days after we arrived, two friends of my husband came to take us to an engagement party. ‘Engagement party?’ I protested, ‘but we are not invited.’

“They answered: ‘Everyone is invited. It was in the paper.’ It appears that if you had a simcha you advertised it in the classified section of the local paper ‘inviting family and friends’.

“Most people telephoned to respond, but others did not and arrived, nevertheless, and one catered on the basis of ‘more or less’ people. Such was the cohesiveness of the Bulawayo Jewish community.

“At the party, I was invited, nay coerced, by Mrs Sadie Kaplan (Kappie) into joining the Magen David Adom committee. There and then I learnt that there was no saying no to Kappie.”

To be continued.

JOHANNESBURG.

From Russell Sadowsky:

“Sarah Zundelowitz was born in Doornfontein, Johannesburg to Jewish Lithuanian parents, Rachel and Morris (a butcher by trade and a personal friend of my late father, Hyman Joseph ‘Hymie’ Sadowsky z’l).

“Sarah is the youngest of four siblings - Rose Aronowitz z’l, Mary Gordon z’l and the eldest brother, David (Dov) who is an exceptionally skilled Jewish bookbinder.

“Dov Sundelowitz’s wife, Hermione’s late mother, Golda Weinbren, was the mayoress of Johannesburg in 1946 (when Jesse MacPherson , a Labour member, was the mayor and her father, Benny Weinbren was a Labour Party City Councillor.

“At the age of nine, Sarah’s eldest brother Dov, bought Sarah her first piano, piano accordion and organ. So talented was Sarah, that her first concert took place a year later.

“As a young girl she played for General Jannie Smuts. She studied music at Wits University.

“In 1960 Sarah left South Africa, married a Londoner and settled in Britain. As an adult, there, her audiences included the Queen Mother and the Queen of Jordan.”

To be continued.

THE ATKINS SCHMALTZ DIET (CONTINUES)

Sent by Frank Friedman:

“My personal all-time favourite is watching my hube (grand-mother) munch on boiled feese (chicken feet). Try that on the kinderlach tomorrow.

“For our next course we always had chicken soup with pieces of yellow-white, rubbery chicken skin floating in a greasy sea of lokshen (noodles), farfel (broken bits of matzo), pietrishkeh (parsley), tzibbeles (onions), mondlen (soup nuts), kneidlach (matzo balls/dumplings), kasha (groats), kliskelech (pasta squares) and marech (marrow bones).

“The main course, as I recall, was either boiled chicken, flanken, kackletten (fried burgers/chopped meat) and, sometimes, ribbed steak, which were served either well done, burned or cremated.

“Occasionally we had barbecued liver done to a burned and hardened perfection in our own coal furnace.

“The meal will be concluded in our next issue.”

Wulf Utian advises a cool head at all times

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

“IS THIS my problem or is this your problem?” By answering this question, one is well on one’s way to adopting the approach towards navigating interpersonal communication and conflict resolution advocated by Dr Wulf Utian.

The world-renowned gynaecologist, who left South Africa for the United States in 1976, discussed his new book, “The Utian Strategy”, at a session of the Living Newspaper. The basis of the book is to identify the owner of a problem; the author’s aim is to empower the reader “to sense someone is passing the buck”.

Utian recalled a time when he was running a large obstetrics-gynaecology practice in Cleveland, Ohio. He had an open-door policy towards his 126 employees, but soon realised that “maybe one out of 10 times the problem was mine.

“It was a question of ascribing ownership of the problem. You’ve got to be quick and act decisively,” he advised. “You either deal with it or say: ‘No, this is your problem’.”

When dealing with family matters, though, he said the first thing was to “try and keep cool. Try not to say the first thing that comes into your head,” he added, conceding that this was easier said than done.

In addition, parents should be “on the same page” to avoid being played against each other.

Turning his attention to health issues, Utian said: “Unfortunately, if you have the disease, you have the problem. But very often, out of sympathy, the family



Nina and Mike Kovensky; Moira and Dr Wulf Utian, at the Living Newspaper session addressed by Utian.

assumes the problem.

“Sharing the problem can ease the load, as long as someone is willing to share it with you.”

He advised patients to cope with the situation by learning all they could about their condition, knowing the details of their health insurance and ensuring that their personal affairs were in order.

“Modern medicine forces decision-making on you,” he added, contrary to the old days where the doctor knew best. “Doctors now say, ‘This is your condition, these are the treatments and risks’ and you make up your mind what you want to do.”

Touching on what he called the “Inverse Utian Strategy”, which describes the situation in which an individual wishes to make his problem someone else’s, Utian joked: “If they know about the ‘Strategy’, good luck!”

The Utian Strategy is available at www.kalahari.net

Teaching of cursive writing back in King David Schools

ALISON GOLDBERG

IN A reversal of its decision to discontinue teaching cursive writing, the Board of Jewish Education headed by its general director, Rabbi Craig Kacev, has informed parents of children at King David Schools that they are bound by a Department of Education decision to reintroduce cursive writing at the end of grade 2 and in grade 3.

This decision was included in the new CAPS (Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statements) documents just released, which determine the minimum curriculum requirements that need to be met by schools to fulfil government requirements.

The King David Schools are bound by such requirements as registered schools and as such will have to reintroduce the teaching of cursive writing in the grades indicated.

Rabbi Kacev informed parents that “not too much time will be invested in this, but parents can be assured that cursive will be taught properly and pride of writing will be included in ongoing assessment.

Learners “who present with learning

difficulties in the process of trying to acquire the skill of cursive, will be exempt from this. Teachers will use their discretion in this regard”.

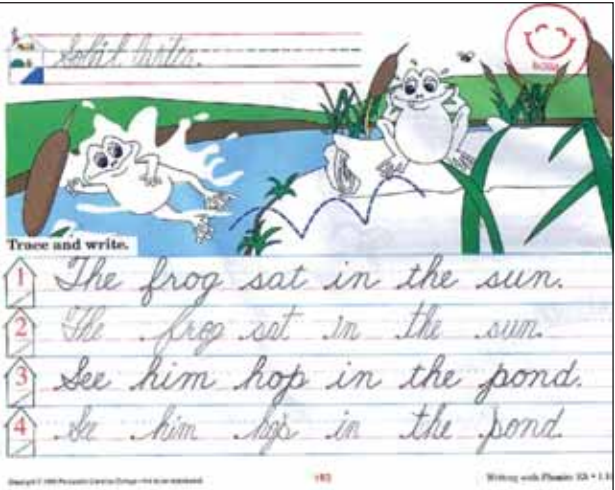
The debate regarding cursive has been ongoing in the King David Schools executive committee for the past two years. The heads of schools who make up the exco, had felt that a decision to discontinue cursive was a valid one for various reasons.

Those include:

- A large majority of learners do not sustain any meaningful use of cursive and by high school there is very little use of cursive, while assignments are completed on computers.
- The current grade 2 and 3 learners will enter a working reality in 10 to 15 years time that will be very different from the present one; a future in which technology will be used for most forms of communication.
- The weigh-up of the different educational demands in the new curriculum creates pressures that require schools to consider the relative value of the many skills that can be taught.

- Learners with learning difficulties are burdened with the further challenge of acquiring a different handwriting style, having just consolidated print script.
- While many will cite therapeutic benefits, these are not backed up by sound research.

One can access the issues raised above in some journal articles such as: The Journal of Instructional Psychology; December 2009 - Cursive writing: Are its last days approaching? And The Journal of Language and Education; July 2010 - Handwriting - A forgotten language skill?



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The artistic gesture

THE OSCARS last Saturday was a bracing counterpoint to the gloominess of world news these days. Televised live in some 200 countries, it raises the age-old question that always eludes a definitive answer: “What makes an artist?”

In every culture and time, some people rise above life’s practical circumstances and create the artistic gesture - celebratory or tragic, sublime or bizarre - which inspires and moves us and without which human life would be unimaginable.

Familiar works emanating from our own country, such as the thousands of years old, beautiful San rock art in the Drakensberg, the radiant oil paintings of Irma Stern and the dark, subtle works of Gerard Sekoto, have those qualities in bucketfuls.

It is intriguing why particular groups of people have a special leaning towards the arts, such as the Jews - as practitioners, patrons or audiences. In music, one thinks of greats like George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Benny Goodman, Bob Dylan, Barbra Streisand, Yitzhak Perlman, Vladimir Ashkenazi and Yehudi Menuhin. In literature, names like Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Norman Mailer and Franz Kafka come to mind - just a few among thousands.

The Oscars on Saturday showed again that film, too, is an industry with a noticeable sprinkling of Jewish names. Celebrating excellence in that arena, it is one of the world’s most glamorous award ceremonies. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences itself (the host of the Oscars) was conceived by legendary film mogul Louis B Mayer, who started Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and was among the visionary pioneers of the film genre and industry itself. The first ceremony was held in 1929.

There were winners and candidates from every culture, religion and corner of the earth, last Saturday. The Jewish presence in the formal programme began humorously, with the hosts James Franco and Anne Hathaway, spinning a dreidel on stage. Israeli-American actress Natalie Portman took the Best Actress trophy for her portrayal of a tortured ballerina in “Black Swan”. “The King’s Speech” took home a total of four Oscars. Danish director-writer Susanne Bier, who inter alia studied at the Hebrew University and the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem, won the Best Foreign-Language Film award for “In a Better World”, a story of conflicted family relationships. (see page 9)

The 40-minute film “Strangers No More”, by Karen Goodman and Kirk Simon, about children of foreign workers and refugees at Tel Aviv’s Bialik-Rogozin School, won the award for Best Documentary Short.

So, why the Jewish attraction to the arts? No easy answer. Jews have been a marginal minority in many countries over many centuries - often oppressed and discriminated against. They have absorbed a myriad cultures and perspectives, which they carried with them wherever else they went - the “itinerant Jew” taking his knowledge and art with him – and sharing it along the way.

The great film moguls were all immigrants - mainly from Eastern Europe. Essentially, Jews, with their drive, passion and problems, always seemed to come from “elsewhere”, and were perhaps freer to express themselves differently from the mainstream culture as they struggled to survive and make meaning out of life. Is that the root of the artistic impulse?

History colours everyone’s life - and for Jews, the gigantic shadow of the Holocaust is always very much present, whether subliminally or explicitly. Jewish German culture critic Theodor Adorno famously stated that poetry is not possible after Auschwitz, that the only legitimate response is silence. Artists have never succeeded in capturing the Holocaust. Whatever form the attempt takes, it generally ends up trivialising it. It is too overwhelming.

We must celebrate and encourage the Jewish love for the arts - the glorious human spirit rising above the mundane or horrible, connecting people from all creeds and cultures.

A Chinese proverb says: “If you have two pennies, spend one on bread and the other on a flower.” The flower speaks for the artist somewhere in all of us.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Arab unrest alters power balance in as yet unseen ways

URIEL HEILMAN
WASHINGTON

THEY WERE the devils they knew.

Though Israel lives in a dangerous neighbourhood, surrounded by countries whose leaders or people wish its destruction, over the years it had adjusted to the status quo, more or less figuring out how to get by while keeping an eye on gradual change.

But the sudden upheaval in the region that in a matter of weeks has toppled regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, and threatens autocrats in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and elsewhere, is forcing Israel to grapple with how to recalibrate for dramatic change.

For the time being, as Israel sits and watches how things play out from Tripoli to Manama, Bahrain, it’s not clear exactly how the game will change.

“The best answer is we don’t know,” Ron Pundak, the director of the Peres Centre for Peace in Herzliya said this week at the J Street conference in Washington.

“The biggest change since 1967 is this tsunami rolling across the region whose end-results no one really can foresee,” said Samuel Lewis, a former US ambassador to Israel who attended the conference. “Something new is happening in the Arab world.”

In some places, like Libya, the immediate effects on Israel are minimal. Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi’s state has had no ties to Israel, so the dictator’s demise - if it comes - wouldn’t change much for Israelis.

“The civil war raging in Libya poses no immediate cause for concern in Israel,” Israeli journalist Avi Issacharoff wrote in Haaretz.

However, the cumulative effects of the Middle East unrest are prompting shifts throughout the region that may require dramatic strategic rethinking in the Jewish State.

Every time a protest movement in the Middle East succeeds, protest movements elsewhere are emboldened, and that has put many regimes that for decades have not been hostile to Israel - including those of the Persian Gulf, Jordan and North Africa - on alert and at risk.

With Israel and the West engaged in a proxy war with Iran for regional hegemony, the fall of autocratic regimes allied with the West provides an opening for Iran to expand its power and sphere of influence.

And Iran is intent on doing so. It was no accident that just days after the fall of Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak, Tehran dispatched two warships to sail through the Suez Canal - something Iran had not dared to do since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The ships docked in Syria in what Iran’s navy chief, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, described as “a routine and

Anti-government protesters took to the streets in Egypt, Feb. 4, 2011 in demonstrations that eventually toppled President Hosni Mubarak from power. (TAKVER - CREATIVE COMMONS)



friendly visit” to “carry the message of peace and friendship to world countries”.

In truth, it was an exercise in sabre rattling.

Iran is projecting “self-confidence and certain assertiveness in the region,” Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told CNN. Nevertheless, he said, “I don’t like it, but I don’t think that any one of us should be worried by it.”

When a pair of rockets fired from Gaza hit the Israeli city of Beersheba last week, some Israeli analysts saw it as another example of Iran’s sabre rattling. Iran has sent weapons to Gaza and seeks more influence there, even though the strip’s Hamas rulers are Sunni Muslims, and Iran is a Shiite power.

“I do not recommend that anyone test Israel’s determination,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after the rocket attack.

The great fear is that regimes friendly toward Israel (Egypt, Jordan), or friendly with Israel by proxy via the United States (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain), or not actively hostile (Libya, among others), will be co-opted by elements with greater animus toward the Jewish State.

That hostility could come from any one of a number of places. On the Egyptian front, the long-outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, an ally of Hamas, stands to gain greater power. In the cases of Tunisia and Libya, there is fear that al-Qaida could capitalise on a power vacuum and take root. In Bahrain, which is overwhelmingly Shiite but ruled by a Sunni king, the concern is that genuine democracy could throw the country the way of Iran.

“The regional balance of power is changing, and not necessarily in Israel’s favour,” Robert Serry, the UN secretary-general’s special co-ordinator for the Middle East peace process, said at the J Street conference.

But there could be some good news, too. The uprisings that have spread from North Africa to the Persian Gulf have been broad-based, loosely organised protest movements led by young people networking through the Internet and social media like Facebook. They have not

been dominated by Islamists, and the protesters have not made Israel a focal point.

Whether these young people really will take hold of the levers of power, and how they will relate to Israel in the future, are open questions.

For those concerned with Israel, the unrest is being interpreted one of two ways, depending largely on political leanings. Those on the right point to the instability as a reason for Israel to be more wary of concessions in any peace agreements, since their peace partner could disappear at any time.

“Why should Israel expect that another agreement would not be overturned by some new revolution, change of mind or cynical long-term plan?” columnist Barry Rubin wrote in The Jerusalem Post.

Those on the left say that if Israel does not resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict quickly with a peace deal, the new generation of leaders emerging in the Arab world won’t be able to see Israel as anything other than an occupier and repressor of Palestinian rights. Arab commentators echo that thinking.

“The hatred of Israel will not end until you start treating Palestinians with freedom and dignity,” Egyptian journalist Mona Eltahawy said at the J Street conference. “This is the time for Israel to sit down and make concrete concessions.”

In Jerusalem, the government is still in the wait-and-see mode, albeit with as much handwringing as possible.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon, speaking on Tuesday in Brussels, warned that the danger was that democracy movements in the Arab world would be “hijacked”, emulating the “model of Iran, the model of Hamas in Gaza, the model of Hezbollah in Lebanon”, according to the German news agency DPA.

Ayalon also said the unrest in the Arab world demonstrated that the notion of the Arab-Israel conflict being the region’s most serious issue was just not true.

“The real major problem of the Middle East, which is now so glaringly evident, is the dysfunctionality of the Arab societies,” Ayalon reportedly said, noting the absence of “rights of any kind”. (JTA)

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

PETE SEEGER SAYS HE REGRETS TAKING PART IN PEACE RALLY

SAN FRANCISCO - Folk music icon Pete Seeger says he regrets taking part in a peace rally for Israel’s Arava Institute for Environmental Studies.

Last November, the 92-year-old musician appeared on “With Earth and Each Other”, billed as an online peace rally in support of the Israeli institute, which brings together an international student body to explore solutions to cross-border ecological problems, particularly those affecting Israel and her Arab neighbours.

A month before the event, Seeger told JTA that he was resisting calls from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement to call off his participation. He cited the need for dialogue to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“I understand why someone would want to boycott a place financially, but I don’t understand why you would boycott dialogue,” Seeger told JTA. “The world will not be here in 50 years unless we learn how to communicate with each other nonviolently.”

According to Adalah, an organisation that supports BDS, Seeger met recently with representatives from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, which he supports financially with proceeds from his music. He told them, the report claims, that he “misunderstood” the Arava Institute’s ties to the Jewish National Fund, which he criticises for taking Palestinian lands for Jewish settlement.

“I appeared on that virtual rally because for many years I’ve felt that

people should talk with people they disagree with. But it ended up looking like I supported the Jewish National Fund,” Seeger told the representatives from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, they report.

“Now that I know more, I support the BDS movement as much as I can,” Seeger reportedly said.

JNF provides scholarships for Arab and Jewish students, and funding for the institute’s infrastructure, according to Friends of the Arava’s new chairman, Seth Morrison.

On January 14, Morrison published an op-ed in the Jerusalem Post noting the JNF’s efforts to help the Bedouin and asking the organisation not to take Bedouin lands in the south in order to plant trees. (JTA)

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Danish Jewish film director behind Oscar-winning movie, an anomaly

**TOM TUGEND
LOS ANGELES**

FILM DIRECTOR Susanne Bier, whose Danish movie, “In a Better World”, won Oscar honours for Best Foreign-language film, is an anomaly.

She is a woman director in an overwhelmingly male profession, and she is emphatically Jewish in a country and industry in which such affirmation is hardly the norm. Her parents are religiously observant.

After a Golden Globe win for the year’s best foreign-language film, Bier, who studied for two years in Jerusalem, repeated her success in that category in the Academy Awards. She faced stiff competition from the other four finalists representing Algeria, Canada, Greece and Mexico.

Israel seemed close to its first Oscar when its entries made the final five cut in each of the last three years. It struck out early with its entry, “The Human Resources Manager.”, but unfortunately didn’t win.

Bier, youthful and animated at 50, was born in Denmark, but the fates and persecutions of her forebears in Nazi Germany and Czarist Russia have deeply affected her personal and artistic outlooks.

Her paternal grandfather, a

real estate executive in Berlin, was farsighted enough to leave Germany for Denmark in 1933, when his son, Susanne’s father, was two years old.

Three decades earlier, her mother’s Russian family arrived in Denmark in 1903, the year of the infamous Kishinev pogrom in what is present-day Moldova.

Their secure refuge in Denmark was shattered in 1940, when Nazi armies invaded the country. Both families were saved in the celebrated 1943 boatlift to Sweden, which saved almost all of Denmark’s Jews.

Susanne’s father, then 12, vividly recalled the experience to his daughter. The car in which the family was driving to the boat rendezvous ran out of petrol next to a German command post. After a very anxious time, a passing Danish motorist supplied the refugees with fuel.

After the Allied victory, both families returned to Denmark, and from their backgrounds and experiences they transmitted two life lessons to Susanne.

“I felt early on that even in the most secure life, there is always the potential for catastrophe,” she said in an interview with JTA at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

On the reverse side, her parents taught her “to address the world in

a positive way”, to look for the good even in evil times, and to deal morally and righteously with others, she said.

Bier grew up as somewhat of a tomboy, preferring soccer scrimmages with the boys to playing with dolls. She was socially awkward, an avid reader and had a creative bent.

Upon finishing high school, she decided to explore her Jewish roots by studying in Israel. She spent half a year at the Hebrew University and one-and-a-half years at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.

She left Jerusalem after “two years of partying,” she says, with a working knowledge of Hebrew and a vague sense that she eventually would marry a nice Jewish lawyer and have six kids.

Her religious parents, whom she phones at least once a day, approved of this tentative life path. However, Bier discovered that “all the nice Jewish boys I encountered were just too boring” and she was more attracted to not-so-nice, non-Jewish boys.

In her actual marital life, Bier has struck somewhat of a compromise.



“My first husband was non-Jewish, my second husband was a nice Jewish boy, and I am now in a relationship with a non-Jewish man,” she said. She is the mother of Gabriel, 21, and Alice Esther, 15.

Bier studied architecture in London and then attended Denmark’s National Film School, graduating in 1987. Her movie career took off auspiciously with

the Swedish film “Freud Leaves Home”, which won critical acclaim.

Her next effort, “Family Matters”, flopped badly, but Bier recovered and her subsequent nine films, released at the rate of about one every two years, generally have been popular and well received by critics.

Bier really hit her stride as director and screenwriter in the last decade. Her 2004 movie, “Brothers”, was a box office and artistic hit and was remade in an English version.

Two years later, she scored even better with “After the Wedding”, which made the final cut for an Academy Award. Hollywood came calling, and in 2007 she directed “Things We Lost in the Fire” with Halle Berry, Benicio Del Toro and David Duchovny.

Her current Oscar winner, “In a Better World”, was released in her native country as “Hoevnen”, Danish for “Revenge”, which seems a more pointed title.

The film stars some of the leading Scandinavian actors and a remarkable 12-year-old boy, William Johnk (ok) Nielsen, whom Bier discovered.

Like many of the director’s movies, “Better World” deals with complex family relationships, this one between two fathers and their sons, and the intense bond between the two boys.

Also typical of Bier’s outlook, the movie ends on a note of hope. “Too many European films celebrate pessimism,” Bier said, “but desolation is no good. It is better to communicate that there’s some hope in the world.” (JTA)



SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONIST FEDERATION

South African Zionist Federation
47th Conference • 26-27 March 2011

Guest Speakers: Saturday

John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia, 1996-2007

Professor Alan Dershowitz
Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law, Harvard Law School


Guest Speakers: Sunday

Colonel Richard Kemp CBE
Colonel, British Army, 1977-2006; Commander of British Forces in Afghanistan

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SA Institute of International Affairs: Governance of Africa's Resources
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South Africa and Israel – A shared tomorrow




ChevrahKadisha

WARNING TO THE COMMUNITY

As a service to our community the Chevrah Kadisha is warning people about the person pictured here.

He introduces himself as “Rabbi Alex Bloom” and has bogus stories about why he is in need of money and support from the community.



DO NOT SUPPORT THIS MAN

- We know Alex well from his prison days.
- He is unable to prove his Jewishness.
- He has a criminal record for theft, fraud and intimidation.

Please do not support this man. The Chevrah reinforces its position as a tzedokah resource to assist the community and once again publishes its Public Service Announcement below:

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHEVRAH KADISHA

The Chevrah Kadisha is aware that there are approximately 20 individuals who approach people in the community for financial assistance. If you are being approached for help you may sometimes feel conflicted and unsure about the responsible course of action.

Most (if not all) of these people are well-known to the Chev and some are, sadly, either active substance abusers or dishonest.

As a general rule it is best to use communal structures to distribute tzedokah rather than to do so directly, and if guidance is needed in particular cases, the Chev invites you to make use of our Tzedokah Helpline on (011) 532-9710 or email feedback@thechev.org.za

ARTS MATTERS

COMPILED BY
ROBYN SASSEN
Call 084-319-7844 or
info@frodo.co.za at least one
week prior to publication

Baxter Theatre, Cape Town:

Swiss troupe, Mummenschanz, until March 19, (021) 685-7880.

Coca-Cola Dome, North Riding:

Cirque du Soleil's "Saltimbanco", from March 9, (011) 794-5800.

Seabrooke Theatre, Durban:

"Big Boys Don't Dance", by Ash Searle and Brad Searle, March 9 – 12, (031) 277-1500.

Emperor's, Kempton Park:

Nataniël's "Combat" until March 17, in the Theatre of Marcellus, (011) 928-1000.

Everard Read Gallery, Rosebank:

Thea Soggot's "Earth and Ink", until March 9, (011) 788-4805.

Fugard Theatre, District Six:

"Broken Glass", by Arthur Miller, a play about Kristallnacht, with Sir Antony Sher in the lead, from March 22, (021) 461-4554.

Joburg Theatre, Braamfontein:

In the Nelson Mandela Theatre, "Simply the Best", Rebecca O'Connor's tribute show to Tina Turner, opens March 10, (011) 877-6800. In the People's Theatre, "Pinocchio" opens March 12, (011) 484-1584.

Linder Auditorium, Parktown:

On March 5, pianist Natalia Lavrova performs works by Clementi, Shostakovich, Liszt and Prokofiev for JMS, (011) 728-5492. On March 9, 10, JPO performs Liadov's Eight Russian Folk Songs, Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Dvorák's Sixth Symphony. Conductor: Bernhard Gueller; soloist: Ching-Yun Hu (piano), (011) 789-2733.

Maker, Parkwood:

Jonah Sack's exhibition "The Reverse of the Woof", ends April 15, (011) 447-6680.

Market, Newtown:

In the Main Theatre, Marc Lottering's "Not in 3-D" until March 27, (011) 832-1641.

Montecasino, Fourways:

In the Pieter Toerien, "Evita", until March 27; in the Studio, "Mass Appeal", until March 27, (011) 511-1818. In Teatro, "Dreamgirls" under the musical supervision of Bryan Schimmel, opens March 11, (011) 510-7472.

Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton:

"London Road", until March 19. The Friday concerts feature Zanta Hofmeyr (violin), Daline Wilson (violin), Morkel Combrink (viola) and Wessel Beukes ('cello) on March 4 and 11, (011) 883-8606.

ProMusica Theatre, Roodepoort:

Arthur Miller's witchcraft classic, "The Crucible", directed by Alby Michaels opens March 9, (011) 674-1356

Wits, Braamfontein:

The launch of "Trance by Chance", by Carlo Mombelli, in the Theatre, on March 12, (011) 717-1380.

TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Rosa will steal your heart

Show: "London Road" (Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton (011) 883-8606).

Cast: Ntombi Makhutshi, Robyn Scott

Playwright: Nicholas Spagnoletti

Director: Lara Bye

Design: Craig Leo (set, costumes); Faheem Bardien (lighting)

Until: March 19

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

IF THERE'S a beloved elderly woman in your life, a grandmother, a mother, an aunt, and you do not pick up the phone to talk to her right after you have seen this play, there is something lacking in your life.

From the compression bandage on her left ankle to the endearing angle between the back of her head and her osteoporotic back, and the sensible cardigan and crimplene slacks she wears, Rosa Kaplowitz, interpreted by Robyn Scott, will melt you. She is everything that a little old Jewish lady should be; yet she's not a bland stereotype.

The fact that Scott is some 30 years junior to the character she portrays, attests to casting brilliance. Rather than interpreting Rosa from her own experience, she does so with electrifying empathy, which at times threatens to upstage Ntombi Makhutshi in her role as Stella, Rosa's

Art-wise sleepy little Wakkerstroom is wide awake

PAUL BOEKKOOI

ARTS FESTIVALS have for decades been the lifeline for arts lovers living far from the cultural centres of our country. More recently city slickers also started feeling the urge to escape the proverbial rat race over long and even shorter weekends to revive themselves through the inspiration generated by such events.

Wakkerstroom in the south-eastern part of Mpumalanga, not that far from Volksrust, is presenting its very first arts festival from March 19 to 21. It's the brainchild of Rona Sonnenberg, who many Johannesburg music lovers will remember as being the fundraiser and public relations manager during the early years of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

When she and her husband, Gus, moved to Wakkerstroom a couple of years ago, she immediately realised this historic village's potential to host an arts festival. They started off by arranging DVD evenings consisting of opera, ballet and classical music screenings. All this eventually led to the planning and establishment of an arts festival.

The programme and the line-up of singers and instrumentalists who are contracted to perform in a fortnight's time is vast and the choice in both classical and jazz just about endless. It's amazing that such an array of around about 80 South African artists, reflecting our crème de la crème, are keen to share their talents and to participate over the three days.

Some of the star attractions include Helen

FELDMAN ON FILM

Peter Feldman

PICK OF THE WEEK

Love and Other Impossible Pursuits

Cast: Natalie Portman; Scott Cohen; Lisa Kudrow; Charlie Tahan

Director: Don Roos

Natalie Portman once again lights up the screen with another potent performance and it comes at a time when she's already received several major accolades for her impressive work in "Black Swan" as well as an Oscar for her role in that movie.

In "Love and Other Impossible Pursuits", (overseas it was called "The Other Woman") Portman is the main focus of an engrossing family drama that engages on both intellectual and emotional levels.

The death of a newborn baby and the grief and

Contemplating life: Stella (Ntombi Makhutshi) and Rosa (Robyn Scott). (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON SCHEINER)

new-found and completely unlikely friend. This well-constructed, but not earth-shatteringly original play lends the characters balance, without feeling contrived.

"London Road" is set in the eponymous road in Sea Point's flatlands in Cape Town, a block of flats called Beach View, to be more precise.

It's about crumbling demographics which touch the lives of elderly Jews, left behind by their emigrant children, and young Nigerians, for whom Hillbrow in Johannesburg has become too bad.

It strips the veneer of polite society and reveals Rosa as savagely lonely and humiliated by her abandonment as she ages in an increasingly hostile world.

Rosa is a mix of mischief-curious yenta and powerfully empathetic friend, as she gets to know Stella, a drug-dealing Aids-infected young woman from Lagos. Stella and Rosa become friends from the inside out, as it were - issues like her illness and the stigma of her profession are obvious but pondered over slowly and not without wit by the

Pianist Malcolm Nay and guitarist Tessa Ziegler, included among the star attractions at this year's Wakkerstroom Festival. (PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY WWW.ARTLINK.CO.ZA)

can be purchased and people can enjoy their early evening meal on the lawns of the church, à la Glyndebourne. A wide array of visual arts and crafts will be on show in two venues, while a mini film festival focusing exclusively on musicals is also presented.

• For bookings or further information visit www.wakkerstroomartsfestival.co.za, e-mail ro@eject.co.za or phone (017) 730-0778.

year-old stepson.

Emilia is also trying to overcome a long-standing rift in her relationship with her father caused by his infidelity.

Roos' production has an underlying chord of tension when Emilia is convinced that she was responsible for her baby's death, a line of thinking that severely affects her relationship with Scott.

The emotional balance is well maintained and there are many striking moments throughout the film.

Lisa Kudrow, who has long discarded the kinky image of "Friends", now seems to be concentrating on playing bitchy women. As Carolyn, her character is a vicious viper, who can see no good in the woman who stole her husband.

Scott Cohen, as Jack, is a credible enough entity, while young Charlie Tahan manages to imbue William with a warm pluckiness.

Portman is expected to change several gears as her character confronts the various challenges in her life – and she does it with a stylish determination.

"Love and Other Possible Pursuits" is fascinating and engaging.

Contemplating life: Stella (Ntombi Makhutshi) and Rosa (Robyn Scott). (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON SCHEINER)

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TAPESTRY – ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Relevance of the likes of Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger and Proust highlighted

Driving With Plato by Robert Rowland Smith (Profile Books, R224,95)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

IN A world where rites of passage have been overtaken by an expectation to grow up quickly, get on with a career, produce progeny and leave a legacy, it is easy to lose touch with the real meaning of life’s milestones, and those seminal events on which Plato, and other philosophers, expounded.

The first, obviously, is birth: one’s entrance into temporal time and space, and all which that implies, namely continuance, memory and the obligation to partake in the global communion of humanity.

Then comes learning to walk and receiving the gift of gravity, a quality envied by the angels. “Being bound to the earth brings rewards unavailable in heaven, to do with human emotion in all its imperfect complexity,” writes Smith.

To walk is also to leave an imprint on the earth, a reminder that one existed, that one trod the planet and that one’s journey on it can be traced.

Around the same time comes learning to talk. The faculty of speech is what gives meaning to the objects around us. Naming something makes it identifiable from other objects, something which we can articulate and therefore control.

This applies particularly to emotions - above all, fear. For James Joyce, babies’ babbling (as famously expressed in the opening paragraphs of his “Finnegan’s Wake”) is not the nonsense it sounds like, but a new being’s sensing - in despair - that from now on, it will bear the burden of having to discourse with others and subject itself to the restraints imposed on it by others, “a lament for the fact of having to enter the world of compromise and negotiation, of social relations and grammatical order”.

By contrast, writes Smith, we have 18th century philosopher John Locke, for whom a baby’s mind is a tabula rasa, a blank sheet of paper waiting to absorb new ideas. For Locke, speech is the first (and possibly the most crucial) human experience which will

provide “the source and the limits of all knowledge”, such that language will always be “autobiographical, a palimpsest of everything (an individual) witnesses”.

Move on about eight years, to learning how to ride a bike. This formative experience marks a child’s first foray into independence and responsibility, not just for his own body, but for its manipulation of a contraption which introduces him to teleological travelling: purposeful movement towards a definite destination.

Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard likens this to religion, noting that - like learning to ride a bicycle - at some point, whichever hand is on your back, holding you steady, at some point it must let go: then you are on your own.

No amount of reasoning will get you to believe in G-d, so at some point you have to abandon reason and take a leap of faith. Faith is not rational, though - for Kierkegaard - belief is not necessarily irrational: it is simply beyond reason. (It is worth noting his adjunct that the opposite of faith is not irrationality, but sin.)

And, as Einstein noted, in extending Kierkegaard’s metaphor, one has to keep moving to keep one’s balance, both in bicycle riding and, indeed, in living.

Other milestones of existence - one’s first car, first vote, first kiss, first sex, first job, marriage, childbirth - all subtly, but undeniably, herald the transition from the prelapsarian world - a state of innocence - into one of experience.

As for falling in love for the first time, Smith invites Freud to look over his shoulder as he writes of the eternal relationship between eros, the longing for sex, with thanatos, the longing for death.

Then come the latter milestones of life: getting divorced, going through a midlife crisis (which, as Nietzsche explains, is prompted by self-reproach incumbent on an internal audit of undone things and unresolved relationships: those projects of the heart and soul which have been irrecoverably



damaged or irretrievably abandoned), retiring and old age: all great exeunts from the main stage of the world.

As for the ultimate milestone, dying, Smith makes the case for “going out in style”: first of all, he reminds us, this is an act of searing loneliness. Your death may be witnessed by everybody but yourself. What is more, nobody can do it for you.

Secondly, he points out that, for believers at least, it heralds an equally lonely judgement, an accounting for actions both committed and omitted. However, in its brutal finality for those left behind to mourn, it regenerates the will to keep living.

“All this relieves death from a portion of the tragedy we attribute to it... You can die crabbed, wizened and embittered, but you can also bow out with a flourish that recognises you’ve had the gift of life and now you’re making a gift of it to others in turn. This frees you up to die well, a notion that we in the West are less attuned to than those in the East,” he tells us.

Apart from his genial, translucently beautiful writing - a treat in itself - Smith (a former Prize Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford) reconnects us to the ancients and not-so-ancients whose sagacity is too often relegated to dusty university libraries. There may seem to be little use for the likes of Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger and Proust in our daily battle to achieve our goals, acquit ourselves well and live like decent human beings, but Smith shows us just how relevant and urgent their observations remain.

SA in for a treat with Cirque du Soleil

ROBYN SASSEN

CANADIAN-BASED Cirque du Soleil has wowed the world and now, for the first time ever, it’s performing live in Africa. With Montreal as its home base, it has hosted 19 shows around the world; “Santimbanco”, its trailblazer, opens in Johannesburg next week, after touring Turkey and en route to Australia.

Try as you might to describe Cirque du Soleil’s work, you cannot be blasé. “Impossible is only a word,” Carmen Ruest, creation director of the company explains its complex gravity-defying acts. They all look so easy in the performers’ command.

“In 1980 it was all a dream,” Ruest,



A scene from the Cirque du Soleil’s bicycle act. (PHOTOGRAPH: OLIVIER SAMSON ARCAD COSTUMES : DOMINIQUE LEMIEUX © 2007 CIRQUE DU SOLEIL INC)

who in the ‘70s was taking and giving dance classes in the winter and performing in the streets in the summer, explains. “We were pioneers in a tiny village called Baie-Saint-Paul, near Quebec City.” A dance partner of Gilles Ste-Croix, she honed her street performance skills, including acrobatics and tightrope walking, which draw from gypsy traditions that reach back centuries.

“The first street performance festival ever was hosted in Quebec in 1982, to celebrate Canada’s 450th birthday. There was a lot of cultural money which enabled the project to tour. And, a circus school had just started in the area. So the ‘High Heel Club’, was formed.

“Two years later, it became known as the Cirque du Soleil - Circus of the Sun. It was supported by Canadian government grants; we had to instruct the bank to believe in us. There was a time when we only had money for petrol.

“And then the company began growing. By 1992, it was independent. It grew incrementally and beyond expectations, particularly for a group of people who just enjoy playing in the streets,” she grins.

“Twenty six years later, the company employs 5 000 people from all over the world. And the concept which fuels its creativity is still the same. It’s a circus without animals that focuses all its design and performance energy on invoking the imagination, provoking the senses and evoking the emotions.

“The name ‘Saltimbanco’ is Italian for ‘to jump on a bench’. ‘Saltimbanco’ is a bowl of joy!” Ruest adds. “Each performer has his or her own character. Every artist brings his or her own flavour. The music is live and the colour, fresh.

“‘Saltimbanco’ is a trailblazer for the Cirque,” says publicist Maxime Charbonneau. “We still have shows like this because we want to teach people that dreams still happen.”

• “Saltimbanco” is at the Coca-Cola Dome, North Riding, March 9 - 20 and the Grand Arena, GrandWest Casino, Cape Town, March 23 - April 3.

The Baron, your ageless, timeless guide to the world of Santimbanco.



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We are compiling an anthology of South African Jewish women's writing. Tell us about your relationship with your maid, sending your youngest child to school, Rosh Hashana in Brakpan in 1953 or anything else that moves you to express yourself on paper. References to South Africa would be nice, but aren't essential.

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LETTERS

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

Guidelines for letters: Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact telephone or cell number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.	Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report
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APPEASEMENT IS THE WAY TO DISASTER

NOT ONLY is the Jury Out (SAJR February 18), but Mr Justice Dennis Davis is also out. Way out.

He subtly, (like a sledgehammer) points out that our community is living in the past because most of us don’t agree with the views of J Street “an important new institution”. That’s like saying Not In My Name is an important institution. He then tells us about “serious” commentators like Thomas Friedman. Ronnie Kasrils, I’m sure, is also a “serious” commentator.

Davis, often uses the hackneyed expression: “Play the ball, not the man”. Then he has a go at Prof Alan Dershowitz, who, he suggests “has been relegated to irrelevance”, as somebody only a few nutters (and of course our community) still listen to.

“He would say that, wouldn’t he?” is a refrain I have heard often about Davis. I don’t know what he finds irrelevant about Prof Dershowitz. They both support the idea of a two-state solution.

To say that Middle East democracy is the only guarantee for sustainable peace, is both naïve and puerile. This is where our leftist and liberal friends are going to get their knickers in a knot.

We read in last week’s parsha of the dangers of making deals with the local inhabitants. Jewish security does not come about by making deals like a two-state solution with our enemies, whose sworn intention is to obliterate us.

Do we have to give them land - our land - for the promise that they will behave? It is a very popular belief that if the Arabs were given a

state within the borders of Israel, peace would descend on the whole world and all our troubles would be over. Even Ahmadinejad of Iran would give up his ideas of wiping Israel off the map. Yeah, right!

Davis tells us that only 15 per cent of Egyptians support the Muslim Brotherhood “bogeyman” and that Middle East democracy will guarantee that they won’t come to power.

But what if they do? Even the moderates like that nice Mr. ElBaradei have already given us good reason to worry about the existing treaty. Not yet in power, but he already says we would have to renegotiate.

Jewish security comes only from Hashem. He has promised us the land. All of the land. The borders are clearly defined. He made no mention of a partition plan or a two-state solution or sharing.

The problem is that our intellectual friends don’t believe that Hashem can keep His promise, and the only solution is to stop dragging our feet and make deals with people who themselves don’t know what tomorrow will bring. Remember “Mr Peace In Our Time” Neville Chamberlain?

Appeasement is the way to disaster. It will take many, many years for democracy to take root in the Middle East, if ever. So, where are the guarantees, and what are they worth?

Dov Grauman
Lyndhurst, Johannesburg

ARE WESTERN MORALS BECOMING TOO CONVOLUTED?

A REFRESHING breeze seems to be blowing through the clogged-up sewers of international morality! The oil-rich dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, is actually condemned severely for using (Western-supplied) military equipment to murder his own citizens.

But didn’t the same gruesome criminality occur, also, quite recently, in the Ivory Coast? Didn’t the equally dictatorial ruler, Laurent Gbagbo, murder 273 opposition voters and refused United Nations personnel permission to inspect the victims’ mass grave?

Is this the consequence of a subterranean racism? Is the (possibly previously-disadvantaged) African, “President” Gbagbo, privileged, while the, distinctly more Semitic,

Muammar Gaddafi, massive oil-resources notwithstanding, is condemned?

Have the moral arbiters in London, Washington and other Western capitals forgotten the mass murder of 68 Roman Catholics (including two priests!) in a church in Baghdad last December? Or does the fact that the victims were (Arab) Semites make a difference?

Are Western morals and ethical standards becoming rather too convoluted? Where is Thabo Mbeki (or, for that matter, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu) to show them a better road to follow?

Julian Schragenheim
Cape Town

STUMBLING BLOCKS IN PATH OF CONVERSION

WITH REFERENCE to Mr Jared Joel’s letter “SA Jews can strengthen position through alliances, conversions” I want to ask him: Do you know of any groups in South Africa who are willing to financially sponsor potential candidates to Orthodox conversions?

I am one such person who wants to apply to convert but am currently unable to

because of the application fees. I suppose I could wait until I have saved enough money, but if there are people who are willing to help make this happen sooner, I would be immensely grateful.

Dee Kisala
Cape Town

HORRIFIED TO WATCH A FATHER WITH A DEATH WISH

I WAS absolutely horrified driving down Long Avenue the morning of February 17.

There was a father driving his daughter into Yeshiva College. This little girl couldn’t have been more than five years old. She was not in a school uniform so she was obviously in the nursery school. She was standing on the front passenger seat with her head protruding from the sun roof of his BMW.

What is wrong with the man? Does he not

love his daughter? Does he have a death wish for her? As far as I’m concerned he should have attempted murder charges brought against him. He certainly does not deserve to be a father if this is how he treats his children!

Next time I will take down his registration number and name and shame him!

Debbie Miller
Sandringham, Johannesburg

UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS MAYBE MUST GO THE CHINESE ROUTE

MR JUSTICE Dennis Davis in “ME democracy only guarantee for sustainable peace” (SAJR February 18) has great respect for democracy, probably because he feels it is just. It is generally associated with a high average standard of living, a relatively high average level of education, an independent judiciary, a free press, freedom to practise the religion of one’s choice, etc.

With regard to education, how can an uneducated person make a rational choice of which candidate or party is best for the country? He/she is likely to vote for the candidate with the best publicist. We only have to look to the north to see how many citizens voted for Zanu PF in spite of their unworkable populist economic policies.

To summarise, a stable democracy depends on a moderate average standard of living, reasonable education levels, etc being in place, but it is democracy in general that delivers wealth, education, etc. This is the catch 22. Possibly the underdeveloped nations should go the Chinese route.

Davis quotes Turkey as a successful example

of transfer to democracy. One should recall that for approximately 40 years Turkey was the forefront of Western defence against the USSR and the USA boosted the Turkish economy to a level where it can sustain democracy.

For the record, Turkey has a per capita GDP of US \$10 200 while Egypt’s is US \$2 900. The per capita GDP of RSA is US \$7 200, but as everyone knows the distribution is severely skewed. For comparison the relevant figure for Israel is US \$29 000, Greece is US \$2 600, Switzerland is US \$63 000, Iran is US \$6 000 and Zimbabwe is US \$157. (Values from The Economist.)

It would appear that the developed world should do a Turkey on the Arab states in order to boost their economies. Can one imagine bankers in London or New York sacrificing their bonuses to boost Egyptian, Algerian, Tunisian or Yemeni economies? I have not mentioned Johannesburg bankers - their bonuses are needed to subsidise our own economy.

John Brenner
Cyrildene, Johannesburg

CYNICAL JUMPING SHIP BY LIBYAN OFFICIALS SLATED

I REFER to a news headline: “Diplomats denounce Gaddafi”, about Libyan officials jumping ship in light of the turmoil in that country, referring to Libya’s deputy ambassador at the UN, Ibrahim Dabbashi.

I want to say to him: Typical UN para-

TIME FOR LEFT TO SHOW THEY’RE NOT HYPOCRITES

I AM writing this letter at a time when the Libyan air force is bombing the civilian population in Tripoli under the orders of the bloodthirsty and evil despot, Muammar Gaddafi.

It is appalling, but not surprising, noting how the genocide against his people undertaken by the brutal Gaddafi regime has been of so little concern to the South African government, the media and civil society.

Here we have a regime that is mass murdering women and children and has received no condemnation from the ANC/SACP regime - the same regime that cut off ties with Israel for responding in self-defence to a ship full of armed terrorists invading her waters.

Why are there no mass marches from Cosatu and NGOs on the Libyan embassy? Indeed no statements from Open Shuhada Street? Why no activity at the universities where there is always such rabid anti-Israel activity by the self-proclaimed custodians of human rights - all of which happened when Israel attacked Hamas bases in Gaza in response to sustained rocket fire on its civilian population?

The South African government did support the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt but that is because he was a pro-Western moderate who maintained a peace of sorts with Israel.

In fact, all the left-wing NGOs that were so supportive of the Egyptian revolution are deathly silent on the carnage in Libya at the time of writing, including that great South African human rights icon, Zackie Achmat.

Gaddafi has operated a totalitarian regime in Libya that has kept the entire

MORE THAN JUST A SINGLE JEW DIED IN THE NZ QUAKE

I REFER to your headline on the front page of last week’s Jewish Report: “New Zealand quake kills Israeli”

On behalf of the many hundreds of New Zealanders who were killed in the recent earthquake in Christchurch, I must point

site. You and your family benefited from the regime for years, and now “the winds of change”.

You are just a traitor. It is too late.

Mario Rocha Pires
Bedfordview

population in terror and has subjected them to torture, arbitrary arrest, assassination of opposition activists and now mass killings. In the eyes of South Africa’s ANC/SACP regime and leftwing civil society establishment, regimes that are revolutionary, anti-Western and particularly anti-Israel, can do no wrong and must be supported in their most horrific excesses.

Think of Zimbabwe, Sudan, Cuba, Syria, China and North Korea. The more brutal a regime, the closer the ANC/SACP regime is to it.

Robert Wistrich in his volume “A Lethal Obsession”, points out regarding leftwing Israel-haters: “The same radical left that foams at the mouth at the very mention of Israel/Palestine has little difficulty in closing its eyes to the religious and gender apartheid in Islam, the murderous crimes of such Communist leaders as Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot, not to mention the mass murders in Africa from Idi Amin in the 1970s to Rwanda over a decade ago and Sudan today.

“While real massacres are ignored, a huge propaganda effort continues to be invested globally in pillorying Israel as a perpetrator of genocide. This far transcends the left since it also involves the United Nations, the Arab states, the Muslim world, non-government organisations and parts of the Western media who black out Israeli victims of suicide bombers.”

Why doesn’t the left establishment in this country show for once that they are not hypocrites!

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg

out that it is an unfeeling and even tactless headline just to quote the one death that applies to our interests.

Colin Plen
Cape Town

DAVIS’ ISRAEL CRITICISM UNFAIR AND SIMPLISTIC

AFTER READING the opinion piece by Mr Justice Dennis Davis (Jewish Report February 18), one is left with the impression that Israel generally supports dictatorial regimes and lacks any serious motivation to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Arab Palestinians.

What is most unfortunate, is that Davis’ almost palpable animosity towards Israel is couched in accusations which are largely unsubstantiated.

In referring to the recent overthrow of the Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt, Davis states that Israel viewed him as “that nice Mubarak” and that she therefore “sided” with him.

The facts, however, tell a different story. Most political analysts would describe the diplomatic relations that existed between Israel and Egypt as cold, fragile and at times even hostile. There can be no doubt, that Israel would have preferred dealing with a democratic Egypt, rather than having to maintain relations with a dictatorial regime.

Under Mubarak, Egypt frequently recalled her ambassador to Cairo. In his rule spanning almost three decades, Mubarak only once visited Israel to attend the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin. That was almost 16 years ago. Furthermore the government-controlled Egyptian press, consistently promoted anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric. Nice?

In line with most detractors of Israel, Davis singles out Israel for criticism and judges her with reference to the most stringent moral parameters devoid of any context or pragmatic perspective.

After reading Davis’ article, one can

only be surprised to learn that the European Union, and not Israel, is Egypt’s biggest trading partner. Egyptian investments in India are reported to be in the region of some \$750 million and trade agreements with China are estimated to be worth around \$400 million.

South Africa and other member countries of the African Union, most of which are themselves dictatorships, have trade and diplomatic relations with Egypt.

Yet Davis chastises only Israel for supposedly “siding” with Egypt; this despite the fact that her political and economic influence with the Mubarak regime was relatively insignificant.

Davis argues, that “only democracy can sustain a long-term prospect of stability, certainty and peace in the region”. This being the case, it is rather astounding that Davis again accuses Israel, the only democracy in the region, of dragging her heels in seeking peace.

The Hamas regime which ruthlessly rules some one and a half million Arab Palestinians in Gaza, is absolved of any criticism. The Hamas government which does not recognise Israel, and whose covenant explicitly advocates replacing Israel with an Islamic theocracy, is apparently not viewed by him as a threat to democracy in the region.

Davis’ argument that the Israeli leadership is solely responsible for the failed negotiations with the Arab Palestinians, is not only unfair but also overly simplistic.

Felicia Levy
Glenhazel, Johannesburg

LETTERS

DAVIS DOESN'T PRACTISE WHAT HE PREACHES

ONCE AGAIN our South African Jewish stormy petrel, Mr Justice Dennis Davis, seems to be sublimely happy in the company of those in the US (like J Street) who agree with his views on how to achieve peace in the intractable Israel/Palestinian conflict.

I refer to his column: "ME democracy only guarantee for sustainable peace", SAJR February 18.

However, it is strange that for someone who complains endlessly about the lack of tolerance in others, he contemptuously derides those with whom he disagrees – Prof Alan Dershowitz/Bibi Netanyahu/Avigdor Lieberman, as though they are not entitled to their points of view. But then, he would do so, wouldn't he?

In fact, one wonders if he ever read Netanyahu's outstanding speech at the UN, accepting a Palestinian state but spelling out

clearly the criteria for peace that that would involve. Or does he simply choose to ignore it?

WikiLeaks? Have Mahmoud Abbas, Hamas and Hezbollah (without whom there can be no sustainable peace) really "abandoned their right to return and abandoned East Jerusalem as their capital"?

Is this the quality of "evidence" on which Davis bases his conclusion that, actually, it is Israel (not the Palestinians) that is "dragging its heels in seeking peace"? Or is his political judgement merely being influenced by wishful thinking?

To date, the "moderate" Abbas even refuses to acknowledge Israel as a "Jewish" state, a fundamental sine qua non in the peace process.

Interestingly, I have often argued in the media - quoting Davis, nogal - that a problem which bedevils the peace process is the fact that there is no equivalent in the Arab world of

the Freedom Charter; no democratic tradition which could support the belief that peaceful co-existence was possible.

Will real and sustainable democracy now suddenly emerge from the current turmoil in the Middle East? Is the Muslim Brotherhood (which spawned Hamas) an insignificant and spent force (like Davis would have us believe)? Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, thank G-d the security and welfare of the Jewish State is in the hands of a strong and resilient leadership elected by Israelis who have seen it all.

They have already walked the walk and talked the talk; been there, done that; as the only reliable ally of Western civilisation and the custodian of the Judeo-Christian religion in the Middle East.

David Abel
George

PLEA FOR SAJR TO SERIALISE DERSHOWITZ BOOK

I AM appalled at the ignorance of those Jews who support everything that goes against the existence and safety of Israel. For example: "Zapiro", sometimes Dennis Davis, etc.

Professor Alan Dershowitz has written a book titled "The Case for

Israel". It would be a mitzvah if you could serialise this book in the Jewish Report. I make this request because you state that your paper is being read by 50 000 people. (This gives me "naches".)

Prof Dershowitz when coming to South Africa, would be speaking to

the "converted".

Only your paper can reach those unconverted people who need clarification and education.

Esme Shay-Cohen
Sandringham Gardens
Johannesburg

WHERE HAVE OUR 'GREAT LEADERS' BEEN LIVING ALL THIS TIME?

I SIT mesmerised by the headlines on TV and in the newspapers, where the Western "leaders" threaten the Mubaraks, Gaddafis and other despots of the oil world to stand down and to cease their abuse of human rights and perpetration of war crimes against their respective populations.

The pompous Poms, whose influence once covered most of the world, who taught the world the meaning of back-stabbing and how to wear two faces, has fought a war against most countries that are more than 50 years old.

They are a Churchillian nation whose people were once at the forefront of defending the free world, but now they are quickly joining the ranks of yet another disappeared empire; an abdicated world leader who tries to make noises from the sidelines, after it has determined which way the ball will bounce.

It is a nation whose sole agenda is determined by their access to oil and the appeasement of those it

believes can influence this supply; a nation that almost sold its soul for "peace in our time".

As for the US, the supposed leader of the free world today: A nation who rescued the world twice from two world wars, whose sacrifices in defence of honesty, truth and justice, finds the graves of American soldiers across the globe.

It is a country that calls itself the home of the brave and the land of the free. Such a nation's leader today doesn't recognise fundamentalist terrorism as the greatest threat facing the world since Adolf Hitler.

So confused is he that he has forbidden the use of words that accurately describe this threat. So deceitful and blind is he, that he abdicates the space race to the Russians and enters a disarmament pact with them, an over-ambitious megalomaniac who doesn't hesitate at killing great numbers of his own people, while they're being held hostage by terrorists.

This same leader, when the peo-

ple of Iran recently cried out for help in their bid to get rid of their crazed president, was out to lunch. Is this the change Americans expected when they awarded him the mantle of leadership of the free world?

All these great leaders assemble on that wonderful playing field called the United Nations, where they sell their valuable votes to the highest bidders, irrespective of morality and integrity. This "United Den of Iniquity" recently elected the (Libyan) lunatic Muammar Gaddafi president of the human rights body of their illustrious organisation.

I'm mesmerised and numbed by the call of these "great leaders" to the despots who have been performing their awful deeds for the past 30 or 40 years, to cease their cruelty. Where have our great leaders been living all this time? Why now? Perchance the "price" of oil?

Russell Gaddin
Johannesburg

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



ABOVE BOARD

Zev Kregel,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Sudan - another African miracle

IN JANUARY this year, a new African nation was born when the people of Southern Sudan overwhelmingly voted to separate from the northern part of the country.

Sudan has long been split along north-south lines. The south is largely black African and Christian or Animist while the north is mainly Arab and Muslim.

This religio-ethnic division was for decades a source of deadly conflict and resulted in horrific massacres, ethnic cleansing and mass enslavement taking place, mainly against the southern population.

These are early days, and there is certainly no guarantee that the conflict will not erupt once more. Now, however, there is at last a glimmer of hope. In agreeing to a peaceful "divorce", the Sudanese people have taken a crucial first step forward towards achieving peaceful co-existence.

They will need support from the international community and particularly from Africa, in ensuring that the transition takes place smoothly, but from what we have seen over the last few years, we can feel reasonably confident that such support will be forthcoming.

The borders of most African states were decided during colonial times, which meant that more often than not a heterogeneous mix of religions, ethnicities, linguistic groupings and cultures exists within them. The South African example shows that this need not inevitably result in irresolvable conflicts, but in other cases - Sudan being one of them - it is obvious that appropriately negotiated partition arrangements must be made.

Getting to the stage where a referendum deciding South Sudan's future could even be agreed upon, was where the real challenge lay. Years of delicate negotiations preceded this, with the Organisation of African Unity playing a crucial role in helping to broker the agreement.

South Africans can be very proud of the fact that among those individuals centrally involved in the negotiations process, was former President Thabo Mbeki.

This has been a true African success story, one in which African countries themselves have co-operated in addressing one of the continent's most persistent and bloody conflicts.

It was also a triumph for the principle of self-determination. Four million South Sudanese were given the opportunity to determine their own collective future, and close to 99 per cent chose independence.

The indications are that the current Sudanese government will respect this decision and do its part in ensuring a peaceful transition process.

I believe that much too little has been made of these amazing events, not just within our own community but in our media in general.

We should be heartened by so encouraging a demonstration of what African countries can accomplish when they work together towards a common goal. It is to be hoped that this process can now be extended to similarly address other fraught conflict situations on this continent, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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Jewish Travel

Visiting places of Jewish interest

Traces of Judaism in India

India as a tourist destination returned from colonialist traditions and into contemporary awareness with the infiltration of Bollywood into popular culture, surmounted by Danny Boyle's award-winning rags-to-riches film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). In truth, the picture is less romantic, but more complex; Jews form a very real part of the colourful social strata of India.

ROBYN SASSEN

Two international outreach bodies nurture Jewish life in India—Chabad and ORT—but its history is rich with mystery, belief and speculation.

Benei Israel

According to Indian-born Robin Jhirad, a mechanical engineer resident in Israel and a graduate of ORT India, "The Benei Israel of India is a small community of Jews that lived for many centuries on the west coast of India, south of Mumbai, in the

Konkan region of Maharashtra." He explains that the community is believed to be one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. "Literally meaning 'Children of Israel', Benei Israel kept its Jewish cultural heritage, traditions, and faith in the original traditional form followed prior to the construction of the First Temple in around 832 BCE."

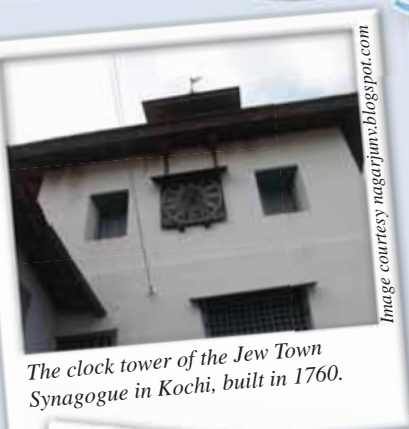
For centuries, the community was isolated from mainstream Jewish culture and access to the written Torah. "When they were rediscovered and exposed to mainstream Judaism, they were still observing several important aspects of traditional Jewishness."

"Indian society at large was always extremely tolerant of other faiths, thus it was quite easy for the Benei Israelis to practise their unique rituals and traditions," he continues. This small community withstood challenges including efforts to convert it piecemeal to Christianity. Jhirad explains: When their

Hindu peers submitted to Christianity, many benefits, including jobs, were offered. But they had friends in the Church: "Several Christian missionaries in Bombay provided the Benei Israel with secular and religious education, story books and prayer books in Marathi, the language they spoke. The missionaries were careful not to include the Christian values."

While fleeing persecution from the Galilee in about 200 BCE, the Benei Israel arrived at Navgaon, in the Konkan region, near the twin rocks of Andheri Undheri when they were struck by a storm in the Arabian Sea. "All but seven couples were killed; the Benei Israel descend from those 14 individuals, who settled in the village to work in agriculture and oil production, which became their main profession. They were nicknamed shanivar teli ('Saturday oil-pressers') by the local population because they abstained from work on Shabbat.

"Though they adopted surface traditions of



The clock tower of the Jew Town Synagogue in Kochi, built in 1760.



Jewish Indians singing hymns at the Judah Hyam Synagogue, New Delhi, 2003.



The façade of the synagogue in Pen, India.

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Ten tips for when you go to India:

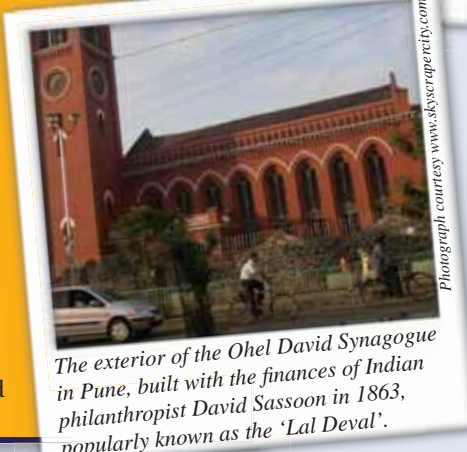
- You need a visa to visit India. The Indian High Commission is in Pretoria: (012) 342-5392. A tourist visa for a South African passport holder is free.
- Four to eight weeks before departure to India, you should be vaccinated against Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Tetanus and Malaria, but it is important that you consult your Travel Clinic for further advice.
- The monsoon season affects the whole of India between July and September and the best time to visit is during the winter season, from October to February.
- Drink only branded bottled water, avoid tap water and road-side foods, including fruit and fruit juice. Always ensure that hot food you might eat is piping hot and not luke warm.
- At the time of going to press, one South African rand will buy you 6.4 Indian Rupees.
- Travellers cheques are not accepted at all banks and dollars and pounds are more regularly accepted than other currencies.
- Traffic in India is on the left hand side.
- Electricity in India is 240 volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. The round pin type of plugs used in South Africa, are also used in India.
- Modest dress is mandatory in Indian culture, particularly for women.
- South Africa is 3,5 hours behind India.



Kenneseth Eliyahu Synagogue, Mumbai, built in 1884.



The Aron Kodesh of Shaar Hashamayim Synagogue in Thane, India.



The exterior of the Ohel David Synagogue in Pune, built with the finances of Indian philanthropist David Sassoon in 1863, popularly known as the 'Lal Deval'.

India, like dress, the Benei Israel never forgot the Shema, Shabbat or Brit Milah, as well as the celebration of major festivals and the laws of kashrut. They were totally unaware of contemporary Jewish literature, prayer books or religious guidance for more than a thousand years and remained dependent on what their parents passed on to them from generation to generation.

“Today in India there are less than 5000 Benei Israels, most of them in Thane, a suburb of Mumbai. At their peak in 1951, the Benei Israel numbered 20000. Since then, most have made aliya; few have immigrated elsewhere.

“According to Benei Israel tradition a Jewish merchant from Egypt, David Rahabi between 1000 and 1400, arrived in west India. He was surprised to find the Benei Israel which followed some Jewish traditions and he decided to teach them all the Jewish traditions.

He chose three Benei Israel men and groomed them as the religious and spiritual leaders of the community, showing them how to read the Talmud, and guiding them in the performance of marriages, funerals and the settling of disputes.

Bnei Menashe
Another Jewish Indian community also considered one of the lost 10 tribes is Bnei Menashe, some 4500 Jews, written about by Michael Freund in 2003. “The Bnei Menashe live in towns and villages scattered throughout the Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, with a handful in Assam and Myanmar. Members of the Mizo and Kuki people, they have passed down through the tradition that they are descendants of the lost tribe of Manasseh, exiled from Israel by the Assyrians in 723 BCE.

“Almost 35 years ago, a group of Bnei Menashe decided to return to Judaism. They began building synagogues and mikvaot, and undertook to live in accordance with Jewish law. Shortly thereafter, an Indian Jew living in Israel passed along a letter from the Bnei Menashe to Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail of Jerusalem, who seeks out and assists ‘lost Jews’.”

As founder and director of an organisation called Amishav (literally “my people return”), Rabbi Avichail is convinced of the authenticity of their traditions. “As

I studied the community and learned about its ancient beliefs,” Freund quotes him, “I could not help but conclude that they are in fact descended from the tribe of Menashe. They have ancient songs and chants with words from the Bible.”

Rabbi Avichail was intrigued to learn of Bnei Menashe’s customs, like laws of family purity, the use of a lunar calendar, and mourning rites - many of which bear a striking resemblance to those in the Bible. “There is simply too much similarity between their customs and ours for it to be coincidental,” he said. The streets of Aizawl reveal a great deal of identification and support for Israel among the general populace. The main market thoroughfare is called Zion Street; many shops have names like “Jewish Store” and “Israel Warehouse,” in spite of none of them being owned by Jews.

Contemporary Jewry in India comprises two per cent of society; it is, nevertheless a thriving Zionist-inclined Jewry. Comprising 17 branches of Chabad countrywide, the community has kosher bakeries, restaurants and mikvaot. Kashrut supervision of restaurants is the responsibility of individual rabbis rather than an umbrella Beth Din; Chabad centres like that in Dharamsala has a kosher restaurant under its auspices.

While there is no demand for kosher schechting of meat in broader India, kosher meat may be obtained through Chabad.

It is, however, recommended that when out of reach of a Chabad centre, kashrut it adhered to with the support of vegetarian restaurants. While the problems of identifying worms in leafy vegetables is acknowledged, it is understood as part of the rigours of kosher attention to detail in the washing and preparing of fresh fruit and vegetables. Cooking from home is the next best kosher alternative, and according to the Chabad website, one can go to the market places with one’s own fish knife and board to ensure that the fish one buys is not contaminated by treif products.

A visit to India promises exoticism and unexpected delights. It is a country rich in ancient history and its Jewish community while small, is generous and hospitable.

Ace pilot Scully Levin still flying high

ALISON GOLDBERG

AFTER 38 years with South African Airways, Scully Levin hung up his cap last year. There was not much he could do about it. Retirement is mandatory at age 63.

During his last seven years of service he had served alternately as SAA’s head of flight standards, and then as its chief training captain. But the airline has not let him go just like that. With his special formation and aerobatic skills he is still likely to be called upon to assist in putting flying formations together for special occasions.

It was Levin who planned and then flew in the fly-pasts for both the inauguration and the re-inauguration of former President Thabo Mbeki. He did the same again for the fly-past at the World Cup Cricket final and for the fly-past when SAA joined the Star Alliance in 2006.

The last fly-past he led before his retirement, was over the Union Buildings in Pretoria when President Jacob Zuma had his turn.

As Levin embarked on a book he had been meaning to write on cockpit resource management, he was called upon to advise on the two Air-link accidents that had occurred towards the end of 2009, one in Durban, and the other in George. He concluded that the small domestic airline was basically sound and that it had just had a run of very bad luck.

Among other duties, he is serving on the board of the SA Civil Aviation Authority’s General Aviation Safety Initiative, which aims to curb the number of accidents involving small airplanes.

The book is on the back burner as Levin has returned to flying, this time for domestic carrier Mango, where he does a half a block of work, meaning flying 50 per cent of what a Mango pilot flies. And he’s still wowing crowds, with his stunt flying - solo and in formation.

Thumbing through his three scrap books Levin pointed to one of his more audacious stunts, where he water-skied across a dam in Gauteng in a four-plane flight formation. The world’s air press picked it up and ran with the story. He has done stunts for 56 movies or commercials and these have had him flying through hangars, under bridges and even landing on a moving bus.

The latter, he recalled, was one of the funnier incidents in his life. In the midst of setting up for this piece of action on the road between Rustenburg and Brits, the American actors found out what was about to take place and jumped out of the bus, flatly refusing to be part of this “lunacy”.

The film’s production manager promptly flagged down a few passing taxis and offered their occupants, mainly mine-workers, a sum of R100 each to get into army uniforms and sit tight in the bus while the stunt was performed. This they were delighted to do...

Levin’s love of aerobatics began in the Air Force. As early as the seventies he won the South



African National Aerobatic Championship title three times flying a Pitts Special SIS. Another highlight was his winning two races in the world-renowned air races at Reno Nevada in 1995.

The credits roll. Levin reckons his greatest contribution to aviation has been the enthusiasm for flying that he’s engendered in pilots. That infectious energy was passed down from his father who flew for the RAF during the Second World War, dropping supplies to Brigadier Orde Wingate’s troops in Burma. Now both his son Ellis and daughter Sally fly for SAA. His second daughter, Hayley, is a successful publisher and manages various aviation events. Even three of his grandchildren want to become pilots!

Levin is afraid that if he writes a book of his life experiences, no-one would believe him. Some of the stunts he has performed are so outrageous that they defy belief. He describes himself as the kind of person who makes things happen and gets on with the job. Whatever happens thereafter, so be it.

On SAA’s new CEO Siza Mzimela, he says that she is showing signs of growing SAA again: The airline has a lot of catching up to do. It has stagnated while almost every other industry has grown, he adds.

He was never tempted to take up an administrative post at SAA because that would have entailed him giving up flying.

Has he ever felt fear? “No, not fear, but certainly concern. The hallmark of a well-trained pilot is to be able to identify threatening situations and manage these before they develop into undesirable aircraft states.

“One has to weigh up options to decide on the best course of action to take when an emergency or unusual situation presents itself. No pilot should ever look for trouble. It will find you quickly enough!

“Risk can manifest when operating from short runways, overloading of the aircraft, operating in bad weather, or flying poorly maintained aircraft. The same principles apply to all aircraft, from small, privately owned ones to huge 400 seaters.”

He said that in 47 years of flying he had had engine failure on five occasions. “I have been fortunate to have had nothing but the finest initial and ongoing training throughout my career, and that’s what saves your life.

“Look at the case of the American airline captain who had two engines fail shortly after take-off from NYC when he flew into a flock of birds. He acted instinctively to guide the aircraft away from built-up areas and then ditched the craft into the Hudson River.

“There was no panic, no commotion, just a lifetime of superb training that came to the fore and saved the day for all of the aircraft’s occupants. The more you fly, the more you rely on training and experience, rather than luck.”

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

DIOR DESIGNER FIRED OVER ALLEGED ANTI-SEMITIC SLURS

PARIS - British fashion designer John Galliano was fired by the Christian Dior fashion house after allegedly harassing a couple using anti-Semitic and racist slurs.

Galliano’s firing as chief designer for Christian Dior was announced on Tuesday, just days after he was suspended from the house.

Galliano’s harassment of the couple in a Paris bar, which he has denied, was reported last week. On Monday, a video of Galliano saying he loves Hitler also came to light.

Actress Natalie Portman, who is the face of Dior perfume and is Jewish, said on Monday that she would not be associated with Galliano.

“I am deeply shocked and disgusted by the video of John Galliano’s comments that surfaced today,” Portman said in a statement. “In light of this video, and as an individual who is proud to be Jewish, I will not be associated with Mr Galliano in any way.”

The video, posted on the website of Britain’s The Sun newspaper and on YouTube, shows Galliano yelling at a couple at the bar and captures him saying: “I love Hitler.” He also tells the couple: “People like you would be dead. Your mothers, your forefathers, would all be f**king gassed.”

The earlier altercation, which resulted in Galliano’s suspension, took place on February 24 in the same cafe between Galliano, who reportedly had been drinking, and a different couple - a Jewish woman and an Asian man - whom he did not know.

Galliano reportedly said: “Dirty Jewish face, you should be dead,” to Geraldine Bloch, 35, according to the French daily le Figaro, which had access to police reports with eyewitness accounts of the event.

Le Figaro reported that Galliano then grabbed Bloch by the hair and shouted at her companion, Philippe Virgiti, 41: “F**king Asian bastard, I will kill you!”

The sought-after designer was taken into custody, questioned by police and tested for blood-alcohol levels before being quickly released.

Galliano denies making any racist statements and filed an official complaint for libel one day later, on February 25. (JTA)

WHAT’S ON

Barry Bilewitz barry@sajewishreport.co.za

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

Today Friday (March 4)

• **UZLC** presents Reeva Forman on “Israel & Democracy in the Middle East”.

Saturday evening (March 5)

• **Bikkur Cholim** is hosting a special showing of “London Road” at Liberty Theatre on the Square at 20:30. Cost R150. Call Joy on (011) 447-6689 to book.

Sunday (March 6)

• **Second Innings** presents Andre Hattingh on “Change Your World”.

• **Cansa** is holding a “Shavathon” at the Norwood Mall from 10:00 until 14:00.

• **RCHCC** is screening “Dunera Boys” at 18:30. Donation: R60.

Monday (March 7)

• **UJW Johannesburg** presents Yael Horowitz on “The Hillbrow Health Precinct: an Urban Regeneration Unit”.

Tuesday (March 8)

• **WIZO Fortnightly Forum** presents Clem Sunter on “The World & SA – What Happens Now?” at Beyachad, 09:30. Bookings (011) 645-2515.

• **Second Innings Men’s Group** presents Zara Jackson on “Stories from Canada” at Our Parents Home at 14:15 for 14:30.

Wednesday (March 9)

• **UJW Cape Town** presents Ben Rabinowitz on

“From Bellville to Sea Point”.

• **RCHCC** presents Ronnie Apteker on “The World is Made of Stories, not Atoms” at 19:30.

Friday (March 11)

• **UZLC** presents Marlene Bethlehem on “The Privilege of Working with Mandela”.

Sunday (March 13)

• **Big Band Music Appreciation Society** is meeting in the Jeffrey Auditorium, St John’s College, St John’s Road, Lower Houghton at 14:15. Contact Barney Segal on 073-438-8799.

Monday (March 14)

• **UJW Johannesburg** presents Meshack Mabogoane on “SA and Israel: Call for Greater Collaboration”.

Wednesday (March 16)

• **Torah Academy** is hosting a business breakfast with Dr Ali Bacher at the HOD Hall at 07:30 for 08:00. RSVP Adrienne on 082-600-8059 or e-mail her on adik@octagonfinancial.co.za

• **SFCC** presents Prof Celine Bernstein on “Hormone Replacement - is it Necessary?”

Friday (March 18)

• **UZLC** presents Anna Cox on “Is there a billing crisis in Johannesburg?”

Sunday (March 20)

• **RCHCC** presents “From Silence to Celebration” - an evening of stories, song and video with Zola; plus the launch of “No Goodbyes” by her late sister, Naava Piatka. Donation R70.

Sudoku Puzzle 27
(Medium, difficulty rating 0.53)

	7	2	4					
6		4			8	5		
			6	9				8
2			1		6		5	
		1				6		
	4		8		3			2
4				6	7			
		8	5			7		6
					1	9	4	

* Answer to follow with next puzzle

Answer - Puzzle 26

6	1	2	8	7	5	4	3	9
9	3	5	1	2	4	8	6	7
4	7	8	3	9	6	1	5	2
3	8	9	4	6	7	5	2	1
2	5	7	9	8	1	6	4	3
1	6	4	2	5	3	9	7	8
8	4	3	5	1	2	7	9	6
5	9	6	7	3	8	2	1	4
7	2	1	6	4	9	3	8	5

Note to readers: Our bridge column and our Sudoku puzzle alternate week by week.

CROSSWORD NO 200

BY LEAH SIMON

ACROSS:

- 1. Tale about being tardy (4)
- 3. Hypocritical – like Janus? (3, 5)
- 8. Pace about South African region (4)
- 9. Tablet somehow read, with columns (8)
- 11. 1 or 2 o’clock, say (3, 2, 3, 4)
- 13. A tenor upset, being highly embellished (6)
- 14. Bird in goblin network (6)
- 17. Actress who starred in “The Devil Wears Prada” (4, 8)
- 20. Conflict at a distance in anticoagulant drug (8)
- 21. Mow around east, says the cat (4)
- 22. What goes up must come down – but this explains why (5, 3)
- 23. Extremely so in over yonder (4)

DOWN:

- 1. Perform antic around loo in the place (8)
- 2. Make toy turn around property of ball being thrown (3, 4)
- 4. Wilbur and Orville ———, aviation pioneers (6)
- 5. Drawn oneself up to this to intimidate – at length (4, 6)
- 6. One hundred disturb four on island (5)
- 7. SA political party to act on slot carved into wooden tool (4)
- 10. Not on the stain – not accurate, either (3, 3, 4)
- 12. Support gone for strike (4, 4)
- 15. At this time, in this place? No, not in any place! (7)
- 16. Los Angeles upset, into Spanish American (6)
- 18. Bellini opera (5)
- 19. South-western sailor gets piece of surgical cotton-wool (4)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 199

ACROSS:

- 1. Tack; 3. Gambling; 8. Maul; 9. Slanting; 11. Bridesgrooms; 13. Marred; 14. Alfred; 17. Read the banns; 20. Levantic; 21. Ogle; 22. Parasols; 23. Odes.

DOWN:

- 1. Time bomb; 2. Courier; 4. Allege; 5. Bingo clubs; 6. Idiom; 7. Gogo; 10. Beheadings; 12. Odysseys; 15. Reneged; 16. Shrill; 18. Elver; 19. Slip.

1		2			3	4		5		6		7
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YOUTH TALK

Alison Goldberg youthsajr@global.co.za

Interaction in Israel leaves SAUJS invigorated

DINA HENDLER
NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN, SAUJS

SIX YOUNG SA Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) leaders from Johannesburg and Cape Town assembled in Israel for the annual Leadership Development Programme recently.

This spectacular two and a half week whirlwind adventure, offers student leaders an opportunity to engage with the distinctly complex political, social and religious terrain that comprises the modern Israeli state.

Commencing with the World Union of Jewish Students Congress (WUJS), participants spent three exhilarating days networking, socialising and interrogating pertinent challenges facing Israel and world Jewry, with the diverse array of speakers ranging from Tzipi Livni to Saeb Erekat, the recently resigned chief Palestinian negotiator.

Joining with young Australian Jewish leaders, the second leg of the tour comprised an action packed week. A heightened understanding of the current political situation was afforded by an informative tour of the Green Line, a lookout over the Gaza Strip and a visit to the nearby city of Sderot, the target of relentless Qassam rocket strikes in recent years.

Throughout the tour, emphasis was placed on fairness and balance, with the Hebron component including talks from both the staunchly right-wing Noam Arnon as well as a discussion with the oppositionist soldiers of Breaking the Silence.

This was further supplemented by a series of interactive workshops, which equipped participants with the skills to combat prevailing myths and misrepresentations concerning Israel.

Other workshops, dedicated to fostering Jewish identity and education and the con-

tinuation of communal life generated much debate.

Participants learned about the refugee crisis in Israel, which accepts fleeing victims of war-torn African countries. A walk through Tel-Aviv streets lined with scores of unemployed refugees, highlighted their plight.

The remarkable and admirable spirit of volunteerism which pervades Israel, was extensively experienced. From Joint Distribution Committee centres that rehabilitate troubled teens in low-income areas, to youth volunteers who selflessly dedicate a year to providing entertainment and support for bored and undirected neighbourhood kids, Israel is a shining example of commitment to charity and support of the disadvantaged.

In all, a superb tour ensured that an inspired group returned armed with knowledge, passion and excitement to contribute to take an active role to the development of Jewish life and community.

Bnei Akiva hits the new year running

AVIVA DAVIDS
PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL DASKAL

BNEI AKIVA South Africa held its annual kinnus on Sunday, February 6. Kinnus is our annual general meeting, where relevant topics such as Israel programmes, Johannesburg, Cape Town, chessed initiatives, as well as plans for machaneh were discussed and important decisions made regarding the movement's plans for the year.

Kinnus was held at Linksfeld Shul and Bnei Akiva would like to thank the Linksfeld community for allowing us to make use of their hall. The day included shacharit, breakfast, thought-provoking shiurim by Rav Ramon Widmonte (the rav of our movement) and Rav Nathan Alexander (our national shaliach), as well as important addresses by the outgoing chairman, Adam Merkel, and past rosh machaneh, Adam Muznitsky.

Resolutions that came up from the various discussion groups were voted on by the Bnei Akiva chaverim present. Over 60 chaverim from Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg attended this very successful kinnus.

Kinnus is also a time to hear from our chanichim how they feel the movement is running. Several chanichim from shevet hagvurah (grade 11) presented their views to the kinnus in an exciting way.

After voting in the new national hanhalla



Bnei Akiva leaders gathered in Johannesburg.

(national leadership), the people who will be running Bnei Akiva SA this year, are:

National chairman - Dean Sher; vice-national chairman (Johannesburg) - Neal Daskal; vice-national chairman (Cape Town) - Kim Feldman; rosh machaneh - Brent Davidoff; Johannesburg chairman - Josh Hovsha; Cape Town chairman - Josh Sevitz; head of dvir (grade 12) Israel programmes - Keren Pokroy; head of lehava (grade 10) Israel programmes - Shani Fisher; head of

chinuch (education) - Avi Levy; national treasurer - Abigail Levitan; head of aliyah - David Schneider; ex officio - Adam Merkel; national shaliach - Rav Natan Alexander; rav tnuah - Rav Ramon Widmonte; and four committee members - Adam Musnitzky, Netanel Azizollahof, Joshua Gavronsky and Tina Falkson.

Yishar koach to you all! We are looking forward to an extremely productive and successful year.



Diana McAlpine, Greenpeace spokesman.

Of course we ‘can’ make a difference!

JODY KAPLAN
PHOTOGRAPH: ARNALDO MANDEL

KING DAVID Sandton Primary School learners have been collecting non-perishable items for Yad Aharon.

The school has collected over 600 cans and is very proud that it can help people in need. We believe that we “can” make a difference.

Back: Jemma Shapiro; Rotem Barashi; Danielle Ogus; Gabriella Galon; Raquel Nathan; Tyler Parker; and Kayla Lowenstein. Front: Jaime Treger; Dean Bacher; Jemma Lowenstein; and Tyra Berman.

Getting the message of recycling across

JONATHAN BERKOWITZ
PHOTOGRAPH: GARY BLOCK

THE ENVIRONMENTAL assembly held on February 18 at King David High School Linksfeld, had recycling as its main theme. We saw the need for more recycling to take place at the school, so we tailor-made an assembly aimed to make the learners aware of the issue, inform them of their valuable part in the battle for recycling and how exactly they can get involved in this important cause.

The assembly contained educational and fun video clips, interesting facts - an example that recycling is possible with a dress made from only newspaper - and there was a speaker from Greenpeace.

The main attraction of the assembly was a video that our environmental committee made that showed the learners littering and walking over rubbish. This evoked guilt and was a standout part of the assembly.

Our assembly managed the difficult task of being both informative and fun and was really enjoyed by the learners.



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Teachers of Hebrew and Jewish Studies are also invited to make an appointment to discuss employment opportunities that may exist at Carmel School



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Closing date for applications 18 March 2011.
Please note that the submission of a CV will not automatically result in an interview.



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- Excellent working knowledge of Microsoft operating systems, LAN's, and wireless technologies.

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As this programme is in developmental stages, job details are subject to change without notice, and employee must be flexible with accepting additional hours and responsibilities.

Applicant must hold Rabbinic certification and basic paramedic training. Minimum 5 years' experience in chaplaincy duties for the elderly. Managerial experience in programme development and execution a must.

Please send CV to: rmk@chabad.org.za or fax (011) 440-6601. Closing date: 11 March, 2011

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Come to Yad’s carnival – for a good cause

YAD AHARON has been travelling through the Jewish Johannesburg with the Can Can Man encouraging children to donate non-perishable food items to those in need. The highlight of this year’s Can Can Collection is going to be the Colossal Can Can Carnival that will be taking place at Genesis Centre in Fairmount on Sunday March 6, Yad Aharon says in a media release.

This is an event for both young and old and entry into the event is a donation of 2 non-perishable items to this most worthy organisation that distributes food parcel to families in need.

The carnival will commence at 10:00 and there will be parachute rides, putt-putt, pony rides, trampoline, bungee jumping, a bumpy jumpy castle zone and more.

There will be a variety of stalls and delicious food will be sold. Live bands will be playing throughout the day. Kids who participated in the Can Can Collection at schools and are seen wearing their Can



Can badges, could win prizes.

With all the cans and non-perishable items that are being collected prior to the day and on the day, Yad Aharon is going to attempt to build a Tin Can Tower, and everybody’s donation will go a long way in

making this happen. The ones who are going to make this day “funtastic”, Yad Aharon stresses, “are the people that show up, donate and participate. Let’s make this a community unity day that brings fun to the whole family.”

Chana Rivka Lewin, a teacher at Torah Academy Primary has written a book called the “The Can Can Kids, a Collectable Story”- which encourages children to help others by donating cans of food.

The booklet was dedicated in the merit of a complete and speedy recovery to the children in our community who are ill.

Schools have been interviewed on ChaiFM and been challenged by each other to participate in helping collect as many cans as possible.

• For further information about the event, contact Yad Aharon on (011) 485-2076 or visit the website www.yadaharon.co.za

ORT South Africa turns 75 in style

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA MORALEE



ORT SA's vice chairman, Ricci Lyons and Martin Behr, ORT SA honorary life president and World ORT secretary.

IN 1936, ORT started as a fundraising arm for Jewish community projects in South Africa and Israel. Since then, ORT has become operational and has expanded its activities to cover not only Gauteng but KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern and Western Cape, it lives out its motto to “Educates people for Life”.

ORT’s gala evening celebration at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg on March 16, is a celebration of the best of the Yiddish Song Festivals that have taken place in the Cape over the past 10 years.

Those attending last year’s event gave it glowing reports, such as: “And it just gets better and better every year!”

So far, Computicket and ORT have sold more than 650 tickets. There have been a

handful of generous people who have asked to buy tickets on behalf of residents at Sandringham Gardens and Our Parents Home. The recipients have been overjoyed to receive tickets and are looking forward to an exciting evening out.

Ricci Lyons, vice chairman of ORT South Africa, commented how people queue to see an opera such as Aida where the words are not understood, yet the voices, costumes and the entire production manages to take the audience on a special journey.

“For this production, we have Yiddish, opera with soul, and it is a language that is so expressive that one cannot help but laugh, cry and enjoy.”

From the comments made by an appreciative Cape Town audience, it would be a shame to miss this one night-only event at the Lyric. Contact ORT on (011) 728 7154 for further information.

Wineberg inaugurated as Green and Sea Point rabbi

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

A MATCH made in heaven. This was the analogy drawn at the inauguration of Rabbi Dovid Wineberg as senior rabbi of the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation attended by an estimated 600 members and visitors last Sunday.

It is the first such event to have been held in the history of the shul which dates back to 1891 when the first Jewish family, a Mr and Mrs Abrahams, moved into the area.

Rabbi Wineberg was formally inaugurated by Israel’s Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, who travelled to the country especially for the event, and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein. Rabbi Goldstein noted that the occasion marked “a new chapter in the history and lifespan” of the congregation as it transitioned from one rabbi to the next.

“The relationship between a rabbi, his rebbetzen and the community, is like a shidduch and I can already see that this is a match made in heaven,” he said. “This is a great simchah in the life of South African Jewry and Cape Jewry in particular.”

Rabbi Wineberg has been the associate rabbi of Sandton Shul for the past 10 years. The fact that several of his former congregants had travelled to Cape Town to attend the inauguration was evidence of the close bonds the couple had forged there.

“In Rabbi Dovid and Sara, we have a rabbinical couple who are passionate about Torah and who come from generations of rabbinic role models.” The chief rabbi welcomed Rabbi Wineberg’s parents, Rabbi Yitzchak and Rebbetzen Henya Wineberg who came from Vancouver for the occasion, as well as his uncle, Rabbi Levy Wineberg and his rebbetzen, Shterna from Johannesburg. The rabbi’s grandfather, Rabbi Yosef Wineberg, has served as a Chabad emissary and travelled regularly to South Africa and other countries.

Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger spoke of the

warm community he had found in Cape Town, with its sense of unity evidenced by the fact that there was “one eruv, one Beth Din. This is not normal, you have to be very proud of your community.”

In a video message, Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks commented that Rabbi Wineberg came from a “great rabbinic family” and was “one of the most eloquent exponents of Judaism among the younger members of the rabbinate”.

“Judaism is a marathon, not a sprint, it takes time, but at the end of the day, with tenacity, with absolute commitment, we get to the end. Where you are on the journey is not so concerning as the fact that you are on the journey,” said Rabbi Wineberg.

President of the congregation, Aubrey Miller, recalled how, on his way home from



Rebbetzen Sara Bayla and Rabbi Dovid Wineberg with his parents, Rabbi Yitzchak and Rebbetzen Henya Wineberg of Vancouver.

shul a year ago, he had “popped in” to Chabad to listen to “an inspirational rabbi. After a period of time, we knew we’d found our rabbi,” he said, referring to Rabbi Wineberg.

“We’re the largest community in South Africa and there’s no reason why we should not be the greatest. We now have the potential to not only achieve, but surpass our goals.”

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Sad death of SA soccer legend Jorge Santoro

JACK MILNER

JORGE SANTORO (Herrmann), one of the legends of South African football, passed away suddenly last Saturday.

As a fan of Highlands Park in my younger days, Santoro was one of our heroes and it is always sad to lose an icon. He is survived by his four sons - Rabbis Ari, Yonatan and Ilan Herrmann, and youngest son Jorge Herrmann - as well as his partner of many years, Jean Standen.

I am grateful to Sy Lerman, doyen of South African soccer writers, for this tribute to Santoro.

Brazilian-born South African soccer legend Jorge Santoro Herrmann, known simply as Santoro during his playing days, died suddenly on Saturday morning aged 66, after suffering a massive heart attack.

He was the “golden boy” of the glittering Highlands Park team of the mid-1960s, whom former club owner and chairman, Rex Evans described on Saturday as “probably the greatest club combination produced in South African soccer”.

“When he came to South Africa with fellow-Brazilian Walter da Silva,” said Martin Cohen, himself a former Highlands great, “the pair brought a new dimension to our soccer. Their exceptional talent and ability to combine uncannily in the pursuit of goals, thrilled spectators and was an example for players to follow,” added Cohen, who was a member of the first non-racial South African team that played against a composite Argentine XI in 1972.

“Now they are both gone,” said Cohen referring to the death of Da Silva last year following the after-effects of a bullet lodged in his head during a hijacking.



An old cutting from the playing days of George Santoro, who passed away.

“Santoro was admired by South Africans of all shades and certainly ranks among the all-time greats of the game in this country,” said Kaizer Chiefs supremo and former star, Kaizer Motaung. “He was also an exceptionally likable person whom I grew to know very well.”

Santoro came to South Africa as a vibrant 20 year-old after being groomed to succeed all-time Brazilian icon Didi in the Botafago mid-field. A cruel injury which kept him out of soccer for almost a year, resulted in Botafago unearthing another Brazilian great in Gerson to succeed Didi - and Chilean coach Mario Tuani persuaded him to come to South Africa instead.

After retiring from soccer, Santoro coached Moroka Swallows and other PSL clubs for several years and ironically was planning to return to some active form in the game in recent weeks - having sought a meeting with Motaung in this respect.

WP teams for Maccabi Interprovincial

MACCABI Western Province has named its teams for the upcoming Interprovincial soccer tournament to take place later this month.

Western Province Maccabi - under-10

Jordan Arelisky (Weizmann); Rohan Bloom (Highlands); Jake Greenberg (Weizmann); Aaron Isserow (Weizmann); Sam Kurgan, (Highlands); Asher Martin (Phyllis Jowell); Nadav Mazor (Weizmann); Ethan Morris (Highlands); Chad Pribut (Highlands); Judd Raichman (Weizmann); Sasha Rodenacker (Highlands); and Daniel Rubin (Weizmann).

Western Cape Maccabi - under-10

Darren Berelowitz (Highlands); Zack Brivick (Weizmann); Zev Cohen (Weizmann); Tal Eisenberg (Weizmann); Adam Gradner (Weizmann); Daniel Hammerson (Weizmann); Ryan Hendler (Weizmann); Matthew Koton (Weizmann); Dan Moritz (Weizmann); Max Peerutin (Weizmann); Ariel Saxe (Highlands); Guy Sheehen and Benjamin Shirk (Constantia).

Cape Town Maccabi - under-10

Aaron Altman (Phyllis Jowell); Jarren Bacher (Weizmann); Zaccary Beilinson (Weizmann); Keanu Craucamp (Highlands); Julio Dozetos (Constantia); Erez Gelgor (Phyllis Jowell); Shai Koehn and Daniel Neuberger (Weizmann); Jacob Osrin (Highlands); Eliram Sharabi and Benjamin Sulcas (Weizmann); Jamie Sulcas (Weizmann); and Kyle Zachs (Highlands).

Western Province Maccabi - under-12

Aaron Benjamin (Highlands); Matt Gins-

berg (Rondebosch Boys); Dylan Greenberg (Weizmann); Matthew Jacobson (Highlands); Max Mauerberger and Ariel Mausenbaum (Highlands); Aaron Pincus (Highlands); Seth Pribut (Highlands); Devin Sheinbar (Highlands); Joseph Sher (Highlands); Aaron Sherman (Highlands); and Joshua Tarlie (Weizmann).

Western Cape Maccabi - under-12

Jonathan Bernstein (Highlands); Adam Carson (Highlands); Gideon Cohen (Weizmann); Zach Israel (Weizmann); Aaron Kruss-Van der Heever (Highlands); Avi Opert; Ben Opert; and Jarryd Roup, all of (Highlands); Dylan Solin (Weizmann); Dylan Trappler (Weizmann); and Aaron Zetler (Weizmann).

Western Province Maccabi - under-14

Samuel Codron (Middle School); Adam Gorin (Middle School); David Herr (Middle School); Saul Jackson (Middle School); Jake Maisel (Highlands); Noam Mazor (Middle School); Jayson Rawraway (Middle School); Aryeh Ross (Phyllis Jowell); Josh Sher (Middle School); Adam Stevenson (Middle School); and Asher Valentini (Home).

Western Cape Maccabi - under-14

Robert Berman (Middle School); Dax Finkelstein (Middle School); David Franco (Middle School); Justin Froomer and Jarryd Hurwitz (Middle School); Moshe Jubiler (Phyllis Jowell); Saul Levin (Middle School); Avi Lurie (Weizmann); Daniel Mendel (Middle School); Jason Smith (Middle School); and Doron Yiacoumis (Reddam Green Point).

Very successful start to Jewish Sports Challenge

JACK MILNER

THE OPENING day of the Inter-Jewish Sports Challenge at the Zoo Lake Sports Complex last Sunday, proved to be a resounding success.

The tournament is open to primary schools and involves King David Linksfield, Victory Park, Sandton, as well as Yeshiva College. The concept was adapted by Haley Nathan, chairman of the King David Sandton PTA, from a model used by Montrose Primary School.

Each school sent around 100 youngsters from under-8 to under-13 who played cricket, soccer and netball. With the superb support of the parents there must have been some 2 000 people at the Zoo Lake on Sunday.

Maccabi SA has supported the event and as a result Maccabi Gauteng will be selecting invitational squads in under-13 cricket (one squad) and netball (two squads) with a view to nurturing teams ahead of the Maccabiah that takes place in Israel every four years.

The festival is played over four Sundays with the finals taking place on April 3.

Peres meets Perez...

ISRAELI PRESIDENT Shimon Peres wound up a four-day visit to Spain last week by watching a Real Madrid training session. He was the guest of Real Madrid president, Florentino Perez and was introduced to all the players by coach Jose

Mourinho.

“Sport is the best way to advance peace, fraternity and equality, and it blurs the differences between countries, religions and adversaries” he said. “On the field, everyone is equal.”

Maccabi futsal times change

IF YOU wish to participate in the Johannesburg leg of the SA Maccabi men’s open futsal trials for the Pan American Games in Brazil please take note of the new starting times. The reason for the change of

time is due to the availability of the court.

The trials will now take place from 18:30 to 20:30 on Tuesday, March 8 at Discovery Soccer Park, The Wanderers Club, 21 North Road, Illovo, Johannesburg



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