



Robyn Orlin and Sylvia Glasser choreograph a full circle. (page 8)

• south african • jewish report

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Obama’s 2nd term: More of the same, at least until Iran flares

RON KAMPEAS
WASHINGTON

The day after the election looked a lot like the day before for President Barack Obama, particularly in areas that had attracted the attention of Jewish voters: Tussling with Republicans domestically on the economy and healthcare, and dancing gingerly with Israel around the issue of a nuclear Iran.

With Obama’s victory over Republican challenger Mitt Romney, the Senate remaining in the hands of Democrats and the US House of Representatives staying Republican, this meant more of the same, said William Daroff, who directs the Washington office of the Jewish Federations of North America.

“What’s amazing from a political point of view is that it’s hundreds of millions dollars being spent and it’s still the status quo,” he said.

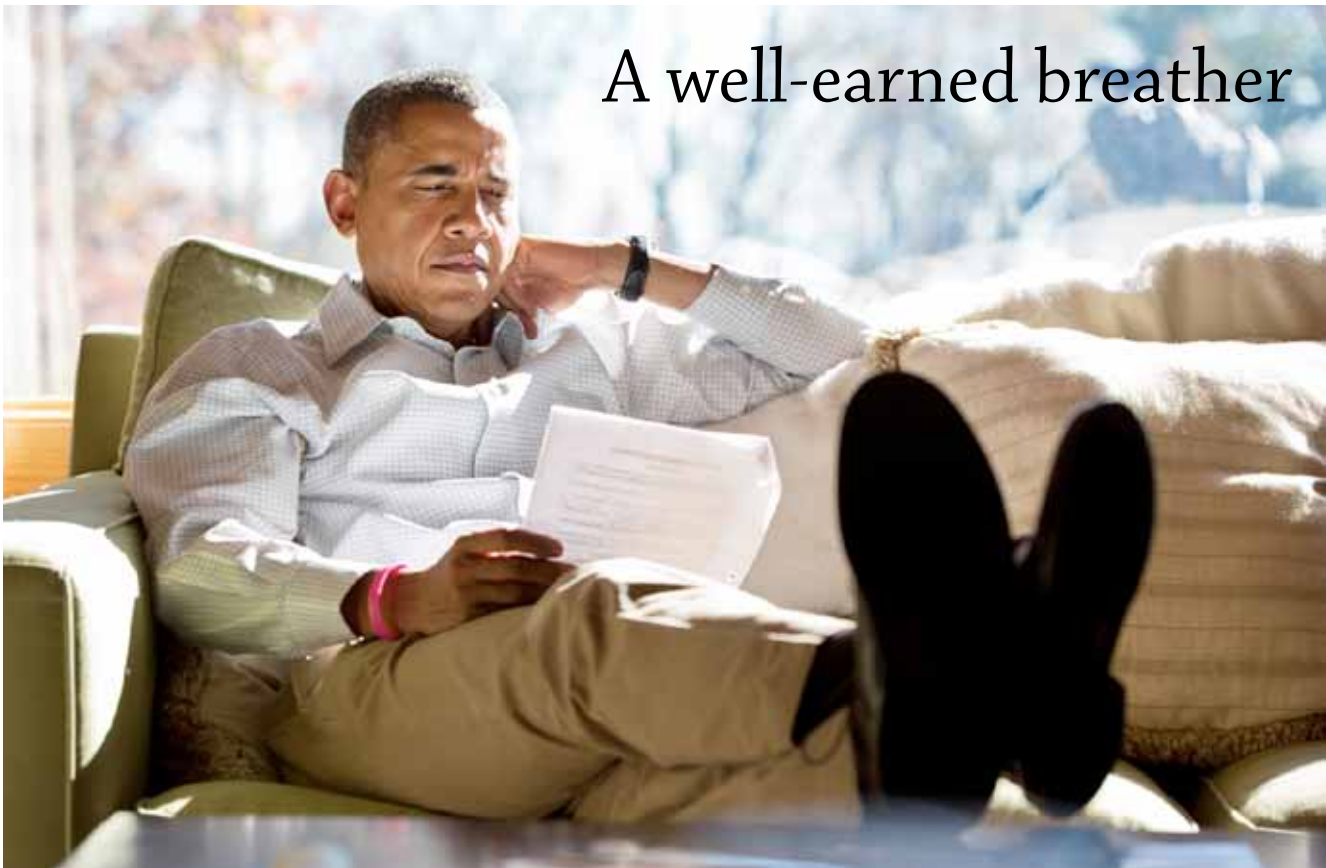
The advantage, Daroff said, was that the sides get back to work, and straight away.

“There’s not going to be a delay in everyone feeling out their new roles and figuring out what colour the rug in the Oval Office should be,” he said.

Jewish federations and other Jewish social welfare organisations have said their immediate focus will be the “fiscal cliff” - the effort to head off sequestration, the congressional mandate to slash the budget across the board at the start of 2013.

“The fiscal cliff and specifically sequestration is a major concern,” Daroff said. “Our concern continues to be that as the nation and our political leaders continue to assess how to make cuts in spending that those cuts don’t fall disproportionately on vulnerable populations that rely on social service agencies that depend on our funding.”

Cuts of about 8,5 per cent would immediately affect the



A well-earned breather

President Barack Obama at Camp David, on October 21.

viability of housing for the elderly, according to officials at B’nai B’rith International, which runs a network of homes. Officials at Jewish federations say the cuts also would curb the meals and transportation for the elderly they provide with assistance from federal programmes.

Obama and Congress would have had to deal with

heading off sequestration in any case, but as a president with a veto-wielding mandate of four more years, he has the leverage to head off deep cuts to programmes that his top officials have said remain essential, including food assistance to the poor and medical entitlements for the poor and elderly.

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Hermanus congregant caught with fingers in cookie jar

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft: “While the shul’s former president Jonathan Lipman must be lauded for masterminding the Hermanus development, the fact that he helped himself to its money is intolerable.”

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DAVIS: Striving for an Israel holding to its moral compass

A significant responsibility rests on our religious leadership to lead towards the balance between universalism and particularism demanded by our tradition, no matter the struggle.

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SAKS: Breaking a lance for the Jewish mainstream

Taken as a whole, South African Jews have not caved in; if anything, their love and support for Israel has intensified. We can take heart from this as we steel ourselves for the even greater battles to come.

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Protest against the JNF is refuted step-by-step



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WIZO’s Triennial Conference: Israel should heed views of Diaspora communities

Israel needs to invest more in hasbarah and how its image was projected internationally. “Information is as important as ammunition,” said World WIZO President Tova Ben Dov.

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Torah shines a light for us in the darkness

“Were the Torah not my occupation I would be lost in my troubles,” said King David. The Author of the Dvar Moshe points out that King David did not say that were the Torah not my occupation, I would have troubles, inferring that with the Torah I don’t have troubles, but rather that with the Torah I’m not lost in my troubles.

Difficulties are part and parcel of daily existence, but the Torah shines a light for us in the darkness. It is our guide and direction.

In this week’s parsha, Sarah, the Matriarch dies at the age of 127.

The Torah, though, strangely refers to her age as “100 years

and 20 years and 7 years”. Why?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakodesh explains that Sarah’s life can be divided into two different stage-the first 100 years and the last 27 years.

Until the age of 90, Sarah had to bear the pain and untold anguish of childlessness. Then even after Hashem blessed her with a long-awaited son, her maidservant Hagar’s son Yishmael tries to damage and hurt Yitzchak.

Only after Yishmael was sent out of the house, when Sarah had already reached her 100th birthday, was she able to rest easier.

How would we be if we had had to endure the difficulties that Sarah went through? Not exactly dancing! Yet our rabbis

teach us that she had the Divine Spirit rest on her, in some ways greater than of Avraham.

And the Talmud lays down a rule, that one can only have Divine Spirit rest on him when in a state of happiness. Therefore says the Netziv, she must have been regularly in a state of joy!

I once heard of a court case in America of a child who sued his parents for doing a bad job! This mentality of blaming others for one’s issues, is unfortunately a trend in today’s society.

The Torah, though, teaches just the opposite. Sarah didn’t wallow or launch an attack on anyone else, but instead rose to



PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH
Rabbi Yonatan Landau,
Ohr Somayach Savoy

the challenge and became one of the greatest examples of true living for all time.

The message is clear: We choose how to respond to any situation; we can accept the challenge or we can wrap ourselves in a quicksand of accusation and blame.

Hashem should bless us all with the strength and courage to battle all difficulties that come our way and become truly successful servants of Hashem.

Senior Hermanus congregant caught with his fingers in the cookie jar

OWN CORRESPONDENT

For many years, the Hermanus Jewish community in the western Cape was celebrated like a jewel in the crown of SA Jewry. The years 2008 was key in its life, in which its own new shul was built and in which “like a phoenix” the community rose from demographic distress and dysfunction in the 1970s to one growing “in defiance of country-wide trends”. This week it was rocked by scandal.

In 2007, the congregation sold its 75-year-old shul in the town centre and purchased another property in the Eastwood neighbourhood, with the plan to erect a smaller community centre, which would comprise a shul, succah, communal hall and a house for the rabbi.

At the time, Country Communities Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft said: “I am hoping to see the same spirit [as that dealing with the rebuilding of the mish-

kan in the Torah] duplicated here, but not by bringing monetary offerings, but by personal involvement and regular attendance to activities in this new synagogue.”

The shul opened in time for Rosh Hashanah 2008; Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein officiated in the consecration with Rabbi Sillberhaft. The ceremony included the unveiling of the Ten Commandments, a plaque dedicated to the memory of the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, who settled in Hermanus with his wife Ann shortly after his retirement in 2004. Sadly he passed away shortly thereafter. But Ann continues to be an active and contributing community member.

At the consecration, Jonathan Lipman, president of the Hermanus Hebrew Congregation for 12 years, instrumental in the rejuvenation of the complex celebrated Rabbi Harris as “the one who got us thinking of hav-



Celebrants in happier times: Ann Harris; Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft; Dylan Single, the first barmitzvah boy in the relaunched Hermanus Shul; with the then shul president, Jonathan Lipman, in October 2008. (File photo)

ing more than just a shul for our community”.

Said Ann Harris at the time: “I’ve watched the partnership between these two gentlemen [Rabbi Silberhaft and Lipman], based on tolerance, respect and understanding. It has kept the Hermanus Hebrew Congregation within the fold of the UOS.” Ann Harris declined to comment.

It was with disbelief that the community last week stood trial against Lipman, in the Cape Town High Court. He admitted to helping himself to R1,5million from the community coffers. The congregation won a court order against Lipman ordering him to repay R1,3m of the missing money.

An audit by Horwarth Zeller Karro at Rabbi Silberhaft’s request, revealed Lipman had made R900 000 worth of transfers to other accounts and had treated the congregation’s money market account like “a personal kitty”.

Lipman also sold the old shul for R7,5million and allegedly pocketed R500 000 from the deal. Confronted with the evidence by Rabbi Silberhaft, Lipman admitted his guilt and promised that he would repay the money. He signed an agreement affirming his willingness to sell their holiday home. Two months later, Lipman and his wife contested the agreement, claiming they had signed it

under duress.

Rabbi Silberhaft commented: “While Lipman must be lauded for masterminding the whole Hermanus development, the fact that he helped himself is intolerable. As soon as the community became aware of the situation, all authority was immediately removed from Lipman and a new, fiscally disciplined committee was constituted.

“The Board of Deputies will not tolerate such behaviour, particularly with communal funds. Every country community is expected to submit a balance sheet to the Board of Deputies on a regular basis, to prevent such a situation happening. It is absolutely intolerable.”

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Obama’s 2nd term: More of the same

From page 1

David Makovsky, a senior analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said Obama’s priorities would be domestic.

“While a victory in the second term tends to give you some political capital, capital is still finite,” he said, citing George W Bush’s failure in 2005 to reform Social Security, despite his decisive 2004 triumph.

“This suggests to me the president will keep his focus on the economy and healthcare,” and not on major initiatives in the Middle East.

More broadly, four more years of “Obamacare” mean the healthcare reforms that Obama and a Democratic Congress passed in 2010 will be more difficult to repeal for future GOP administrations. By 2016, American voters will have habituated to mandates guaranteeing health insurance for all, including for pre-existing conditions and coverage of children by their parents until they reach the age of 26.

On these issues - entitlement programmes and federal assistance for the poor - Obama and Senate Democrats have the backing of an array of Jewish groups led by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the community’s public policy umbrella.

Additionally, Jewish advocacy organisations will look to Obama to appoint to the Supreme Court justices likely to uphold the protections favoured by much of the Jewish community, including abortion rights, women’s equal pay guarantees and gay marriage gains in the states.

The exception will be the Orthodox groups, which generally align with conservative Christians on social issues.

The potential for domestic tension between some Jewish groups and the new Obama administration - and its Democratic allies who continue to lead the Senate - lies in Democrats’ plans to let lapse some of the tax cuts passed by the George W Bush administration.

Senate Democrats in recent years have pressed organised Jewish groups to advocate for raising revenue through tax increases. Some groups have advocated for the increases, but the major social welfare policy umbrella, the Jewish Federations of North America, has resisted in part because tax hikes are controversial among a substantial portion of the federations’ donor base.

Daroff said that Jewish federations would continue to push for keeping the tax deduction rate for charitable giving at 35 per cent and resist Obama administration proposals to cut it to 28 per cent.

“We see from the response to Hurricane Sandy how vital charities are,” he said. “To put stumbling blocks in the way of our ability to raise charitable funds, is the absolutely wrong policy.”

Unlike the looming sequestration, Obama’s most vexing first term foreign

policy issue - how to deal with Iran - has gained some breathing room in recent weeks with the Obama administration and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arriving at an agreement that Iran will not be poised to manufacture a nuclear weapon until the spring at the earliest.

Without intimations by Israel that it might strike before then, Obama has a window to see if the tightened international and US sanctions introduced during his administration will goad the Iranians into making their nuclear programme more transparent.



Makovsky said he expected a quick return to talks with Iran, which could lead to bold new proposals, setting some of the bottom lines that have been eagerly sought by Israel.

Makovsky said one scenario could be removing some sanctions in exchange for keeping Iranian uranium enrichment at five per cent, down from the 20 per cent level it currently achieved and well below the 93 per cent that would make a weapon.

Another Iranian give, he said,

would be to export the stockpiles of enriched uranium already on hand.”

Two personnel changes in the coming months in both Israel and the United States will help shape how the two nations interact.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who has long-standing relationships with much of the Israeli leadership, has said she is certain to quit, and there is much speculation about her successor.

Three names have been touted - Tom Donilon, the national security adviser; Susan Rice, the ambassador to the United Nations; and US Senator John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Of the three, only Donilon has warm relations with his Israeli interlocutors. Rice has steadfastly defended Israel against formal condemnation at the United Nations, but Israeli and pro-Israel officials have been galled by the tough language she has used to describe Israeli settlement expansion.

Kerry raised some eyebrows with his sharp language about Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip following the 2009 war with Hamas. And some conservatives questioned his insistent outreach to the Assad regime in Syria prior to the protests that set off the regime’s bloody oppression and the country’s resulting civil war.

The other personnel change is in Israel and will be closely watched by the Obama administration. Elections there are scheduled for January, and Netanyahu and his new right-leaning alliance with Avigdor Lieberman, currently the foreign minister, may be facing a serious centrist challenge. (JTA)

Campaign against JNF refuted step-by-step



Protesters outside a Johannesburg branch of Reggies toy shop.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Last Sunday, a disinformation campaign attacked the Jewish National Fund, protesting nationally around branches of the toy franchise Reggies. Led by Alan Horwitz, spokesman for the organisation calling itself StopTheJNF, the protests - described by the SABC as “small but vocal” - apparently brought about temporary closure of some stores.

The protest hinged on a sponsorship embarked upon between Reggies and the JNF in 2010, at the time of the Carmel fires, and subsequently, during heavy rocket attacks from Gaza. The JNF marketed “tree cards” through Reggies stores, in which children were made aware of the need to raise money for relief after the fires and then the planting of trees to prevent rocket attacks on Israelis near Gaza.

A statement by JNF National Executive Director Isla Feldman, point-by-point discrediting StopTheJNF’s claims, was widely disseminated. Considered “Israel’s Chief Forester”, the JNF has been planting trees in land it has owned since before the existence of the State of Israel. Further, “the JNF teaches agricultural technologies - including honey production and water management - for free to any community that wants them. The JNF has nothing to do with the political status of Bedouin squatters. Each land ownership claim submitted by the Bedouins is aimed at the State of Israel, not the JNF, which works closely with Bedouin representatives in projects like Nahal Garar Park, for wastewater treatment in Hura and Segev Shalom; and Wadi Atir, an agriculture and tourism farm.”

Zimmerman was not available for comment.



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Israel should heed the Diaspora communities’ views – Tova Ben Dov

STEVEN GRUZZ

An erudite panel moderated by Reeva Forman discussed “The Faces of Israel in the Media” at the 34th Triennial Conference of WIZO, at the Killarney Country Club in Johannesburg on November 4.

World WIZO President Tova Ben Dov suggested that the Israeli government needed to take more seriously the concerns of Diaspora communities. A casual dismissal of what the outside world thought, couldn’t work in today’s global village.

Digital media allowed immediate access to endless knowledge, but also to poisonous vitriol and distortions of truth. Citizen journalism through cellphones, could bring to light atrocities in Syria and Iran, but this material was easily twisted and manipulated.

Israel had pride and dignity and often did not publish gruesome pictures to protect families, the polar opposite of the Arab media’s approach.

The price of democracy and academic freedom was that state-paid Israeli professors bad-mouth Israel internationally, as did some Arab MKs.

She said Israel needed to invest more in hasbarah and how its image was projected internationally. She said “information was as important as ammunition”.

Jewish Report Editor Geoff Sifrin illustrated the fluid, volatile media environment with the example of how a small article on the threatened demonstration by some Jews outside Sandton Shul at Mr Justice Richard Goldstone’s grandson’s barmitzvah in April 2010, got distorted and snowballed into a global story within 24 hours.

Goldstone quickly went from ‘villain’ (as the author of the 2009 Goldstone Report on Operation Cast Lead in Gaza which was widely regarded as deeply flawed) ‘to victim’ – the target of intolerance.

Freelance academic Dr Donna Wyckoff-Wheel, noted that Israel and the US were targets for negative media. “Much of the

sympathy and support Israel once enjoyed is gone,” she said.

Israel today has political, economic and military power, and is often typecast as a dangerous aggressor and oppressor. She showed how subtle bias and word choice by journalists and editors can slant a story, and how media depiction relies on established narrative plot lines and stock characterisation.

She noted that “democracies depend on vigorous debate among diverse approaches to problem identification and problem solving”, and that a free press was vital. She cautioned that “irate, opinionated responses shut down conversation and prevent exploration of issues or perspectives”, and urged us to find a new world story, lest we remain trapped in entrenched media depictions and archetypes of each other.

Victor Gordon, a member of the SA Zionist Federation’s media team, described two wars in the Middle East: the military conflict of the last 100 years and a propaganda battle in the media where “Israel is being beaten

hands down”.

Israel has not prioritised how it is depicted in the media through “arrogance, indifference or stupidity”. He mentioned the “sense of invincibility” Israel assumed after the 1967 Six Day War.

The media, he said, was willing to buy into the anti-Israel propaganda due to its liberal leanings and not wanting to appear out of step with the prevailing support of the Palestinians as underdogs.

Secondly, journalists were human and could be lazy and sloppy when chasing deadlines.

Thirdly, few understood the complexities enough to separate fact from fabrication. He noted that left-wing Jews were often brought in as “useful idiots” to propagate outrageous lies through the sympathetic media.

Israel’s free press let journalists write what they liked, and those views were often used by Israel’s detractors. He noted that just 10 per cent of what the media team submitted, was ever published.

Community Briefs

ORT SA’S GOLF CLASSIC ‘MOST SUCCESSFUL YET’

ORT SA’s Annual Golf Classic was held on October 29 at the Killarney Country Club, Houghton. “This was one of the most successful of the 38 golf days preceding it,” said Solly Burgin, convener of the golf day for many years. This year’s co-convener, Alan Mendelsohn said: “ Support from donors this year was exceptionally good and there were enough wonderful prizes, up to 16th place.” ORT SA’s fundraising allows for the continuation of implementing ORT’s unique education philosophy, “Educating for Life”, through its projects in schools across Gauteng and the Western Cape as well as in the Jewish community.

Photo supplied



Dorienne Levitt, ORT SA national executive board member, with Alan Friedman, a prizewinner.

JOIN THE WOMEN’S GUILDS IN CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF GIVING

The Federation of Synagogues Women's Guilds, under the presidency of Devorah Nates, invites members of the community on Sunday November 18 to celebrate International Day of Giving, in unity, be it in giving charity, in reading psalms or in consciously going out of your way to help another. Nates calls upon community members to make a point of doing an extra “random” act of kindness on this day, which, established a few years ago in the wake of natural disasters in America, became an undertaking commemorated by religious communities throughout the Western world.

TAMAR LAZARUS IS THE NEW WIZO SOUTH AFRICA PRESIDENT

At the 34th Triennial Conference of WIZO South Africa, Tamar Lazarus was elected as the new president. Her mother Tova Ben Dov, president of World WIZO, was the guest of honour at the deliberations to which she made a vital contribution by bringing a tangible link to WIZO SA's projects in Israel, and their importance.

This is the first time in over 90 years of WIZO's existence that a daughter of the president of World WIZO has simultaneously held the position of president of any of the 52 WIZO federations throughout the world.

The conference ended on a high with a festive lunch and tributes made to both the outgoing president, Yvonne Jawitz and the new president. The delegates left with much food for thought brimming with new and exciting innovations on bringing WIZO South Africa into the 21st century.



Past and present WIZO presidents: (back) Tamar Lazarus, Annette Price, Yvonne Jawitz, Marcia Parness, and Lee Joffe. Front: Lorraine Rosmarin, Sylvia Berzack, Tova Ben Dov, and Mushe Kirsh.

For Tony it was from gauchos to war criminals

STEVEN GRUZZ

In an address entitled “From Jewish Gauchos to Nazi War Criminals: Reflections of a Returning Ambassador on Argentina and South Africa in the World Today,” Tony Leon (pictured) wittily entertained a packed house at the official opening of the 34th Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) Triennial Conference at the Killarney Country Club on November 4.

Leon has recently returned from a posting in Buenos Aires as South Africa’s ambassador to Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Describing himself as an “accidental ambas-

sador”, he said there was “no higher honour” than being able to serve his country. His term from 2009 - 2012 was bracketed by the 2010 World Cup and the Marikana mine massacre, showing the best and the worst of South Africa.

Leon reflected on Argentina’s Jewish community of 170 000 in Buenos Aires, many of whom has come to South America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from the Pale of Settlement in eastern Europe.

Today, many families are powerful and prominent in Argentinian high society, such as the mega-wealthy and colourful Wertheim,

Grobocapetel and Elzstain families.

Many of the Argentinian “cowboys”, the gauchos, had been Jewish immigrants. Argentina’s foreign minister, Hector Timerman, is Jewish, and is the son of Jacobo Timerman who was tortured and imprisoned by the military junta in 1978 and deported to Israel.

Leon called Hector a left-wing radical populist “like Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils combined”. He said being the only Jewish ambassador apart from the Israeli head of mission was “an unanticipated plus” in terms of networking and promoting SA business interests.

Leon also remarked on the

abduction of Nazi Adolf Eichmann from Buenos Aires in 1960 to stand trial in Israel, and said he was “only one of several major and lesser Nazi fugitives who had found refuge in Argentina after the Nazi Reich was defeated,” including Josef Mengele the infamous Auschwitz doctor.

Leon met with Argentinian journalist Uki Goni who had researched this subject from 25 000 pages of Argentine, Swiss and German official records, who said many Nazis “hid in plain sight” in the capital. The Nazi link is a taboo subject in contemporary Argentina.



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Money needed to convert JJR films to DVD



Eric Mathabo and Leon Lever masterminding the shift from video to DVD in the Joe Green Audiovisual Library collection.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Last March plans were implemented to halve the shelf space of the Beyachad library in Raedene, now known as the Johannesburg Jewish Resource Centre.

“The library is in limbo,” Marcia Parness, JJRC’s chairman, said at the time. “If all those people who wrote such supportive letters at the time of the announcement of the possible demise of the library helped us tangibly, maybe we would not be in such a situation.”

Not even two years later, Parness still feels the same about support from the community.

Assisted by former KDVP headmaster Leon Lever, and longtime Zionist Federation staff member Eric Mathabo, about half of the collection of films at the Joe Green Audiovisual Library have been converted to DVD and validated as legal.

The JJRC still seeks an additional R30 000, so that the job can be completed. It further needs to raise R150 000 per annum, says Parness, for the upkeep of the library.

“If 100 people donate R2 000 to us each year, our problem will be solved.” The library is asking a once-off annual fee of R240.

“The resources in this library cannot be found anywhere else in this country.” Parness is endorsed by Lever who explains that the rarest movie in this collection is Haim Gouri’s 1974 documentary “81st Blow”, the true story of one of the witnesses at the Eichmann trial. The collection also includes some 30 Yiddish language films.

The collection of 2 000 films includes anti-Semitic classics like the 1940 Jew Süss directed by Veit Harlan, movies which the library will not allow out unless there is a speaker. On the other hand, the matchmaking romance with Amy Irving of 1988, “Crossing Delancey”, is the most popular film in the collection.

“There are maybe 1 000 films left to convert to DVD,” said Lever.

SA Jewry’s doyen of information, Isaac Reznik, added that the collection was started before the war. “It’s the finest audiovisual collection of Jewish material in the world. And the largest. Some of our 16mm and 35mm films were donated to the archives of the Hebrew University some years ago. So many people have written books through this library, which has holdings and newspaper archives dating back to 1898.”

“Nellie Joseph was the librarian here for more than 60 years,” Parness adds. “She loved this place. It was her life and she masterminded the catalogue of the collection, which we are preparing for internet availability.” The JJRC has just established internet connectivity for an internet café, “at half the price of commercial ones”.

• On November 18, at 17:00, the JJRC screens “Partisans of Vilna” a film about the partisan movement; Ronnie Mink is guest speaker. Phone Norma: (011) 645-2567.

• JJRC’s hours: Mondays - Thursdays: 09:00 – 14:30, Wednesdays: 12:30 – 16:30, and the first Sunday of every month.

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LONDON, NEW YORK, KILIMANJARO NOW ORT SA TEAM HEADS FOR PARIS



The ORT SA team heading for Paris: Back: Robert Levin; Ben Swartz; Nathan Sasto; Darren Sosnovik; Darryl Josselowsky; Wayne Abramson; Craig Nadelman; Robert Katz; Greg Kinross; Joel Kesler; and Stan Medalie. Front: Elton Bondi; Tanya Josselowsky; Ralene Ben David; Nicci Raz; Leana Schlesinger; and Stacy Sidelsky. Absent: Limor Azaraf and Richard Friedland.

From London to New York and the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, ORT SA is pushing people beyond their boundaries in aid of its incredible, empowering projects.

“I am very excited to be taking a team of such incredible people to run the Paris Marathon. It is the biggest group we have ever had; I think the fact that each runner has committed to complete 42,2 km for charity is an incredible achievement “. says Nicci Raz, team leader and ORT SA fundraiser .

Follow them on facebook and twitter and at www.ortjet.org.za

If you would like to make a contribution and support the Paris Marathon Team, please e mail nicci@ortsa.org.za or call 011 728 7154 .



"Running the New York Marathon last year with the ORT team was an incredible experience, the Paris Marathon experience should be even more special with my husband taking on the challenge with me, "says Tanya Josselowsky.

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Are we a democracy
or not?

Barack Obama’s and Mitt Romney’s marathon to the White House has ended, with incumbent Pres Obama elected, in a tough race, for a second term, to lead the planet’s most powerful country. The fascination of the race and the intricacies of America’s electoral system, cast a light on how leaders of other democratic countries behave. Not all are equal, nor are their citizens equal in insisting on their rights.

Recent statements by President Jacob Zuma that Africans must solve their problems in an “African” manner, not the “white man’s” way, has raised alarm bells all over. What exactly does he mean? Certainly, what comes from “outside” is not necessarily better than our South African way of conducting our lives.

Among many other attributes, we can teach the world a thing or two about dialogue and reconciliation between conflicting parties - and we have. But is Zuma questioning the basics of our hard-won constitution, co-created right here by an African team headed by Cyril Ramaphosa and proudly touted as the world’s most progressive?

Respect for traditional African leaders and customs and those of other local communities is essential. But not at the cost of negating key elements of our constitution binding us together as a nation - such as equal rights for women, gay rights, the right of South African children to education, rights for people with disabilities, transparency in government’s financial affairs, and so on.

Last Sunday’s brash march by DA leader Helen Zille to the President’s Nkandla estate in rural KwaZulu-Natal, demanding answers about the public money spent on it - with a figure of some R250 million touted - raised hackles in some places. Old, but still dangerous accusations were trotted out about Zille and her predominantly “white” party – which, ironically enough, today has a majority of members of colour - being racist by affronting the President’s dignity. Brett Murray’s controversial painting “The Spear” elicited near-identical responses.

The question of taxpayers’ money spent on Nkandla is not about Zuma’s dignity. It is a national issue needing to be cleared up. One does not have to be a supporter of the DA or any other party to understand that Zille’s march was a symbolic gesture - her critics might call it a cheap publicity gimmick - without intending to physically intrude into his estate, and she risked losing some black voters doing this.

In a proper democracy, what is wrong with the leader of the Parliamentary opposition traversing a public road near the President’s house, while not posing a security threat? Even if Zille only wanted to make a political point visibly and noisily, so what? The only security threat came from the threatening crowd blocking her, to the extent that police felt it necessary to physically separate the two groups.

Imagine how different South Africans would feel if Zuma had behaved like a statesman and welcomed her - even offered her tea. He could have openly affirmed her right to be there, asked the crowd to disperse and instructed the police to ensure she could pass unhindered.

Not only would that earn him points among an electorate increasingly disenchanted with him and his leadership style, it would send a positive message to a world - and potential investors who have become increasingly jittery - watching us closely. After the Marikana massacre and other awful recent incidents, our battered image desperately needs help.

But Zuma couldn’t because the Nkandla saga has embarrassed him. How can you put any spin on the some R250m being spent on it? The impression has been created that what his office really wants to find out is who leaked the embarrassing information. When millions are spent on bullet-proof glass and a bunker as a “retreat”, foreign investors say with good reason, this is a Third World, third-rate country where their money is not safe. This is not what the people who fought apartheid at colossal personal sacrifice - including many Jews like Joe Slovo, Denis Goldberg and others - had in mind.

As the ANC’s elective Mangaung conference is only a month away, a reaffirmation from its leadership of its founding democratic ideals - for itself and the country - is badly needed to calm the unease pervading South Africa today and which in fact has become part of our national psyche.

Striving for an Israel holding to
its moral compass

Last week, a friend of mine, who happens to be one of the great human rights advocates of recent times, sent me a string of Facebook/twitter entries from what, judging by the names and content of the entries, appeared quite obviously to be members of our community.

They painted an appalling picture of Islamophobia. Hateful remarks about the smell and sight of religious Muslims abounded. There appeared to be no shame in articulating views in public about wanting “these people” to be removed from public sight.

I suspect from the volume of entries that this is not the work or views of an isolated few bigots. For this reason, some reflection is called for within our community, itself a tiny minority within a multicultural society.

Of course my encounter with this publically articulated bigotry comes at the same time as the publication of the Dialog study of the attitude of Israeli Jews to Palestinians.

Unfortunately these results seem to have been significantly misinterpreted by Haaretz correspondent Gideon Levy, both in Haaretz and in the Mail & Guardian.

Levy claims that two thirds of Israeli Jews say that 2,5m Palestinians living in the West Bank should be denied the vote in Israel. The important caveat over which he elides is: If the West Bank is annexed.

Significantly, only 38 per cent of the sample favour annexation. Similarly, 74 per cent of the respondents to the study are in favour of segregated roads for Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank. While this is a correct reflection of the result reflected in the survey, 50 per cent of the survey claim that this segregation is necessary in the light of terrorism and only 24 per cent actually approve of the system.

That being said, there are worrying features in the results: 49 per cent say Jewish citizens should be treated better than Arabs; 42 per cent would not want to live in the same building as Arabs nor would this number wish their children to go to school with Arabs.

Even this result should be treated with caution. As Benjamin Pogrund, the distinguished South African journalist who has lived in Israel for the past 15 years, noted in a response to the study, of secular Israeli Jews, 73 per cent have no problem with their children attending such schools and 68 per cent reported no objection to living in an apartment building with Arab neighbours.

Given the consequences of the second Intifada and the deadly and consistent attacks on innocent civilians, Pogrund observes that this is a positive finding. He notes that it is no surprise that the overall results paint a bleaker picture in that the responses of the ultra-Orthodox skew the final figures.

As he observes, rabbis in these communities incite hate against Arabs, urging Jews not to rent or sell property to Arabs. Given the increase in this sector of the Israeli population and the large predominately Russian constituency who support the hateful policies of Avigdor Lieberman, the results do carry a serious warning concerning the long-term moral trajectory of Israeli society.

In turn, this should prompt a serious debate about whether Judaism, with its tradition read in its best and most coherent possible light, can balance its claim to a universal message concerning the inalienable dignity of all humankind, itself a central message of the parshot that we have commenced reading since the beginning of the year and the concern for the



THE JURY
IS OUT
Dennis Davis

particular interests of our own which includes, quite obviously, the right of Israel to live peacefully in secure and defined borders.

That is the debate that should be prompted by this controversial study, as opposed to the contrived attempt to force it within the parameters of an apartheid paradigm, no matter the clarion differences between the two contexts. That debate is not one that should be confined to Israel alone.

To return to the exposition of local manifestations of unbending hatred as exhibited in the social media, the parallels are so clear that they require no further explication. Notwithstanding the existential threat faced by Israel, a majority of secular Israelis remain committed to an Israel that holds to its original moral compass.

That should be a cause for reflection among those who only peddle hatred in our community and the larger Jewish world but particularly those who lead or prompt this bigotry. If the study is read carefully, a significant responsibility rests on our religious leadership to lead toward the balance between universalism and particularism demanded by our tradition, no matter the struggle.

So far it appears to have failed or, all too often when I have heard or read from these quarters, has added fuel to the fires of bigotry. We should take our lead from those in Israel who continue under difficult circumstances to show us a way towards tolerance and respect for the other.

Poster collection
looted by Nazis to be
auctioned in New York

NEW YORK - A collection of pre-Second World War posters that were returned to the heir of a Jewish dentist who fled the Nazis, is going on sale.

The more than 4 300 posters collected by Hans Sachs and looted by the Nazis, will be auctioned at Guernsey’s in New York on January 18, though the auction house is seeking to sell the entire collection to one buyer. The posters are worth about \$5,8 million, according to Bloomberg.

They reportedly arrived at John F Kennedy Airport in New York at the height of Hurricane Sandy. The posters had been returned last month to Sachs’ son Peter of Sarasota, Florida, from the Deutsches Historisches Museum, where they had been stored.

Hans Sachs was a serious poster collector who began collecting in the late 19th century. He also published a poster magazine.

The posters were taken by the Gestapo in 1938; Sachs was told at the time that Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels wanted them for a museum exhibit.

Sachs was arrested on the night of Kristallnacht in November 1938 and taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. His wife secured his freedom and the family escaped to the United States.

Sachs accepted compensation for the collection from West Germany in 1961. He died in 1974. (JTA)

A poster by Jules Cheret from the collection of Hans Sachs



Breaking a lance for the Jewish mainstream



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

There’s not much glory in being mainstream. The ones that get all the attention are those who break with the consensus, who choose the path less trodden. Somehow, these gain a reputation for greater honesty, boldness, integrity and imagination than those of the docile majority who never deviate from the party line.

A manifestation of this is how those who scorn their origins - religious, national, ethnic or otherwise - are acclaimed for being “brave” enough to break with the stifling parochialism of their upbringing to join the greater community as liberated, free-thinking beings.

Admittedly, the greatest advances in human history have largely come about through those with the courage, foresight and persistence to rethink the conventional wisdom and blaze a new trail. Was not Avraham Avinu par excellence such an individual?

The problem, however, is that sometimes, if not most of

the time, the majority are right. As for the dissenters, far from being out-of-the-box innovators leading the bovine-like masses into a brave new world, they more often than not turn out to be simply maladjusted individuals whose very deviance from the norm is driven not by their innate ingenuity but by sundry unresolved emotional, psychological or identity-related issues.

The real danger is when such unstable malcontents nevertheless do succeed in persuading large numbers of people that they are onto something, in which case the consequences can be disastrous. The example of Karl Marx particularly stands out.

Where exactly am I going with all of this? Essentially, I am looking to robustly assert the cause of that much-maligned component of the South African Jewish community, namely the mainstream majority and those who lead and have led it in times gone by.

These are your shul-goers, King David or Herzlia school parents, IUA-UCF contributors, Union of Jewish Women volunteers, youth movement channichim, They are those who can regularly be seen at Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations or Yom Hashoah commemorative

services, and those who even when not being particularly religious, nevertheless seek out a Jewish partner to marry and thereby provide at least a link in the chain.

The leadership would include the sundry office-bearers of the various communal organisations, including those who respectively represent the specific interests of the local Jewish community and its staunch Zionist allegiances, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the SA Zionist Federation.

These are the more committed men and women who have cared enough about furthering the Jewish heritage and the well-being and safety of their fellow-Jews to devote abundant time, money and effort into initiatives promoting these causes.

All these are your normal loyal, middle-of-the-road Yiddishen who have remained in the Jewish fold and are passing the torch on to the next generation. To some degree or another, the strong, active Jewish communal life we enjoy today has been built on the backs of such people, most of them anonymous.

However, the written record is seeing an increasing number of attacks being made on the Jewish mainstream, in the press, academia and cultural realm in

particular. It will not surprise anyone to learn that those leading the charge are dissident, Jewish-born leftists who feel alienated from the greater community and feel the need to communicate their disdain to the wider, gentile societies.

Once, it was primarily over the issue of apartheid that Jewish leftists would contemptuously distance themselves from mainstream Jewry. The failure of the Jewish leadership to mobilise the community against the injustices of the apartheid regime has long been used to condemn South African Jewry as a whole, both during and even long after the transition to multiracialism.

Leftwing Jewish-born dissidents view the rest of Jewry with lofty scorn, yet looking more closely, one soon finds that their own connections with and commitment to the cause of the Jewish-people is minimal to non-existent. Sometimes, indeed, they are actively hostile to Jewish interests.

Today, it is over the issue of Israel that the mainstream Jewish community is coming under increasing attack. Again, Jewish-born leftists anxious to advertise their moral purity have thrust themselves to the fore, publically dissociating

themselves with those “other” Jews in the media and on other platforms.

They have been gleefully seized upon by anti-Israel campaigners to foster the impression that there are the “Good Jews” who stand for justice and the benighted “Bad Jews” who don’t.

I’ve written on this before. What I really want to do here is convey a heartfelt “Yasher Koach” to our Jewish mainstream for so staunchly maintaining their loyalty to Israel despite the ever-mounting pressure that is being brought to bear.

I applaud, for example, that courageous Jewish cinema owner in Cape Town who refused to screen an Arab propaganda documentary, despite being pilloried in the press and picketed. Likewise, I am proud of our Jewish students who have not backed down in the face of escalating hostility and sometimes outright intimidation, but have fought back with courage, tenacity and dignity.


Taken as a whole, South African Jews have not caved in; if anything, their love and support for Israel has intensified. We can take heart from this as we steel ourselves for the even greater battles to come.

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Kamishibai storytelling at its quintessential best



Jemma Kahn with Rokuda Genji in the local newspaper from the Japanese town she was in, birthing her own brand of kamishibai theatre.

ROBYN SASSEN

Jemma Kahn’s name rings with behind-the-scenes familiarity in Johannesburg theatres. Responsible for the production design of *Delirium* and *From the Mouths of Babes*, her career has stretched many creative envelopes, so far.

She switched half way through a fine art degree at Wits University, to study drama, which culminated in a jewel of a work by her and Brian van Niekerk in 2006, about animal rights. “It was not marketable, because it hadn’t a script.”

“Immense disappointment in the industry” set her on the path of many arts graduates; she went to Japan to teach English to foreign students. “I hated it. I was terrified of everything, from the buzz of cicadas to the oppressive manners of society.”

The programme she was on demanded two years; she could do little but get used to it.

“I met ‘Gunch’, a man of 67, at a pancake shop, one day.” After an initial hilarious conflict of language in which he made lewd comments to his friends about her body, working on the biased assumption that she didn’t understand Japanese, Rokuda Genji became her mentor and friend. “Among other things, he taught me kamishibai.”

Literally “paper drama”, kamishibai is a form of storytelling originating in 12th century Japanese Buddhist culture.

Like Purim shpiels in mediaeval Europe, it was premised on moral lessons brought to the largely illiterate community.

Kahn adheres to the genre

impeccably, but her stories digress from traditional kamishibai ones. Starting off as an assistant to Genji, she learnt the skill inside out. In her work, the traditional values are turned on their heads.

The coupe de grâce of “The Epicene Butcher and Other Stories for Consenting Adults”, an anthology of seven stories using kamishibai methodology, is the eponymous one, evoking Peter Greenaway’s “The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover”. It is storytelling at its quintessential best, premised as it is, inescapably on rudimentary devices.

The stage is a small box-like structure standing on a wooden clothes horse, and the stories are told through a sequence of drawings, run through the stage, by hand.

Working with Welsh artist Gwydion Beynon “who has an enormous, wonderful brain and who fell in love with the approach immediately,” and director John Trengrove, whose praises Kahn can’t sufficiently sing, Kahn debuted “Butcher” at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown this year.

It won an Ovation Award, and was invited to a festival in Amsterdam, where it won “Pick of the Fringe”. Part of the Wits 969 Festival, it’s enjoyed seasons at Maboneng.

- The Epicene Butcher and Other Stories for Consenting Adults is at the Alexander Bar on Strand Street, Cape Town on December 8, 9 and 13; the Catalina Theatre in Durban for the Musho! Festival in January, and heads to Prague and Brighton next year, before returning to the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in July.



Sylvia Glasser works with Fana Tshabalala, one of the MIDM dancers.

‘Beauty is what touches your heart’

ROBYN SASSEN

Behind her desk, there’s a copy of Jenny Joseph’s quirky poem “When I am an old woman, I shall wear purple”. Veteran choreographer Sylvia Glasser (72) wears bright turquoise. “It’s come full circle,” she smiles.

The founder and artistic director of Johannesburg’s oldest contemporary dance company, Moving Into Dance Mophatong, formed 34 years ago in Glasser’s Victory Park garage, is referring not only to “Tranceformations”, a ground-breaking work she choreographed from 1986 and which will be performed by the current MIDM dancers this month, but also to a new work on MIDM dancers choreographed by Robyn Orlin.

“I taught Robyn in the 1970s, when she was 16 or 17. Robyn has been so generous with these dancers. She loves them; they love her.”

Orlin, deeply respected in Europe, has choreographed a new work: “Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position...”, featuring costumes by fashion guru Marianne Fassler; it opens in SA fresh from a 10-city European tour, part of the French/South African cultural exchange season.

AnMari Honiball and Lezanne Viviers, interns at Fassler’s studios who made the costumes and travelled with the work to its opening in Paris, commented on the thrill of seeing two giants, Orlin and Fassler collaborating.

Says Viviers: “Both Marianne and Robyn are in love with the

beauty of Africa, of Johannesburg’s urban inner city.”

“Nothing is set up or planned,” concurs Honiball. “Some costumes happen at the end.”



Robyn Orlin.
PHOTO COURTESY www.lieux.toutelaculture.com



Marianne Fassler.
PHOTO COURTESY www.leopardfrock.co.za

The ideas of beauty are premised on ones of recycling; there’s a tutu of fake Luis Vuitton handbags and a fabulous huge frock made of Chinese carrier bags - and another of safety pins and DVDs.

Fassler grins widely: “I have known Robyn forever! I did my first

dance class with her mother. This is the first time we’ve collaborated; it’s a dream come true.”

“Misery, death and starvation are always central in the portrayal of Africa. But those things are everywhere,” Orlin acknowledges. “Beauty is right here. It’s political. It’s also subjective. In Africa, it is hard to put a finger on: it is what touches your heart.”

“There are two streams of tickets for this upcoming season,” says Glasser. “You can book through Computicket or through the company. In the latter case, money goes toward helping next year’s dancers.

“For the first time in six years, we have no funding from the National Arts Council. We are restrategising,” she adds, citing the long list of MIDM-grown dancers like Greg Maqoma, Vincent Mantsoe, Portia Mashigo, Moeketsi Koena and more, who are today globally celebrated.

- The MIDM season, November 17 - December 2 at the Dance Factory, Newtown, celebrates 21 years of MIDM’s fulltime vocational training.
- Orlin’s “Beauty...” is on November 21 - 24; Glasser’s “Tranceformations” is on November 29, 30 and December 1: see www.midance.co.za
- Dance patrons interested in supporting the MIDM bursary fundraising drive, can contact Nadia or Busi on (011) 838-2816 to book tickets.

Arts in Brief

RABINOWITZ ‘STANDS AND DELIVERS’ AT GOLD REEF’S LYRIC

Inimitable Jewish, isiXhosa-speaking Constantia-born funny man Nik Rabinowitz, a weekly institution on Radio 702 in his Week that Wasn’t, performs his acclaimed and hilarious show *Stand and Deliver* twice at the Lyric Theatre, at Gold Reef City, on November 10 at 18:00 and at 21:00. On sale in the foyer will be a DVD of *Stand and Deliver*, as well as signed copies of the recently published *South Africa: A Long Walk to a Free Ride*, which Rabinowitz wrote in collaboration with Gill Breslin. Rabinowitz’s opening act, *Breakthrough Comic* for 2012 is Tats Nkonzo. Advance booking recommended. PG13.

DAN PATLANSKY MAKES HIS FENDER WEEPS WITH JOY

Blues guitarist extraordinaire Dan Patlansky, considered by Rolling Stones magazine to be one of the greatest SA gigs, plays tunes from his album “20 Stones” at Tanz Café in Fourways on November 10. “Humility suits him well,” a press statement comments on his Judeo-Spanish heritage and his appeal on stage and in person. “It’s as much an extension of his being as his Fender Stratocaster guitar, also known as ‘The Red’.

There are no airs and graces here – just sincerity and an incredible musical talent.” Visit www.tanzcafe.co.za for further information and directions to the venue or contact grant@tanz.cafe.co.za for bookings.

The Jewish World

in seven seconds

The Jewish Week, New York, US:
www.thejewishweek.com
“**Rabbis cause furore with their explanations for Sandy**”
In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, New Yorkers have been exposed to a cacophony of religious “explanations”, from Rabbi Noson Leiter, claiming that the storm was prompted by single-sex marriages to Rabbi Yehuda Levin punting “a traditional Torah approach to the hurricane and the election in which we learn that G-d multitasks.”

Jewish Journal, Los Angeles, US:
www.jewishjournal.com
“**Four more years (of bickering)**”
Saying the 2012 elections were not as important as the candidates said they were is easy. Neither of the two candidates attracted many crossovers. Obama was supported by Democratic voters and Romney by Republicans. They masqueraded debate over issues of great significance when, in fact, they were battling over a technicality.

European Jewish Press, western Europe:
www.ejpress.org
“**Francois Hollande vows security for Jews in homage with Benjamin Netanyahu**”
Pres Francois Hollande vowed to wipe out anti-Semitism and ensure the security of Jews as he and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu paid homage to three children and a rabbi killed by an Islamist gunman in a school in Toulouse, southwestern France, earlier this year. “My country will not be weak in fighting terrorism,” he said.

Yediot Achronot, Israel:
www.ynetnews.com
“**Syrian opposition congratulates Obama**”
The Syrian National Council expressed hope that Syria will be a top priority for President Barack Obama as he begins his second term. Radwane Ziadeh, head of international relations of SNC said: “We congratulate Obama and hope Syria will be made top priority of the US foreign policy, in order to bring the Syrian crisis to an end.”

The Australian Jewish News, Sydney, Australia:
www.jewishnews.net.au
“**Concern continues over Jewish care**”
Relatives of residents in Melbourne’s Jewish Care have made shocking allegations concerning the organisation’s aged-care facilities, concerning food standards, hygiene, staff shortages and the general level of care provided by the organisation.

The New Jersey Jewish News, New Jersey, US:
www.njjewishnews.com
“**Former Mideast negotiator sees possibilities for peace**”
Veteran diplomat and Middle East negotiator Dennis Ross predicted an “endgame proposal” by the United States would allow the Iranians to have civil nuclear power but not the ability to make nuclear weapons.

Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem:
www.jpost.com
“**Netanyahu: Israel/US alliance stronger than ever**”
Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu congratulated US President Barack Obama on Wednesday for winning a second term and said the strategic alliance between their two countries was “stronger than ever”.

World News in Brief

REPORT: NETANYAHU, BARAK ORDERED PREPARATION FOR IRAN STRIKE IN 2010

JERUSALEM - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Ehud Barak ordered the Israeli military in 2010 to prepare for an attack on Iran’s nuclear sites, according to an Israeli television station.
Netanyahu gave the order during a meeting with what is known as the Cabinet of Seven, or the Security Cabinet, Israeli journalist Ilana Dayan reported. Israel’s Channel 2 noted the command during a promotion last Sunday night for the season premiere of Dayan’s one-hour weekly documentary programme, “Fact”.
The programme, which aired on Monday night, looked at Israel’s decision-making process regarding an attack on Iran’s nuclear programme.
Gabi Ashkenazi and Meir Dagan, the Israel Defence Forces’ chief of staff and Mossad head, respectively, at the time, told Dayan that the order to go to a level “P Plus” - code for preparing for a military strike - was an attempt to circumvent acquiring the approval of the full Cabinet.
Dagan reportedly said “the prime minister and defence minister were trying to ‘hijack a war’.”
Ashkenazi reportedly responded that the Israeli military lacked the operational capability to carry out such a strike.
Since their retirements, Dagan and Ashkenazi both have publicly stated their opposition to an Israeli strike on Iran. (JTA)

SANDY’S AFTERMATH: UJA-FEDERATION OF NY RELEASES \$10 MILLION IN AID

NEW YORK - UJA-Federation of New York, has released \$10 million in Hurricane Sandy emergency relief aid to its network agencies and synagogues.
“The emotional and economic impact, especially on the isolated elderly and the poor, is acute and will remain so for a long time,” the agency said in a statement on Monday. The week before Sandy struck the greater New York area, the federation raised a record \$45 million at its annual campaign kickoff event. (JTA)

WIESEL SAYS HE AND OBAMA ARE TEAMING FOR BOOK

JERUSALEM - Elie Wiesel and President Barack Obama are writing a book together, the Holocaust survivor and author told an Israeli newspaper.
The book, which the two men will resume writing after this week’s presidential election, is “a book of two friends,” Wiesel, a Nobel laureate, told Haaretz.
The paper reported that Wiesel and Obama became friends in 2009 when Wiesel joined Obama on a visit to the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp, where Wiesel was interned at the end of the Second World War, following a death march from Auschwitz. (JTA)

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‘FROM THE MOUTH OF BABES’ CREATES RESONANCE, NOT DISTANCE

The letter from Dion Fransman in Jewish Report of October 26, about the Market Theatre production “From the Mouths of Babes”, was telling on many levels.

It seems that the myopia of the more fearful among us forget that there is a rich tapestry of Jewish life beyond the shtetl. Jews are very often culturally attuned, sophisticated aficionados of art and theatre, and appreciators of good intellectual stimulation.

We love music too - and songs that speaks of the wealth of diversity within our own tradition, as so beautifully expressed in “From the Mouths of Babes”, is obviously going to draw the crowds as it has been. In fact, according to the Market Theatre, there’s been a great turnout every night!

Why? Because, even if it’s not for “littlies” (if you read the information about the show, it says 14 and up), it has attracted audiences from three generations and many cultures.

My 82-year-old uncle loved it, and I happened to be there when a high school group of 17-year-olds were in the audience, holding their sides with laughter.

In terms of it negatively impacting the Jewish community – lehefesh – the opposite! My friend’s mother recounted a conversation she had with a group of 20- and 30-something black women who had been to the same performance as she, who commented that it did several things for them, namely it brought them towards a closer understanding and appreciation of Jewish people (hello?) and it gave them permission to not be so embarrassed by their own cultural quirks - because they were so similar. In short, it created resonance, not distance.

To drive this point home, I think one great recent example that had a far broader reach than “From the Mouths of Babes”, is the film “Material” in which the viewer gets an inside track of life in the Muslim world in Fordsburg, and the struggles of a young comedian who has to keep his late night performances on the comedy circuit secret from his family, specifically his bigoted and fanatical father. But the sense you get from the film is the range of humanness that ebbs and flows throughout the Muslim community.

This kind of realness draws people of different shades and worldviews closer to one another. That’s a good thing!

The stories in “From the Mouths of Babes” are honest tales of three bright, talented and lovely young women. It was clearly not intended to “represent” the community, and anyone with a basic understanding of the world will grasp that. There is no need to wish for a shutdown of artistic expression of this level, just because it’s Jewish. In fact, self-reflective humour has probably done more for peace in the world and understanding between peoples, than high walls and laager mentalities.

Just go see the show. You’ll love it!

Guy Lieberman
Johannesburg

This issue has now run its course and we are closing this correspondence – Editor.

TIME GOVERNMENT IS TACKLED HEAD ON, ON ITS ANTI-SEMITIC STANCE

Former Deputy President Baleka Mbete says that Israel is far worse than apartheid South Africa and senior members of the ANC this week endorsed a boycott of Israel, seemingly contradicting Pretoria’s official stance of maintaining trade ties with Israel.

During an international conference hosted by the ANC last week, delegates endorsed the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions and (BDS) movement.

According to a media release by the South African BDS chapter, there was “widespread support from international delegates for the adoption and support of the Palestinian BDS call”.

Israel cannot be compared to South Africa during the apartheid era, despite whatever the ANC or the BDS says. The government of South Africa has stated time and again that it is against boycotts. Yes, if it affects Libya, Iran and all the despots and dictators, we eagerly cuddle up to them. But if Israel is involved, then boycotts are in order.

Both Minister Rob Davies and Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim, have called for boycotts of Israeli goods.

It is about time that the SAJBD and the SAZF take their heads out of the sand and tackle the ANC (and the SA government) head on, on their stance, which smacks clearly of anti-Semitism.

Myron Robinson
East London

OUR COUNTRY IS IN NEED OF AN URGENT TRANSPLANT

I would like to address an open letter to Deputy President Kgalema Mothlanthe:

I successfully predicted you would be the next president after President Thabo Mbeki, but never predicted that this would be short-lived by the introduction of Jacob Zuma as president.

To say the country is at a serious crossroads at this point, would be a serious understatement. The resilient people that make up this country, are in a serious state of “will-we”.

Will we ever fight corruption earnestly; will we ever respect and uphold the constitution that was adopted as our foundation; will we ever have direction and vision; will we ever redress the discrepancy between our haves and have-nots; will our nation ever have another Madiba, driven to reconcile a nation effectively and not divisively and of course, will we ever deliver to all the citizens of our country?

What South-Africa needs is a decisive leader that can take up the challenge and lead the people to uncover our land of milk and honey. We have the right ingredients – climate, beauty, unique people and a history of oppression. Now we need our Moses to guide us into the future.

I think any aspirant president would be able to sleep through his or her term of office and still be more productive than the current one.

It is clear that South Africa in its entire history has never been so rudderless. Marikana, Nkandlagate and text book scandals are warning blemishes of more and more of the same to come. It is a severe case of whether the head is controlling the body, or the body controlling the head.

A lack of empathy and understanding, has led to critical punctures in education, employment, productivity and delivery. Nepotism and corruption has spread like a cancer, but now it seems to be almost expected and has become a rule rather than an exception. If I were a doctor, I would say we’re on the critical list and in need of an urgent transplant.

This transplant needs to inject a new leader, one with a vision, not a fence-sitter, a person that has educated experience, a leader that can separate party from state and learn to run a country for all and not just for some.

This urgent plea is not to listen to those giving you bad advice not to stand; they are protecting their own interests and worried about a new broom sweeping clean.

Show us that you can move from fence-sitter to leader and give this country the hope and delivery it deserves.

Put your name in the race before it is too late and let’s resuscitate this patient.

Darren Bergman
Councillor,
City of Johannesburg

LITHUANIA NOTHING BUT A HUGE JEWISH GRAVEYARD

I refer to letter from Mike Esra (SAJR, November 2) about the “ opportunity “ to get Lithuanian citizenship and passports. What a disgrace! I do not believe that I can be alone with my reaction.

My late stepfather, Yehudo Wides, a man of fine principle and integrity, would have blown his top at this kind of thing.

His whole family, who lived in a town in Lithuania for generations, were brutally and horrendously wiped out by their own Lithuanian neighbours and compatriots, a hurt that I had to live with for years.

When it became fashionable for visits back to Lithuania, I asked him if such a trip would interest him. He responded angrily that Lithuania was just a big Jewish graveyard of our murdered people and he had no desire to go there.

With the tragic Jewish background of the place, how could one still be tempted by their passport (even citizenship nogal), whatever the benefits to be gained!

Cyril Wides
Johannesburg

WE MUST STOP TOLERATING JEWS WHO TURN ON OTHER JEWS

Isn’t it interesting - and telling - that the only country on earth whose right to exist is questioned, is the Jewish State?

If there’s anything that enrages me it is someone engaging in hate speech against Israel and then concluding their rant with, “and by the way, I’m Jewish”.

Liberal and left-wing Jews in the 21st century are racist against Israelis. They think their friends at work or on campus will like them again if they renounce the State of Israel.

What gives Jews in Britain, the US, South Africa, Canada and Australia the right to demonise Israel and the Israeli people? They don’t live with the dangers faced by the people of Israel; they are not threatened with annihilation like the Jews of Israel are.

What makes these leftist Diaspora Jews think their lives are so much more important than that of Jews in Israel?

I think it is high time that we dealt with and stopped tolerating, Jews who turn on their own people, such as left-wing anti-Zionist, anti-Israel Jews. What these leftist anti-Zionists are practicing, is a form of racism against Israeli Jews.

The fact that they are born Jewish does not excuse this violent and revolting racism. These Jew-hating Jews do incalculable damage to the struggle of Israel to survive and they encourage Arab terror.

I shall always shun those who show any acceptance of the perpetrators of atrocities and will continue to condemn those whose twisted ideas suggest any equivocation of Israel’s self-defence with brutal Arab terror.

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg

EUREKA! IS NAME OF BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

The article which appeared in last week’s issue on page 9 about the business plan competition hosted between ORT SA and Chabad erroneously omitted to mention the branding of the project. Named Eureka!, the competition is a joint initiative of Project Natan (a branch of Chabad) and ORT JET (the mentorship division of ORT SA, which was established six years ago). The closing date for Eureka! is November 26. Visit www.ortjet.org.za for further details.

World News in Brief

TORAH SCROLLS IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE SANDY



At Mazel Academy in Brooklyn, Torah scrolls were unrolled to dry after being damaged by the floodwaters from Hurricane Sandy, on October 31. Photo: Ben Harris

LOOKING FOR



Recognise the person in the old photograph?

Do any of our readers recognise the unnamed person in the photograph?

Birger Bäckman (birger.backman@gmail.com) writes: “I am helping to try and trace a person (see attached photograph) to re-establish contact with a friend in Sweden.

“The lady met the (unnamed) person in the picture in London circa 1963-64, then 18 years old. He was studying in London to become an actor and used the artist name Tony Cooper(?);everybody called him Tony. His real Jewish family name she has forgotten.

“She would like to re-establish a friendly contact or know what has happened to him. The picture is from around that time, but taken obviously in Durban or Pietermaritzburg.

“Unfortunately the contact was then lost, but the picture has now showed up and has awoken memories.”

Does anyone recognise the person in the photograph taken some 50 years back?

“The suggestion to write to you was given to me by the Jewish Museum in Cape Town, which I visited a few months ago.”

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

The Board actively supports the community in many forums

On Monday, the Board hosted a large group of American Jewish leaders and philanthropists who were visiting the country as part of a Jewish History and Heritage tour. Usually, these groups visit Europe, but on this occasion chose to come to this more remote part of the Jewish world.

Participants were intelligent and well-informed about world Jewish issues, and asked many probing questions about how our community was run. The scholar-in-residence accompanying the group was a distinguished product of our Jewish community, Professor Gideon Shimoni.

While he made aliyah many years ago, Professor Shimoni has maintained warm links with South African Jewry and is the author of two acclaimed, scholarly books on its history. He was able to facilitate and direct the interesting discussion that ensued.

We are always happy to host overseas Jewish visitors and showcased what our community is all about. It is a point of pride to us that while we can obviously learn much from the large, influential Jewish centres abroad, they can learn just as much, if not more, from us, notwithstanding our relatively small numbers.

South African Jewry is renowned for its unity, the range and quality of its communal institutions, its high levels of Jewish identity and correspondingly low assimilation rates and the disproportionate influence its members have played on the word Jewish stage.

One of the things we emphasised during the discussion was how we maintain a balance between addressing the internal affairs of the Jewish community and taking part, as Jews, in the affairs of the wider society. In terms of the latter the SAJBD, as the representative voice and



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

public face of SA Jewry, has a key role to play. Over the past couple of weeks, we have in fact represented the community in a number of high-profile public forums.

Through the Board, Rabbi Gideon Fox and Chevrah Kadisha social worker Zoe Cohen, represented the Jewish community at a “Dialogue on Corporal Punishment in the Home”, hosted by the Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Commission. The meeting was chaired by Marlene Bethlehem, a past president of the SAJBD and long-serving member of the CRL Commission.

That same week, Steve Gruzd participated in a breakfast briefing on economic and labour-related issues by leading journalist Justice Malala and Investec Chief Economist Annabel Bishop.

In Durban, the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry hosted a very successful working reception for Mayor James Nxumalo. In Cape Town, where the Board has a fine track record in interfaith outreach, Deputy Director Gwynne Robins participated in a meeting hosted by the Claremont Main Road Mosque for visiting US religious leaders from the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Programme to introduce them to the interreligious programmes available in Cape Town.

What these and the many other similar instances of the Board’s involving itself in public events show is that representing our Jewish community is not only about fighting anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activism.

There is also a positive, constructive side to what we do, and we ensure that this aspect of our work is not neglected, even when, as is the case at present, we must devote much of our energies towards confronting attacks on our Jewish and Zionist identity.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD.



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Rabbi Dovid Hazdan

74 – 4th Street
HOUGHTON ESTATE, 2198


The Great Park Synagogue, formally the Wolmarans Street Shul, will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in June 2013.

Over the past 100 years the shul has played a pivotal role in the history of the Jewish community and indeed, the history of Johannesburg as a whole. To celebrate this mementos occasion, a special prestigious limited edition coffee table book is being produced. Only 1500 copies will be published, then individually signed and numbered. Thereafter all relevant material utilised in the publishing process will be destroyed in order to maintain the authenticity and value of the individual copies. The ultimate aim is for the finished product to be a once- in- a- lifetime collector’s item of superior quality that is beyond the standard of most other material published in the community. The criteria are compelling readability and reader interest plus class and prestige.

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World News in Brief

RUSSIAN LAWMAKER WANTS TO STRIP HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS OF PRIVILEGES

MOSCOW - A Russian lawmaker from President Vladimir Putin's ruling United Russia party, reportedly opposed making public transportation free for Holocaust survivors. Andrei Yershov of the Smolensk City Council in western Russia, acknowledged making the comments during a free-ranging council debate on October 16, the French news agency AFP reported.

A recording of the meeting, shows Yershov wanting to know "why is it that we owe anything" to the prisoners. Russian law stipulates that any Russian held in a concentration camp up to the age of 18, is entitled to a range of benefits, including free transport. Those affected are chiefly the victims of the Nazi persecution of Jews in the Second World War. (JTA)

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Israel embraces IDF orphans in barmitzvah celebration

DANIEL TUKSAR
JERUSALEM

On Monday, October 29, 35 boys and girls of bar- and batmitzvah age, visited Jerusalem, sang and danced at the Kotel and cried together with their family members.

Yet, these were no ordinary children celebrating their special day, they are children who have lost a parent who died while protecting Israel.

The day was sponsored by various donors from around the world.

IDF Widows & Orphans Organisation was behind this memorable day. Throughout their lives these orphans are assisted in many ways, provided with school equipment and university scholarships.

For their bar- and batmitzvahs, the children visit Canada and the US, hosted by families in different Jewish communities and spending 10 days in a camp. Throughout the year, hundreds of orphans aged 13 - 18 attend camps around Israel, celebrating Chanukah, Pesach and Succot, hiking, biking and learning about Israel, but also spending time together while able to talk about

their tragedies to other children who understand them all too well.

This year the children toured the Old City and gathered next to the Kotel. The IDF Chief Rabbi, Rafi Peretz, told them that "their parents, the heroes, fell for all of us, fighting for the unity of the Jewish people - the most crucial value".

In the evening, a reception was held at the Jerusalem Theatre, where the celebration was joined by inter alia President Shimon Peres and IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Benny Gantz.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent a personal video to the children, congratulating them and wishing that each child would realise his or her dreams and contribute to the nation.

Seven of the boys and girls spoke of their fathers and the tragic circumstances in which they fell, lighting candles in their memory on a menorah.

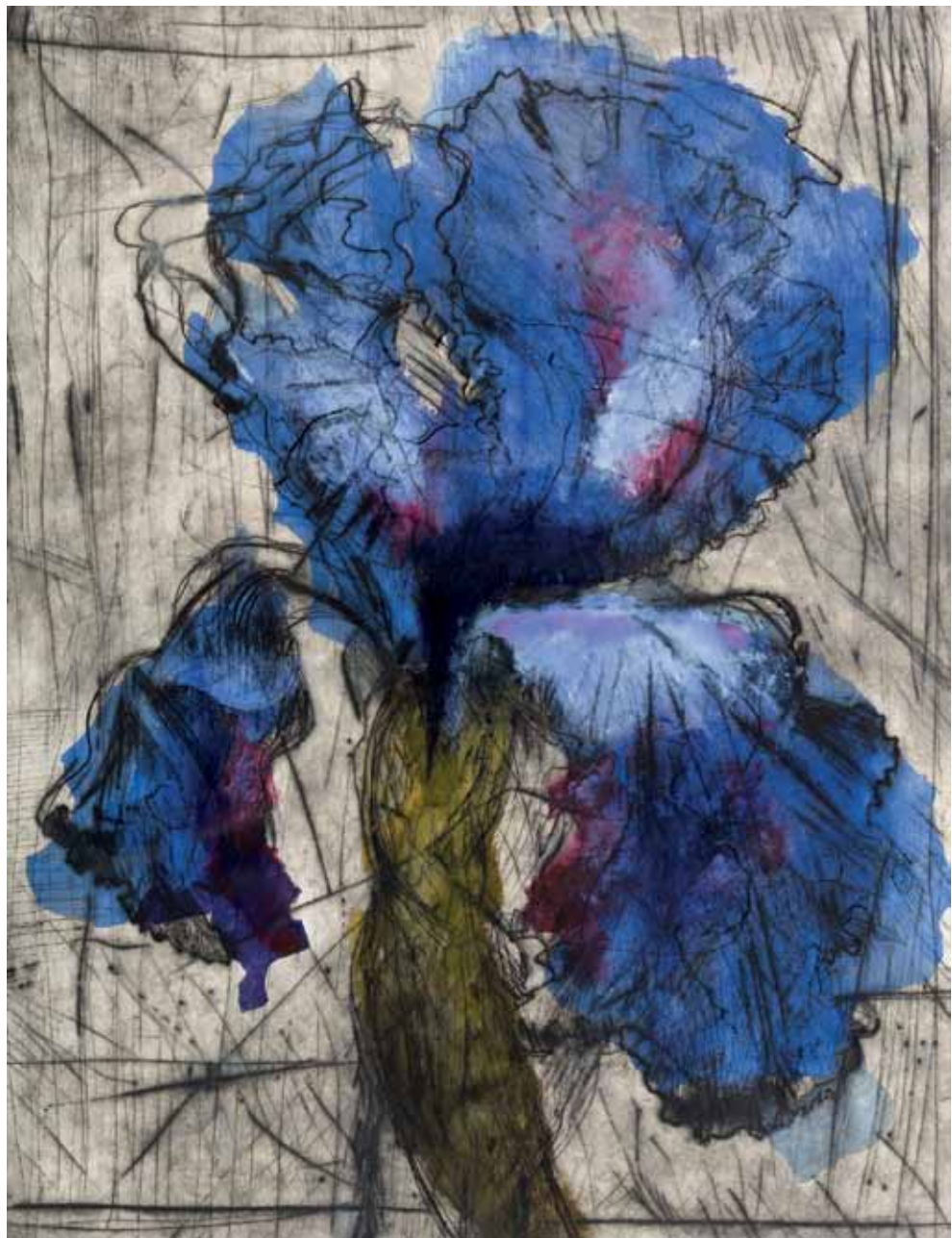
- Daniel Tuksar is the director of Resource Development at IDF Widows & Orphans Organisation.



IDF Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Benny Gantz with Oz Buanish, son of Yitzhak Buanish, z”l, who fell in Hebron in 2002.



President Shimon Peres with Itamar Angel, son of Chen Angel, z”l, who fell in the Gaza Strip in 2003.



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KZN’s Jewish leaders meet with Durban mayor

ALANA BARANOV

KwaZulu-Natal leaders of the Jewish community, under the auspices of the Council of KwaZulu-Natal Jewry (CKNJ), recently met with Durban Mayor James Nxumalo and Councillor Fawzia Peer, at a luncheon at the Durban Jewish Centre.

The luncheon on October 29, hosted by the CKNJ and at their invitation, was held for the mayor and his colleagues to have the chance to meet one-on-one, and discuss various issues of mutual interest, with the leadership of the KwaZulu-Natal Jewish community.

Nxumalo brought a message from his office that emphasised the importance of the Jewish community as a stakeholder in the city of Durban and thanked them for all their charity and upliftment efforts in the region, most notably the CKNJ’s computer project in which each month more than 60 computers are refurbished and distributed around Durban to underprivileged schools and institutions.

The mayor also noted the good work of the Children’s HIV Association (Chiva). Started by the Moshal family and supported by the CKNJ, Chiva brings out teams of medical experts from overseas to train local health workers and care

for children affected by HIV in the South Africa.

CKNJ President Linda Nathan spoke about the values intrinsic to the Jewish community. “Despite being a small community, we are strong and flourishing, so proud of our history and extremely optimistic about our future.”

She went on to quote the famous Jewish saying: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

She added: “Righteousness, kindness and charity are primary and we must remain sensitive to the suffering of others and those less fortunate than ourselves.

“We are required to look at other human beings, to understand what they are lacking, and endeavour to help them.”

Nathan emphasised the CKNJ’s history of service and its mandate to ensure that the community was active, with citizens building a just and prosperous society.

Part of the CKNJ’s mandate is to build open channels of communication with government and civil society; the warm luncheon gathering is part of a growing relationship between the mayor and the Jewish community, the CKNJ said in a media release.



Honorary CKNJ Life President John Moshal engages with Durban Mayor James Nxumalo, at the luncheon with the leadership of the Durban Jewish community.

Community Briefs

FORMER ESTATE AGENT WENDY MACHANIK FINED R1,5 MILLION

Former estate agent Wendy Machanik was fined R1,5 million after pleading guilty to 90 counts of theft involving R27million. The plea agreement was made an order of Johannesburg’s Specialised Commercial Crimes Court this week. Machanik was ordered to pay R300 000 upfront; the remainder in monthly instalments of R25 000. The court withdrew charges against Machanik’s co-accused Bruce Bernstein, formerly chief financial officer of WMPH. They were arrested last year on charges of conspiracy to commit fraud, failure to keep accounting records and to reflect transfers between WMPH’s trust and business accounts. Machanik’s sentence will be heard next month; magistrate Phillip Venter wasn’t satisfied with the sentence conditions.

PROF DAVID GLASSER IS HONOURED BY WITS UNIVERSITY FOR HIS WORK

Earlier this year, Professor David Glasser, husband of dance veteran Sylvia Glasser, professor of chemical engineering and director and co-founder of the Centre of Material and Process Synthesis at Wits, received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the NSTF-BHP Billiton Awards hosted by Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor. The award recognises excellence in science, engineering, technology and innovation. A statement says: “It is the highest accolade bestowed upon an individual in this field over a lifetime. Glasser is internationally recognised for important research in design and reactor theory and synthesis processes that produce energy from waste.”



CKNJ President Linda Nathan; Councillor Fawzia Peer; Mayor James Nxumalo; SAJBD Chairman Mary Kluk; and KNZC Chairman Greg Bass, at the luncheon held at the Durban Jewish Centre.

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Rabbis, guests and community members at the launch of the new mikvah in the grounds of the Great Park Synagogue in Johannesburg last weekend.
Photos by Ilan Ossendryver

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‘Tenacity’ is the watchword behind building the Great Park mikvah

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The back story of the launch of the mikvah at the Great Park Shul in Oaklands this week, is a curious, almost miraculous one. Nine years since the shul’s relocation from Currie Street in Oaklands, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan was approached by a core of young women from the community, with a request to build a mikvah. Rabbi Hazdan felt it was an impossible dream, but worth tackling.

It was eventually agreed the first mikvah meeting would take place on April 5, 2009. It coincided with Torah Academy’s Cyalive initiative and Rabbi Hazdan was not able to attend, as he was in Durban with the cyclists at the time.

That morning, he received a call from his son, who had spent the night organising archival correspondence between the late Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson and Rabbi Hazdan’s father, Reb Yisroel Hazdan.

In these letters, the proposed mikvah in the small South African town of Bethlehem in the Free State, where the older Rabbi Hazdan was appointed, was discussed. The Rebbe had made a personal contribution of \$18 towards

this project.

It transpired that the Bethlehem community of the time, in spite of advice to the contrary from SA’s Chief Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz and the then Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Hertzog, reversed Rabbi Hazdan’s father’s idea of building a mikvah, condemning it as a “useless and antiquated institution probably patronised by one or two isolated fanatics”, according to letters in the Jewish press.

Cognisant of this situation, the Rebbe had written: “the \$18 that I sent as participation in building a mikvah, are to remain in your hands, since I hope that in time a mikvah will be organised in Bethlehem, or at least somewhere else. Then the aforementioned sum will be included in the expenses.”

This correspondence was dated 12 Nissan 5714, corresponding to Pesach, 1954: the eve of the same day of the planned Great Park mikvah meeting in Oaklands.



Also, tragically at the time of the 2009 mikvah planning meeting, the Jewish world was reeling from the attack on Chabad in Mumbai, killing Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg. It was decided the mikvah would be named for them.

Co-ordinated by Tyrone Zinman, the mikvah has been built to halachic requirements, but also meeting the standards of the most luxurious of spas. According to a media statement, it has an extra-large foyer which will be used to teach groups of women and senior high school girls about the significance of family purity.

Brand-new mikvah now in use

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of the Great Park Synagogue in Oaklands, Johannesburg, recently opened the area’s first mikvah, located in the grounds of the shul. Rabbi Hazdan is proud of this accomplishment, which has come to fruition after three years of development; he attributes the success of the project to the “dynamic and inspired women of our community.”

The mikvah will now make Shabboses and Yomtovim more accessible to women and has already sparked interest in women to learn about and partake in this sacred tradition. The mikvah will also act as a learning centre to young brides and teenage girls. - SHIRA DRUION



The Yeshiva College Foundation wishes Saul Kaplan, Deputy Headboy of Yeshiva College 2000, a hearty mazal tov on being crowned “Top Trader” on CNBC Africa TopTrader.



Saul epitomises the Yeshiva College ethos with a love of Torah, care for the community and a spirit of excellence in everything he does.

Mazal Tov Saul!

Ohr Somayach bids a sad farewell to Larry and Jenny Shain



Rabbi Shmuel Moffson; Solly Krok; Rabbi Larry Shain; Rabbi Yechezkel Auerbach; and Sean Melnick.

SHIRA DRUION

Ohr Somayach SA is renowned worldwide for connecting Jews from all walks of life to their heritage. The organisation which currently boasts five shuls in Johannesburg and one in Cape Town, was pioneered by Rabbis Larry Shain and Shmuel Moffson, who for 25 years selflessly grew the organisation into a spiritual edifice.

Tuesday night, the Sandton Sun Maroela Room was transformed into a dinner of candlelit nostalgia, as hundreds gathered to bid farewell to Rabbi Larry and Jenny Shain, who will be making aliyah in January.

“The last 25 years have been better than I could ever have expected, but it is hard to say goodbye to it all. We have been privileged to have been a part of G-d’s grand plan, and it has been a time of enormous satisfaction and fulfilment.”

Shain has become an institution in the SA Jewish community with his extraordinary leadership ability. This ability is not only reflected in his dynamic manner, but also in his capacity to steer the ship even when the journey has been challenging at times. Said Shain:

“Our philosophy has always been that the Torah sells itself. If you present it to Jews at their level from a credible source and they can relate to the individual presenting it and it is presented without expectation and without pressure and with love, tolerance, compassion and passion, there is a good chance it will be accepted and embraced.”

The proceedings kicked off with cocktails and a Jerusalem themed art auction created by several Jewish artists such as Naama Nothman, Lana Bengis Rubinstein, Loren Hodes and others. Sean Melnick, deputy chairman of Peregrine Holdings, in welcoming the audience, said: “I was honoured to accept the position of MC for tonight’s function so that I could pay tribute to the rabbonim who have been so influential in my life.

“If it were not for Ohr Somayach, I am not sure where I would be today and I am eternally grateful to Rabbis Shain and Moffson for all that they have invested in me and in hundreds of others who have come through their doors. They have really changed the landscape of the South African Jewish community and I am very proud to have been a part of that over the last 15 years.”

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Today, Friday (November 9)

- UZLC hosts Amanda Porter as its guest speaker. Her topic is: “9 Lessons I learnt Climbing Kili”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (November 11)

- RCHCC, by popular demand, is rescreening the documentary, Woody Allen. Time: 18:30. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378.
- RCHCC is hosting an exhibition of 3-dimensional works by self-taught artist Lazarus Ramontseng. Exhibition closes on December 8. Time: 17:00. Hours: Monday - Thursday 09:00 – 16:00; Friday - 09:00 - 12:00; Sunday - 18:30 - 21:30. Contact: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378; after hours (011) 728-8378.

- JJMC in association with Maccabi SA, presents “Israel in Song” at the Linder Auditorium Time: 19:45. Guest artist: Cantor Avron Alter. Bookings: Evelyn Green (011) 728-5570; 082-704-2322 and Computicket outlets.

- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets in the Jeffrey Auditorium at St Johns College, Lower Houghton. A selection of audio and video material is lined up, featuring the great Big Bands of yesteryear, focusing on the life of Frank Sinatra. Starting time 14:15 sharp. Dave at (011) 885-3525 or Barney, (011) 440-1996.

- Second Innings hosts Gertie Awerbuch who will deliver “A Tribute to Solly and Abe Krok” and a screening of Gertie’s “Mock Wedding”. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Monday (November 12)

- UJW is hosting Elliot Wolf, director King David Schools Foundation, on “The Role of the Foundation in the Community After 45 Years”. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053, fax 086 273-3044. Donation: R20.

Tuesday (November 13)

- WoW hosts educationist Gavin Keller on “Secrets of the Teen-age Brain for Boys and their Parents, Age 11 and Over”. Venue: Sydenham Shul Community Centre, Rouxville. Time: 19:30. Cost R50. Information: Mandy, 083-380-5268, or wom-enoftheworld.org.za

- Second Innings Men’s Group hosts Marlene Sher, physiotherapist, who will speak on “Physical Fitness for Seniors”. Venue: Our Parents Home.

Time 14:00 for 14:30. Tea is served at 15:30. Contact: Grecia (011) 532-9718.

- UJW CT’s Na’Arot Group hosts a talk by Achmat Hassiem, a competitor in the recent Paralympics. Tickets: R150. Enquiries: V Arelisky 082-882-3615.
- UJW hosts Estelle Sher, presenting “A Morning of French Music”. Time: 09:30 - 11:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053. Donation: R30.

- WIZO Forum hosts a discussion on “Ageing: It’s Mind over Matter! If You Don’t Mind... It Doesn’t Matter!” Speakers: Dr Moshe Fayman, plastic surgeon, on external ageing; Dr Stanley Lipshitz, specialist physician on internal ageing; and Julienne Sackstein, psychological ageing and the power of the mind. Time: 09:30. Venue: Beyachad. Cost: R40. Contact: Sandy, (011) 645-2548.

Wednesday (November 14)

- UJW CT adult education division hosts Ben Levitas who will talk on “Israel’s Second Battlefield”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20. (021) 434-9555.

- WoW presents educationist Gavin Keller on “Amazing New Information on Understanding Your Brain from Neuroscience Conference in NY”. Venue: Sydenham Shul Community Centre. Time: 19:30. Cost R100. Call Mandy, 083-380-5268.

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

- Great Park Shul invites you to “Two Homes but One World” - a parenting workshop with Dr Ronel Duchen for separated and divorced parents. Explore techniques in supporting children in dealing with the fragmentation that can result from separation or divorce. Starts 19:30. Cost: R30 pp. Bookings essential. Contact: Goldie, 072-832-2001; goldiesimpson@gmail.com

Thursday (November 15)

- JHGC in association with Goethe-Institut, screens “Journey to Justice”, directed by Steve Palackdharry, to commemorate Kristallnacht. Venue: Goethe-Institut. Time: 18:00 for 18:30. Booking essential. Tel: (011) 640-3100.

Friday (November 16)

- UZLC has as its speaker Reeva Forman who will talk on “Israel in the Eyes of South Africa - its Government and People”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421.

Fair play remains a pillar of any sporting contest



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

I was quite amused the other day when listening to a radio programme in which they were discussing the fall from grace of cyclist Lance Armstrong, at the number of people still protested his innocence.

Some callers were arguing that he had not been found guilty in a court of law, while most of them claimed he was the victim of a conspiracy.

“I met Lance when he was in South Africa and he was a great guy,” said one caller. “Look at all the work he has done for cancer,” said another.

He may very well be a nice guy and the setting up of his foundation probably has done a lot for cancer, but it doesn’t mean he isn’t a drug cheat.

It would have been one mighty conspiracy to set up all the evidence against him. Adding fuel to the incident is that South African cyclist David George, a former teammate of Armstrong’s, on Tuesday admitted that he had used the drug, EPO.

“I returned an out-of-competition positive test for Erythropoietin (EPO). I will not be asking for a B sample to be tested as I know the result will ultimately be the same. This decision will be communicated to Cycling South Africa (CSA) and Drug Free Sport shortly and according to protocol,” George said in a statement.

The comments by defenders of Armstrong made me ponder two questions: Why should we expect top sportsmen to be paragons of virtue and secondly, when they are exposed, why do we continue to defend them?

Professional cycling has been a cesspool of drug abuse for many years and instead of applauding the International Cycling Federation for trying to clean up the sport, some people accuse them of conspiracies. There is no ulterior motive for the federation to expose people like Armstrong. It only brings the sport into disrepute.

They did it because it was vital that they regained both control of the sport and the moral high ground from the cheats.

This incident took me back to April 2000 when I was in Minsk, Belarus, covering a Davis Cup tie. The only connection the journalists had with South Africa was my hotmail

e-mail address which first had to get past two murky operatives who we nicknamed Olga and Boris. They were clearly expurgating anything sensitive that we sent out.

On that Friday Olga passed on to me a communication from my Sapa office in Johannesburg that Indian police were investigating cricket captain Hansie Cronje for match fixing. Among the journalists with us in Minsk were Mark Smit, cricket writer for Business Day, and Beeld’s cricket scribe, Christo Buchner.

I had also covered my fair share of cricket events and had many dealings with Hansie. His father EW Cronje, had been president of Free State tennis and Hansie himself had been a pretty decent tennis player. He could easily have opted to play tennis instead of cricket.

In 1998, as their Test against England at Lord’s had been completed, Hansie and Shaun Pollock came to the opening day of Wimbledon and we had chatted quite a lot while watching Amanda Coetzer, a good friend of the Cronjes, win her first round match. Hansie had strong views on issues and was always a pleasure to talk to. He had a good sense of humour and was extremely likeable.

So, when the match-fixing story arrived all three of us pooh-poohed it as just a brush being used by the Indians to tarnish Hansie. That night at the hotel I was able to watch BBC World and saw the interview with the policeman who was carrying out the investigation.

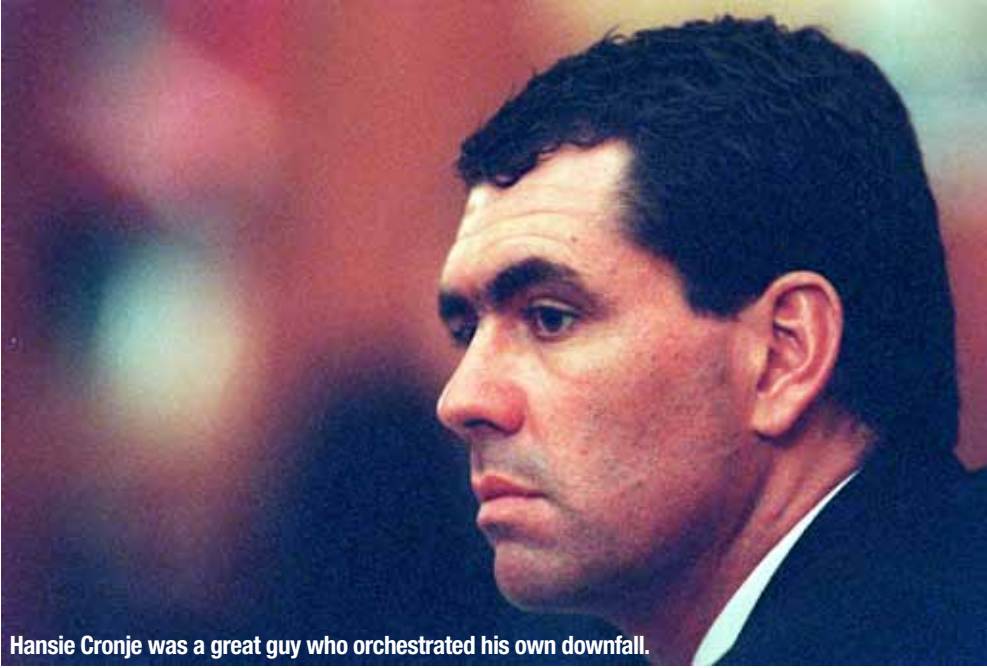
It was unsettling as he was clearly a highly decorated cop and appeared to be someone who needed to be taken seriously.

As we arrived back in South Africa the Tuesday morning, we were informed of a media conference to be held later that day. In that “presser” Hansie admitted to the charges and was pulled out of the team that was to play Australia in a one-day series.

Immediately the conspiracy theorists began to sprout their garbage. That Saturday at the Wanderers, Ali Bacher was booed by cricket supporters for his actions.

What many people might not know is that Bacher was in denial as much as the rest of us when the news broke. Bronwyn Wilkinson, who at the time was the media liaison person for the UCB, told me that she had been in Durban with Bacher when the news broke and he was distraught.

They took a walk that evening and she asked him if he had considered that Cronje could be guilty. “He got so upset with me for



Hansie Cronje was a great guy who orchestrated his own downfall.

even suggesting it that I thought he was going to fire me,” Wilkinson added.

A couple of days later, Bacher was in a game park and received a call from Cronje who admitted his guilt. “Once he told me he was guilty I had no option but to remove him from the team immediately and do damage control,” Bacher told me in a later interview for the Jewish Report.

Why the story? Like most people I was in denial, but once the match-fixing was clearly true, Hansie was no longer defensible.

I was in the Sapa office the Saturday morning Bronwyn phoned to ask about a plane crash near George, I was part of the team who relayed the story of Hansie’s death around the world. It was an ambivalent mo-

ment for me. On the one hand the adrenalin of breaking a story like that and having to take calls from CNN, Sky TV and even Chinese news agencies, is thrilling.

On the other hand I was pained at the loss of somebody I really liked. Hansie was a great guy, he was a magnificent captain and an extremely charismatic person. I will always have fond memories of the person he was.

However, I will never forgive what he did to his teammates, his country and cricket. He took advantage of his position, he let his country down and he deserved his punishment.

No sportsman or woman is a god. They are simply like the rest us - fallible people with faults.

Jewish grapplers off to World Champs

JACK MILNER

The Senior World Grappling Championships will be staged in Krakow, Poland, from November 15 to 18. In what seems a most surprising turn-up, half of the



Tal-El Bugai and Lance Weir will be off to Poland to represent South Africa at the World Grappling Championships.

South African team attending the event are Jewish.

It is not quite as dramatic as it sounds, as the SA team comprises four grapplers, with two of them - Lance Kier (25) and Tal-El Bugai - being Jewish. They will be competing in the Gi and No-Gi division.

Grappling is a form of wrestling, but differs in various areas. The object is either to take down and pin the opponent, or to catch the adversary in a specialised chokehold or joint lock which forces him or her to submit and admit defeat, or be rendered helpless.

There are two forms of dress for grappling that dictate pace and style of action: with a jacket, such as a Gi or kurtka, and without - No-Gi.

Lance, Tal-El and their two teammates have made history in that they are the first grapplers to be awarded Protea colours.

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