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Jewish Report

■ December 11 2015 / 29 Kislev 5776
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Light after Paris darkness



Photo: Chabad.org / Thierry Guez

Thousands participated in Chabad-Lubavitch’s annual public menorah lighting ceremony at the base of the Eiffel Tower in Paris last Sunday, the first night of Chanukah. The event featured a live video hook-up with a simultaneous menorah lighting at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The annual event is part of a worldwide Chanukah campaign set into motion by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson. This year’s menorah lighting in Paris took on special symbolism in light of the terror attack on November 13, in which 130 people were mowed down by ISIS terrorists. Parisians - including the city’s Jewish community - sent out a clear message that they will not be cowed by terror. They proudly took possession of their city.

This is our last print edition of the year. Our next issue will appear on January 15, 2016. We wish our readers and advertisers a restful holiday period, to return refreshed to face a new year.

Participate in all SA issues, community is urged

New SAJBD National Chairman Jeff Katz is urging community members to get involved in all aspects of South African life. He points out that despite difficulties, Jews in South Africa have never had it so good, with freedom of religion and movement.

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Jewish Report’s lunch with the Adelsons

One of the Jewish world's greatest power couples, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson, were in Cape Town to attend a biennial meeting of Keren Hayesod International Leadership. Editor Vanessa Valkin interviewed these high-profile donors to good causes.

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Kids shouldn’t be at a loss this holiday

Suzanne Belling in Johannesburg, Alana Baranov in Durban and Cindy Moritz in Cape Town look at the abundance of options available to the young - and young at heart - in all three cities and environs this summer. The mind boggles at the wide variety offered, from the mundane to the exquisite.



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Parliamentarian Yossi Sarid passes on

At moshav Margalioth, during the Lebanon War, everyone scammed for shelter. But not Yossi Sarid. He was tending the chickens because “chickens cannot take care of themselves”, he said. This erudite man will be sorely missed.

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Let’s bring light and illuminate our surroundings



Parshat Miketz
Rabbi Alex Carlebach
Chabad of Lyndhurst

Boruch Hashem, what a special Shabbos we are celebrating this week! We do the unusual and take out three holy Torahs. In the first, we read the parsha of Miketz; in the second, we read Rosh Chodesh; and in the third, the portion for Chanukah.

Chanukah is a fascinating festival. All are aware that two main miracles are associated with it. One is described in the prayer of Al Hanissim which we add to the Amidah and Birkat Hamazon in this period.

We describe the miraculous victory of an amazing war. We say: “Masarta giborim biyad chalashim; virabeem biyad miateem - You G-d,

in your abounding mercies waged their battles; defended their rights and delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few”, etc.

The second miracle is the famous one with the oil. When the Jews cleansed the holy Temple they could only find one jug of olive oil, still pure, sealed with the seal of the High Priest, sufficient to burn for one night.

They lit it and G-d A-mighty performed the great miracle: It lasted for eight nights, sufficient time to make new pure oil. Ever since then, on the 25th of Kislev, we light menorahs for eight nights commemorating the miracle of Chanukah.

Yet we are only commemorating one of the miracles, the second one. In what way do we mark the first miracle, the amazing victory in a war that any bookie would give you little, if any, chance of winning?

Look at all the nations of the world, how they mark days of victories. You have D-Day, V-Day, Armistice Day, etc. Where is Jewish Day?

Yet that precisely is the point. When our holy sages were faced with two options and deciding which to celebrate, they taught us to celebrate the victory of light over darkness rather than celebrate wars.

Our holy Torah is a teaching of peace. Our holy traditions not only preach peace, but more importantly, practise it. It says that if you want to fight G-d’s wars, holy wars, light candles, light up the darkness rather than celebrate killing and murder, even if it’s for a good reason.

We are taught that a little light drives away a lot of darkness. Chanukah and Shabbos are both holy days and both times we light candles, guiding us, our children and all, the best way to combat evil and darkness, be it within ourselves or outside.

Bring light. Torah is referred to as light. Let us illuminate our surroundings by adding a mitzvah, spending time in study of Torah. May that help brighten up the difficult gloom around us.

Let us all declare this to ourselves as well as to the outside world, especially the likes of the UN, that “den of darkness” which brings condemnation to the victims of terror and glorifies the perpetrators and terrorists of innocent lives.

We are celebrating the lights of Chanukah rather than victories of even “just and miraculous” wars, because that is what our heritage is all about.

I reach out to any open, just-thinking human, be it an “In my name or not in my name”, lighten the darkness with lights of Chanukah till the great day when once again we will light the true menorah in the third Beit Hamikdash and the whole world will be filled with great light. Amen.

Reflecting on the life and times of Rabbi Bernard Casper

ISAAC REZNIK

This year marks the 27th yartzheit of Rabbi Bernard Moses Casper z.tl on the 10th of Tevet (Fast of Tevet) 5776, which corresponds to December 22.

When the late Rabbi Dr Louis Isaac Rabinowitz retired from his position as Chief Rabbi, it took some two years before his successor, Rabbi Casper (pictured) arrived to assume office.

Inducted one week before Rosh Hashanah in 1963, Rabbi Casper was an imposing figure - tall, very dignified and very different from his predecessor, not only physically, but in his whole demeanour and conduct.

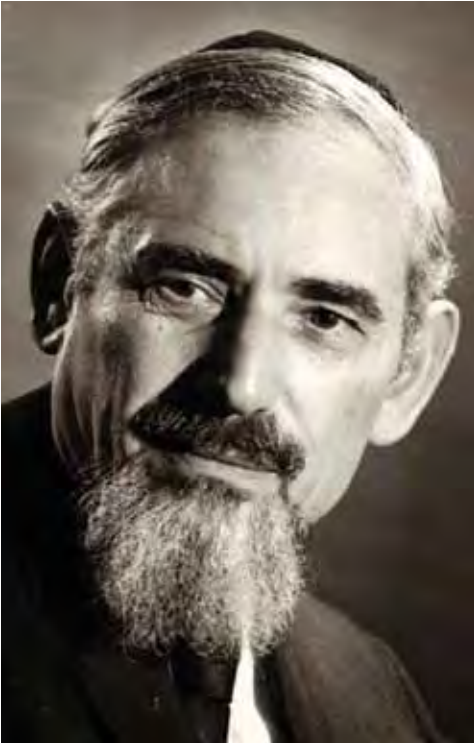
There are several factors that distinguished Rabbi Casper’s rabbinate in South Africa, which lasted 25 years and culminated in his appointment as Chief Rabbi of South Africa, the first time such a position was brought into being.

Previously there were two chief rabbis - one for the Cape and the other for the rest of the Republic of South Africa.

Rabbi Casper was a very quiet-spoken man, eloquent, certainly not brash or impetuous, very composed and very dignified.

During his term of office there were no big confrontational occasions; he certainly did not foster or promote them. His policy was clear: he would go to war when he felt that there was a distinct possibility of winning.

One of his significant achievements was the concordat he managed to arrive at with the then Chief Minister of the Reform Movement, with recognition that despite the existence of an unbridgeable gap between Orthodoxy and Reform on a religious level, on a communal level, there would be mutual understanding and respect and both sides would be represented at national and communal occasions.



Rabbi Casper retired after 25 years of loyal and devoted service to return to his beloved Jerusalem, where sadly he passed away after about 18 months, in 1988.

May his memory be for a blessing.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Miketz		
December 10 / 29 Kislev		
December 11 / 30 Kislev		
Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:28	Johannesburg
18:16	20:30	Cape Town
18:21	19:27	Durban
18:15	19:44	Bloemfontein
18:15	20:01	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:48	East London

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Thank you to our readers and advertisers during 2015. Our next print issue – including the sought-after Matric Results supplement – appears on 15 January. Our website, www.sajr.co.za, will continue to publish 24/6 throughout the holidays. We wish you a restful holiday period.

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Jews are well represented on South Africa’s ‘Rich List’

ANT KATZ

No fewer than 47 of the wealthiest 225 South Africans, measured by the value of listed shares they hold, are Jewish. This is according to the Sunday Times “Rich List” 2015 published last weekend. Jews represent at least 21 per cent of the list.

This is still a most sizeable representation, seeing that SA Jewry represents just 0,14 per cent of the total South African population. Also, many of South Africa’s wealthiest Jews control privately owned companies or earn income from overseas holdings or are privately invested in property.

Old-established family wealth such as that of the likes of the Samsons, Lubners, Kaplans, and so many more are not reflected in these surveys. Neither is Donny



Gordon or his daughter, Wendy Appelbaum, who is said by Forbes to be the wealthiest woman and biggest female philanthropist in Africa. His son, Graeme, does appear this year however.

Among the notable information in the Sunday Times List is that second place goes to Glencore’s Ivan Glasenberg with a net worth of R24.9 billion, down from R61.4 billion last year. The highest ranked Jewish entity is the Ackerman Family Trust, at number 11, with R7.3 billion (in 2013 it was also at 11 with R4.8 billion), and Adri-

an Gore is in 12th place with R7.2 billion.

Gore, the founder and CEO of Discovery, who also came in at 12th place in 2013, has seen his shares’ value climb from R2,1 billion in 2011 to R2,7 billion in 2012 and R4,2 billion in 2013 and then the large jump in 2015.

Among the Sunday Times List of Top Earners, Jews tend to feature far less, pointing to the fact that they do not pull the largest salaries. Bidvest’s Brian Joffe was the highest-earning member of the Jewish community – ranked



at number 26 having earned R13.77 million in 2015. Joffe’s 0.32 per cent holding of Bidvest shares, however, puts him at 110 on the wealthiest list with a value of R366 million.

Topping the Sunday Times Rich List this year is businessman Christo Wiese, whose investment holdings wealth has ballooned by almost 200 per cent over the past year to R104,8 billion.

• To see a full list of the 2015 wealthiest and top earners, go to www.sajr.co.za.

World News in Brief

Israel accused of ‘extrajudicial executions’ of Palestinians

STOCKHOLM - Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom sparked outrage in Israel last week Friday when she accused the Jewish state of carrying out extrajudicial executions of Palestinian terrorists.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling Wallstrom’s comment “scandalous, delusional, rude, and detached from reality”.

“The [Swedish] foreign minister suggests that Israeli citizens simply give their necks to the murderers trying to stab them with knives,” the Israeli Foreign Ministry said. “The citizens of Israel and its security forces have the right to defend themselves. In Israel, every person who commits a crime is brought in front of a judge, including terrorists.”

Wallstrom made her comments while addressing the Swedish parliament to respond to claims made by three fellow lawmakers that Swedish foreign policy was pro-Palestinian and discriminatory against Israel. According to the Swedish newspaper Expressen, Wallstrom was asked in parliament by Liberal MP Mathias Sundin why she has not condemned the recent wave of Palestinian terrorism in Israel in similarly strong terms.

Wallstrom responded that Israel had “the right to defend itself”, but that the response could not be “extrajudicial executions” or a “disproportionate” reaction.

Israeli Ambassador to Sweden Isaac Bachman told Expressen: “To focus on the

actions terrorism victims take in self-defence only serves to draw attention away from the horrors of terrorism. Instead, we should condemn and act to stop the perpetrators, the financiers and the inciters of terrorism.” (JNS.org)

US ‘can’t sit on the fence’ in Islamic State fight

WASHINGTON - America “can’t sit on the fence with regard to the Middle East” and the Islamic State terror group, Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya’alon said last week Friday at the Saban Forum in Washington, DC.

“Unfortunately in the current situation, Russia is playing the most significant role, then the United States,” Ya’alon said. “We don’t like the fact that King Abdullah of Jordan is going to Moscow. Egyptians are going to Moscow. The Saudis are going to Moscow. This should have been very different.

“ This is a global challenge [and] I believe the United States should be the leader of the Western world in order to meet this challenge. If you sit on the fence the vacuum is filled and Syria is an example, whether by Iran or the Shi’a axes supported now by Russia, or by ISIS.”

While it is desirable “to avoid Western boots on the ground on one hand,” it isn’t possible to defeat Islamic State “without boots on the ground”, added Ya’alon. (JNS.org)



90% of IDF ‘lone soldiers’ see their future in Israel

JERUSALEM - Ninety per cent of Israel Defence Forces lone soldiers (those without immediate family living in Israel) who have completed their military service see their futures in the Jewish state, while 62 per cent report that family members have followed them and moved to Israel, according to a new survey.

The survey was conducted by the Jewish Agency for Israel in conjunction with the Merage Foundation by the Ergo Consulting Group to mark the 10th anniversary of the Wings Programme, established to help lone soldiers build a home in Israel.

The respondents were former lone soldiers who live in Israel and were accompanied by the Wings Programme. The survey set out to examine the challenges

faced by lone soldiers as they approach the end of their military service, with the aim of developing additional tools to ease their integration into civilian life.

Some 84 per cent of those surveyed said their families supported their decision to immigrate to Israel. The survey results also show that the vast majority of lone soldiers feel well-integrated into Israeli society after their discharge from the IDF: 58 per cent consider themselves first and foremost “Israelis”, while only 29 per cent consider themselves “immigrants”. (JNS.org)

Menorah vandalised in New York

NEW YORK - A large menorah was found vandalised on the Upper East Side of Manhattan on Monday.

Police found the menorah on its side with one half broken into pieces at Carl Shurz Park, two blocks from the mayor’s official residence.

Police believe the menorah had been toppled over on both Saturday and Sunday nights.

“Incidents like this have no place here or anywhere,” New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a statement.

Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun and Chabad of the Upper East Side lit the menorah in a highly attended ceremony last Sunday night. They planned to lead another lighting at 08:00 on Monday.

“Last night we gathered to kindle the menorah, bringing light to the world, and this morning we found that we were met

by an act of darkness,” Rabbi Elie Weistock of Kehilath Jeshurun said on Monday. “But light always overcomes darkness, and tonight we plan to light the menorah again.”

A different menorah was stolen from a Chabad-Lubavitch synagogue in Salt Lake City, Utah, over the weekend. It was found outside an alumni house at a nearby college.

The theft was not being investigated as a hate crime.

Rabbi Benny Zippel told The Associated Press that the perpetrators were likely just “bored souls” who did not mean to be anti-Semitic. (JTA)

Israeli bodybuilder wins Mr. Universe title

TEL AVIV - Israeli bodybuilder Dani Kaganovich, 23, became the first Israeli ever to win the title of Best Overall Body in the NAC International Ms. & Mr. Universe 2015 competition in Hamburg on November 28. He also placed first in the Junior category for the third time.

Kaganovich told Ynet that he was a skinny, insecure teenager until he started working out and paying closer attention to his diet.

“I started training at the age of 16 at home watching videos on YouTube, and read on the Internet how to get stronger to improve my appearance and self-confidence,” said the Beersheva resident. “I saw my muscles respond well, so I signed up for the gym.” Israel21c

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Bradley Gogoski 082 828 9658 | 011 880 3550

Participate in all SA issues, community is urged

ANT KATZ

While the SA Jewish Board of Deputies is a completely transformed and well-oiled machine, says newly-inducted National Chairman Jeff Katz (pictured), he hopes to add a new, personal focus “to enhance the wonderful work” that it has already done.

Katz spoke to Jewish Report on issues such as BDS, Hamas, anti-Semitism and where he sees South African Jewry going.

Over the past eight years the SAJBD “has been completely transformed”, says Katz, particularly through the time, work and effort put in by Zev Krengel (who served two terms as chairman and two as president), Mary Kluk (who served two terms as chairman and is now president), and executive director Wendy Kahn and her team who “have built a great foundation”. He hopes to continue the work they have done.

However, says Katz, if the Jewish community in South Africa is to succeed, as he has no doubt it will, “the country as a whole must succeed”. For this reason one of his points of focus will be to encourage SA Jewry to participate in all spheres of SA society.

“We can help to better the country - and that will, in turn, enhance our wonderful life here.” He is full of confidence.

He recognises: “There is a lot of negative sentiment. But look around and see what a wonderful life we have as Jews here in South Africa; we really are thriving.”

He doesn’t believe that there is a comparable Jewish community anywhere else in the world.

“We make a major contribution in (areas such as) commerce and industry.” But SA Jewry needs to widen its contribution in realms such as politics and welfare.

Asked if he thought he was taking over the reins during a tricky time for South African Jewry, Katz said he did not see it as a time of difficulty, but as one of an opportunity to participate.

He acknowledges that “BDS is a pain - a thorn in the side,” but says BDS has enjoyed little success.

“The relationship between SA and Israel is pretty good,” Katz said. “Trade is increasing, the ANC believes in a two-state solution and the government has a relatively stable approach to the Middle East.”

On the thorny issue of Hamas, he made it clear that “from the Board’s perspective, we will have no talks with Hamas in any way”. The Board could not and would not recognise that organisation.

Katz told (ANC Secretary General) Gwede Mantashe that what was problematic for Jews, was that Hamas was a terror organisation set on the annihilation of Israel.

He said Mantashe had told him: “You have to speak to your enemies as well. Having the ANC talking to them is probably better than (if it was) anyone else.”

During their recent visit as guests of the ANC, Hamas had told Mantashe that they were prepared to talk to Israel. President Jacob Zuma, as keynote speaker at the Board’s elective conference recently, acknowledged



that SA Jewry was angered by the ANC having viewed Hamas in a Mandela-like manner.

The ANC believes what Hamas told them, says Katz, but the SAJBD “will never, and can never, talk to Hamas as long as they are designated a terror organisation.

“At the end of the day, that’s what we are here for, to protect the civil liberties of SA Jewry,” he stresses. By and large, these manifest themselves as anti-Semitism. He reiterated the Board’s zero-tolerance stance in this regard and reminded the community that the Board should always be their “first point of call” when experiencing anti-Semitism.

Of course the Board deals with many other community issues, says Katz.

Levels of anti-Semitism “are remarkably low in South Africa. They could even be the lowest in the world in terms of reported incidents for communities of comparable size.” Racism against Jews spikes in SA (and globally) when there is military activity in the Middle East.

He can recall “only one incident of a physically violent assault” in the recent past, where Jewish kids were attacked at the Rosebank Zone.

“I have never met any member of government or official not sympathetic to (eradicating) anti-Semitism,” says Katz.

Katz matriculated at King David Victory Park, before studying law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and he completed his studies at Wits. After his articles, he started work as an attorney at Discovery in 1998, where he has since served in many legal positions, including heading the corporate legal department.

He has been a member of the National Board for some time. He served on the Gauteng branch of the Board for almost a dozen years, first as a member, then as vice-chairman and, before moving up to chair the National Board, he served two terms as Gauteng chairman.

He is married to Terry and they have two children, Jaime, 13 and Alexa, 11.

* Read the full interview on www.sajr.co.za

Looking back at 2015

Here are some highlights of the major news stories for the Middle East, Africa and South Africa in 2015.

STEVEN GRUZD

MIDDLE EAST

ISIS dominated this year’s news, as the terrorist group posted beheadings of Western hostages online, claimed responsibility for indiscriminate attacks worldwide, destroyed ancient heritage sites, and consolidated control over large swathes of Iraq and Syria.

The Syrian conflict raged on and became more complex in September when Russian aircraft began bombing opponents of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (including groups other than ISIS).

In the wake of the Paris attacks of November 13, Western powers, including the US, France and Britain, stepped up bombing campaigns in Syria and Iraq against ISIS. The Turkish downing of a Russian fighter jet in its airspace has ratcheted up tensions between the two in the Middle East.

War in Syria and Iraq, and other conflicts (such as Eritrea, Libya and Somalia) has seen refugee flows into Europe unprecedented since 1945, raising fundamental questions about treatment of “the other”, human rights and mutual responsibilities.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud won 30 of the 120 Knesset seats in March elections, confounding predictions. Relations between Jerusalem and Washington remained frosty, especially after the June nuclear deal with Iran. By year end, Israel was facing multiple violent attacks on Jews, promoted by Palestinian politicians and clerics.

AFRICA

West Africa continued to suffer under jihadist movement Boko Haram, which claimed the most lives of any terrorist group in 2015, especially through suicide bombings in Nigeria. That country went through relatively peaceful polls in March, which saw Muhammadu Buhari defeat the incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, the first alteration of power between democratically elected parties in Nigeria’s history.

March also saw 148 killed at the Garissa University College in Kenya, where Al Shabaab claimed responsibility.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

battled the deadly Ebola disease, as the epidemic lost steam but still persisted.

Incumbents won elections in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Togo and Sudan, while the ruling EPRDF in Ethiopia took every single parliamentary seat. Tanzania’s new president, John Magufuli, quickly set about combating graft and wasteful expenditure.

Burkina Faso elected a new president after the ouster of long-time leader Blaise Compaoré in 2014, but Burundi is beset by violence as its president, controversially, was elected for an unconstitutional third term. Rwanda will change its constitution to allow President Paul Kagame to run for another term, in a worrying African trend.

SOUTH AFRICA

Tensions in the ruling alliance continued in the run-up to local government elections next year and the ANC’s 2017 National Conference. Parliament became unruly, with the disruptive antics of the Economic Freedom Fighters, who continually harass the ANC, especially over Nkandlagate.

President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address was disrupted by the EFF, who were forcibly removed from the chamber, where cell phone signals were jammed.

The Democratic Alliance in May elected Mmusi Maimane as its first black leader, hoping this will allow it to grow yet again, as it has in every election since 1994.

People power was in evidence when the #RhodesMustFall movement succeeded in having a prominent statue of imperialist Cecil John Rhodes removed from public view at the University of Cape Town.

And starting at Wits, the #Fees-MustFall campaign spread to campuses across the country in October, disrupting lectures and sometimes turning violent, resulting in a freeze on fee increases for 2016. The taxpayer looks likely to foot the bill.

Terrorism, political instability and migration appear to be issues that will again dominate in 2016.

• Steven Gruzd is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs



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Community Voices

Let the holiday spirit be with you!

The holiday spirit has truly taken hold of most South Africans - and the Jewish community is no exception. School has closed and sweltering December heat has made visions of “cool” waters and sandy beaches all the more alluring. For many the December packing has become part of a long-established holiday ritual and it’s again time to dust off the cobwebs from a patiently waiting seaside cottage, while the more adventurous will try new destinations each year. Of course there are those who prefer the tranquil beauty of the Eastern Free State or will be braving the heat of a game park, in case one of the “Big Five” suddenly appears! Then there are also some wise ones who cannot wait for all their fellow-Gautengers to get out of the city and leave it to them - wide open and quiet. What a blissful thought! We asked a handful of people where they are heading to.



Terri Singer
Terri and her accountant husband Alan will be spending five days in a chalet at Hunters Rest and three days at the Sun City Hotel.
“It is different there” she said. “There is no one around; it is quiet and tranquil.”

Terri is a nursery school teacher at Yeshiva College, where she has taught children of four who turn five during the year.
“It’s the best,” she said of her teaching.



Kim Wener
Kim lives in Parklands, Cape Town, which she calls the place to be; she moved there with her husband Adrian from Johannesburg just under three years ago.
She is staying in Cape Town for the holidays and her mother, Jenny Rosenston, is coming to spend 10 days with them later this month.
“I haven’t seen her in almost a year,” Kim said.

Both she and her husband have stopped work for the holiday season. She intends spending her time shopping, going to restaurants and taking her mother all over, mainly to the beach. Kim likes the Fish Hoek and Muizenberg beaches, but will also take her mother to a Blaauwberg beach, near where she lives.



Ben Neuberger
Fifteen-year-old Ben Neuberger left for Habonim camp on Wednesday.
Ben, who starts at Herzlia High School in Cape Town next year, has been a member of the movement for five years and has attended the camp annually. This year he will be in the Sollelim age group. He enjoys the camping experience. “You are with your friends all day. There is always something to do. You don’t get bored. Then there’s the beach,” he said.
“Every year there is a new topic to talk about, always addressing some problems in the world.”
Many of his contemporaries are also attending the camp - “about 10 of my good friends”.



Nicky Lieb
Nicky is already in Cape Town with her family - husband Elan and their three children of 10, eight and three - for their three-week holiday. They will be there until December 28, based in Milnerton.

“We flew down and have a car here,” she told the SA Jewish Report, speaking from an outing in Stellenbosch.
“The kids enjoy the freedom. You can walk here very freely.”



Jonty Tuchten
Jonty (24), an audit associate, has just passed his honours in accountancy and is rewarding himself with a three-week trip to London and Israel from this weekend.
He will be spending 10 days in each place - touring with friends in London and visiting his sister, her husband and his six-month-old nephew in Jerusalem, where they have lived for three years.

“Specifically at this time it is important to go to Israel. We won’t change the way we live,” said Jonty, a self-proclaimed “ardent Zionist”.
He has been planning the trip for about three months.



Paula Baetu
Psychometrist Paula is doing a road trip to Coffee Bay in the Eastern Cape.
Last year she and three friends went on a road trip to the Northern Cape and drove down to Cape Town from Port Nolloth.

They made no advance bookings, but took tents with them, travelling in two cars.
The first trip lasted two-and-a-half weeks, but because of work commitments, the four friends (with one change) are going for only a week at the end of December.
They will drive to Clarens in the Eastern Free State and from there through the Sani Pass in the Drakensberg to the KZN coast and down to Coffee Bay.
“I heard about it a couple of years ago. It is a hippy community, where one can both give and receive. I am looking forward to that,” she said.



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Jewish Report’s lunch with Sheldon and Miriam Adelson

VANESSA VALKIN

Last week Thursday, every single contender for the 2016 US Republican presidential nomination was in Washington DC at a forum held by the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC).

Apart from the upcoming presidential debates, this is the best-attended forum for GOP (Republican party) candidates for the singular reason that Sheldon Adelson, the biggest donor to the 2012 presidential election, is a key board member of the RJC and is the person to win favour with.

However, Adelson and his wife, Miriam (pictured), were not in Washington - they were in Cape Town to attend the biennial meeting of the Keren Hayesod International Leadership Reunion, a gathering of Keren Hayesod’s top donors throughout the world.

About 30 private jets (including Adelson’s) descended on Cape Town for the event, which included three days of meetings and discussion, where Eric and Sheila Samson were the official hosts.

When I was granted an interview with this couple, I was told he and Miriam were only prepared to discuss the Birthright Israel programme (a free 10-day trip to Israel for Jewish youth from around the world) for which the pair now provide about \$40 to \$50 million a year.

The reluctance, as he later told me over lunch, was that the media and consequently the public, often misinterpret or misrepresent his actions.

However, I came to our meeting, not with a barrage of tough questions, but rather, with an immense admiration and with some requests for ideas and advice. After all, the Adelsons, are probably the largest donors to Israel and Jewish-related causes in the world (hundreds of millions of dollars every year) and, more than any other philanthropists in the world, were deeply concerned about anti-Semitism, the global movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, and wider anti-Israel sentiment.

Relevant to what South African Jewry are dealing with: countering the BDS-SA movement and a local press with hostile views on Israel – there was

plenty to ask about.

Just this year, Adelson hosted a Campus Maccabees Summit at his Las Vegas hotel, the Venetian, which is considered the most significant initiative in the United States to date to combat BDS on college campuses. He gathered a group of deep-pocketed, pro-Israel donors who are pledging millions of dollars to build campus activism against anti-Israel groups like Students for Justice in Palestine.

He also started a newspaper in Israel called Israel Hayom which, although

caust, although many members perished.

“I grew up with very few people who had grandparents.” She has that increasingly rare sensibility as we move further from the Holocaust years and especially tough times for the Jewish people, that Jews need to be ever cautious and are not safe without a homeland of their own.

When Sheldon comes to the table, he is in a wheelchair but what a hi-tech, gorgeous one! He looks at me intensely and starts to page through some cop-

begin to believe it.

“You have to take people to Israel,” Adelson says. “The Jewish community needs to take [President Jacob] Zuma to Israel.”

He glances around the lunch area at the Mount Nelson which is embarrassingly empty of serving staff, and eventually, when someone does come to take the orders, he says: “May I make a suggestion? You should put a bell on the table so that your customers can ring when they need something.”

Mount Nelson staff should take

When Adelson’s own son wanted to go on the Birthright Israel programme, almost 10 years ago, there was a wait-list of 10 000 people and it evoked emotionally tough memories of his father not getting to Israel before it was too late. And that was that.

He met with Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, the two philanthropists who supported the programme from its start, and found out that they were short of about \$30 million that would pay for 10 000 to get on the trip that year (2006).

The Adelsons funded the shortfall. “The next year there were 20 000 wanting to go,” says Adelson, who hopes other donors will contribute and see the importance of this programme.

“Brandeis University (in Boston) has done extensive research and found that between the ages of 18 and 26, only 42 per cent of Jews intend to marry Jewish. That means that 58 per cent are willing to assimilate. Where is our Jewishness going?”

But when the sample was re-questioned after the Birthright Israel trip, 76 per cent said they intended to marry Jewish, explains Adelson as evidence of the necessity of the trip.

“The noble thing to do is to be the cement and connect one generation of Jews to the next,” he says, pointing out that assimilation is the greatest danger to Jewry today, particularly in the United States.

Miriam recalls an instance when they once went to meet some Jewish youth on a Birthright trip. “One girl spoke up: ‘There is no such thing as a free lunch, what do you expect in return for this free trip?’ I said to her: ‘You have already paid back for your trip; you are our soldiers outside of Israel.’”

It is time for the Adelsons to go. They are off to Robben Island for a tour and then getting back on their plane that evening, heading home to Las Vegas.

As I get up to leave, I look around and see that there are about two or three tables of their security detail waiting patiently. I had not noticed them before but I am not surprised - these two agents of change, enablers of dreams and powerbrokers extraordinaire, are precious cargo.



only eight years old, has become the most read daily in the country. Using their immense resources, (Adelson is ranked 15 on Forbes list of wealthiest individuals with a net worth estimated at \$24,6 billion), Miriam and Sheldon have in essence become the world’s greatest protectors of Israel and the Jewish people - soppy or clichéd as this sounds.

Miriam, who is slim and elegant, with long grey hair and a razor-sharp mind (she trained and worked as a physician), is seated at the table of the lunchroom at the Mount Nelson Hotel when I arrive. Speaking to her, it is evident that a deep part of this passionate support for Israel originates with her.

“It is a big miracle that Israel exists,” she says. “And without Israel, the Jews wouldn’t exist.”

Miriam grew up in Israel and her family escaped Poland and the Holo-

ies of the Jewish Report I have brought along, his agile brain ticking through all I represent.

Satisfied that I am not coming from a critical vantage point, he is happy to talk. I tell him about the challenges SA Jewry face with the BDS movement, the recent red-carpet visit of Hamas’ political bureau leader Khaled Meshaal as a guest of the ANC and the increasingly anti-Israel bias in our newspapers.

“The Jewish philanthropists in this country must use their resources to be proactive,” says Adelson. He is disappointed to hear that there are no Jewish newspaper owners to ensure the real story is told.

“BDS is a sham and a false narrative, and they make untruthful statements about apartheid in Israel,” says Adelson emphatically. “And for people who don’t know any better, if you repeat and repeat the lie often enough, people

some notes - this is probably the most valuable advice on service they are ever going to get. Adelson is the CEO of Las Vegas Sands, America’s largest casino company, and the owner of one of the most impressive hotel collections in the world.

Orders taken, Adelson begins to talk about the reasons for their support of Birthright Israel which is, after all, the reason this power couple were prepared to be interviewed in the first place.

His own roots are interestingly similar to many South African Jews’. His father escaped the pogroms in Lithuania and arrived in Boston, making ends meet by driving a taxi.

“He always dreamt of a country free of progroms and when Israel was founded, he always wanted to visit, but was too poor,” recalls Adelson. “When I wanted to send him, he was too old and sick.”

Opinion and Analysis

Presidential hopefuls make their pitch to GOP Jews

SARAH WILDMAN
WASHINGTON

In carefully tailored stump speeches that ranged in tone from apocalyptic to chummy, all but one of the Republican presidential candidates showed up in an attempt to woo Jewish voters.

Many of the speeches at the Republican Jewish Coalition Presidential Candidates Forum, held on December 3 in Washington, focused on the threat of “radical Islamic terror”, emphasised their disapproval for the recently negotiated nuclear deal with Iran, and took direct aim at Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton, President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry.

For decades, the Republican Jewish Coalition has had as its mission bridging the divide between a conservative party and a moderate constituency, US Jews. Since the late 1990s, when casino magnate Sheldon Adelson be-



came the group’s most generous funder, it has taken on his passions - for instance, embracing a hawkish pro-Israel stance.

When it came time for Donald Trump to speak, the real estate mogul turned Republican front-runner, who has long traded in conspiracy theories about Obama, told the crowd: “We have a president who refuses to

use the term”, referring to “radical Islamic terrorism”. Trump then added: “There’s something about him we don’t know about.”

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush said: “This president and his former secretary of state cannot call it what it is: Islamic terrorism,” referencing Clinton, who preceded Kerry as America’s top diplomat. “[Islamic terrorists] have declared war on us and we need to declare war on them.”

Among the candidates to take the stage, only New Jersey Governor Chris Christie made a point to distinguish between mainstream Muslim-Americans and radical jihadists, noting his own pushback when one of his appointed judges was falsely accused of practising traditional Islamic religious, or shariah, law.

At times throughout the day, the candidates seemed to be competing over who was closest to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and which had spent more time in Israel. Many pledged to move the US Em-

bassy to Jerusalem on “day one” of their presidency.

Trump, however, said he would wait to decide until he spoke with Netanyahu. The crowd booed its disapproval.

He tried to win back the audience by telling them about how he made a commercial for Netanyahu’s re-election campaign. (Trump also made a point of reminding the room that his daughter Ivanka is Jewish; she converted before marrying real estate developer Jared Kushner.)

But Trump also seemed to acknowledge that he wasn’t likely to be popular among Jewish Republicans, telling the crowd: “You aren’t going to support me even though you know I’m the best thing that will ever happen for Israel. You aren’t going to support me because I don’t want your money.”

One common refrain during the event was the rejection of the deal that the Obama administration, together with other world

Continued on page 9

Whiteness and Jewishness smoulder in SA and France



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Raw nerves for Jewish South Africans will be touched by two new books published in France and South Africa, highlighting the authors’ uneasy identities as both Jews and whites. They are indicative of the confusing, scary times in which we live.

In France, popular Jewish author Eliette Abecassis’ novel “Alyah” [sic] probes the struggle of her wounded country still reeling from terrorist attacks, to protect her as a Jew. She asks: In the light of the growing anti-Semitism in France, can one still be both French and Jewish?

In the story, based on the author’s experiences, a Jewish teacher of French literature enters her classroom in a secular Paris school where most learners are second- and third-generation North African immigrants.

Abecassis’ parents also emigrated from Morocco in the late 1950s. A 15-year-old learner immediately confronts her: “Teacher, are you a Jew-girl?... If you are a Jew-girl, does that mean you are a Zionist?”

She is shocked, as other learners chime in aggressively: “She’s a Zionist! We will eliminate her!”; “And the Jews”; “There’s no difference!”; “It’s true, they are killing our brothers the Palestinians!”; “We’ll get rid of them all!”

French Jews have long viewed France as home. But the second intifada in Israel in 2000 caused a rift between the Muslim and Jewish communities of migrants from North Africa, who once had a cordial relationship. The former sided with the Palestinians, the latter with Israel. Ethnic antagonism multiplied and Jews were attacked.

Through fear, Abecassis removed all external signs of her Jewishness in public places. She felt France betrayed her: “Until a few years ago, I did not understand that I was actually an exile in my country. France was my country, my culture, the definition of who I am and how I think. I thought our leaders would ensure our security... The phrase ‘Jew and French’ was still possible. It almost exuded pride.”

Anti-Semitism is pushing Jews to leave France. Abecassis would like to continue writing in French and teaching French literature, and consider France her homeland. But she tells an intimate friend: “In 10 years, I will not be in France.”

He replies: “Then in 10 years, it will no

longer be France.”

In South Africa, a book by Ferial Haffajee, editor of City Press, probes the sensitive race issue and “whiteness” in the country today, particularly white privilege, through stories from mostly black, middle class contributors. It is titled provocatively: “What If There Were No Whites in South Africa?”

One contributor, Milisuthando Bongela, a Rhodes alumnus who runs a feminist stokvel, tells of eavesdropping on a meeting in a Johannesburg cafe of “Jewish business people” who were discussing the production of teacups.

“Pure green jealousy settled inside me at the thought that these grown white men had the luxury of convening a business action about crockery,” he said. “And that they were probably going to make a lot of money from it.

“I tried to check the jealousy in me to understand why it was so buoyant, so relentless... The difference between them and me is that they inherited the peace of mind to craft and contemplate teacups on a Wednesday afternoon. I inherited the responsibility of discovering, addressing and solving a race, gender and class disparity I did not create.”

Non-racialism is a complicated, elusive South African ideal. Haffajee said in an interview: “When I grew up, that was what we staked our identity on, a non-racial

future, which meant that... the eventual outcome of where I see you goes beyond the amount of melanin that you have in you. I see you for what you are as a human being.”

But things are in many ways going in the opposite direction. Negative racial stereotyping is growing. Recognising the racial problems of South Africa, the inequality and staggering unemployment among blacks, she notes ominously: “There is a substantial narrative, and it is largely but not only white, that is waiting for South Africa to fail.”

The subtext, obviously, is the notion some whites hold that blacks cannot run a country. The next five years, she says, “will separate out those with a pessimistic take and those of us who want our country to succeed.”

As we approach 2016, the bogeymen of racial and ethnic animosity are taking on more openly expressed forms than they have for a long time. For this country, the question begs itself: If there were no whites, would South Africa still be South Africa?

The road ahead differs depending on one’s answer.

• Geoff Sifrin is former editor of the SAJR. His blog address in which his regular Taking Issue column appears is <https://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com>

Why campus anti-racism protests are bad for Jews

TAMMI ROSSMAN-BENJAMIN
SANTA CRUZ, California

A day before University of Missouri graduate student Jonathan Butler made headlines with a hunger strike protesting racism on campus, a coalition of 36 Jewish and civil rights organisations contacted University Chancellor R Bowen Loftin to protest a vile act of anti-Semitism that had recently occurred at Mizzou: Someone had used faeces to smear a swastika on a bathroom wall.

In our letter, we criticised Loftin for not promptly and publicly addressing this act, which targeted Jewish students and made them feel threatened and unsafe. Little did we know that Butler, in an open letter to the university’s leadership in early November, would cite the swastika as his last straw, the latest in a “a slew of racist, sexist, homophobic” incidents that drove him to swear off all food unless the university president was removed.

The threats worked. Less than a week after beginning his hunger strike, Mizzou President Tim Wolfe stepped down. Hours later, Loftin followed suit.

Would Butler’s actions help our right against anti-Semitism at Mizzou?

There was every reason to be optimistic. After all, Butler’s successful protest was directed toward administrators who had not responded promptly to campus discrimination. Surely anti-Semitism

requires the same vigorous treatment as racism, sexism and homophobia. Why shouldn’t the spotlight Butler was shining on the unacceptable discrimination and harassment of African-American, female and LGBTQ students also illuminate the rising threat Jewish students face regularly?

In no time, that question took on national significance. Butler’s hunger strike has sparked a national student movement demanding an end to “systemic and structural racism”.

On far too many campuses Jewish students report being harassed, assaulted, threatened, vilified and discriminated against, their property defaced and destroyed, and their events disrupted and shut down.

Unfortunately, the rash of campus protests has shown itself to be far more likely to hurt Jewish students than to help them. There are three main reasons:

First, university administrators are less likely to address anti-Semitism in the wake of the Mizzou-inspired protests. In part, this is because administrators are so overwhelmed with meeting or deflecting the demands of protesters - and making sure they themselves do not meet the same fate as Mizzou’s president and chancellor - they simply do not have the time or energy to focus on Jewish students.

Administrators are also afraid of appearing to favour Jewish students. Recently, I called a top administrator at the University of Central Florida to



discuss some neo-Nazi fliers that had been posted in and around UCF dormitories.

I expressed my dismay that although the fliers had been discovered several days before, the university had yet to make a public statement about them. The administrator responded that he was afraid to do so lest it be seen by campus protesters as pandering to Jewish interests and lead to further campus unrest.

Second, anti-Israel student groups who often target Jewish students for harassment and discrimination, have opportunistically aligned themselves with anti-racism protesters to more forcefully promote their anti-Zionist agenda.

Finally, Jewish students themselves have been accused of racism for speaking out about the anti-Semitism they experience. For example, on an

official University of California, Santa Cruz website dedicated to educating the campus community about subtle forms of bigotry known as “micro-aggressions”, one of the examples given is a Jewish student’s statement to an African-American student: “I don’t get why you’re excluding me like this. I’m Jewish; I know oppression.”

Even though the Jewish student is simply expressing feelings of marginalisation and oppression, the statement is considered a micro-aggression because of the student’s socioeconomic status. (JTA)

• Tammi Rossman-Benjamin is a lecturer at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the co-founder and director of the Amcha Initiative, a nonprofit that combats campus anti-Semitism.

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NARRATIVE OF ISRAEL ‘APARTHEID’ CANARD BECOMING TEDIOUS

Geoff Sifrin, in his Taking Issue column, is correct in asserting that many Jews will reject former President De Klerk’s warning that Israel is heading towards an apartheid state. Informed people know that Israel is not an apartheid state. Many people, including Jews, however, resent Israel and the Jewish people, for reasons that are not always clear. Recently, a Jewish academic in Britain, Marsha Levine, replied to a letter written by a 13-year-old Jewish girl, who asked for advice on horses. She replied to the youngster that she should first consider the plight of Palestinians before asking her for advice. Levine, an erstwhile researcher at Cambridge University, is also a member of Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP) and is openly supportive of BDS. Many European politicians have blamed Israel for the Palestinian problem and say that the terrorist attacks in Europe are a consequence thereof. Mind you, they say this despite the unchecked influx of mi-grants into their own countries. The accusation of Israel being an apartheid state is frequently used by BDS and other anti-Israel entities to attempt to gain a position of relative superiority and is used euphemistically to liken Israel to apartheid South Africa. As events unfold over time, the truth becomes clear. For example, the ANC and

government, hosted Hamas, while Hamas recently hosted ISIS in Gaza. These two terrorist organisations are expanding co-operation between themselves, and yet the SA govern-ment has the chutzpah to say that it sees itself as a mediator for peace between Israel and Palestine (a two-state solution) notwithstanding. BDS sides with the Palestinians too, and they also feted Hamas’ visit to SA. Sifrin optimistically hypothesises about Marwan Barghouti and Benja-min Netanyahu shaking hands. This in my view, will never take place, because events currently in the re-gion, are moving so fast that there is no moral high ground left for either side, because of the violence. Israel is also moving closer to Asia and Russia and it is becoming clear that there are new alliances on the horizon as a result of Europe’s antagonistic attitude towards Israel (and Jews). Asia and Russia also understand that economic co-operation with Is-rael will benefit their countries; after all, Israel is a leader in water, arms, and scientific technology. The narrative, therefore, of apart-heid Israel is not only tiresome, but is becoming precarious because of its falsity, and moreover, the Jewish State’s opposition to the various religious conflicts in the region, which are affecting other Western countries.

**Nathan Cheiman
Northcliff, Johannesburg**

BARGHOUTI ‘HANDSHAKE’ SUGGESTION MAKES ME SICK TO THE STOMACH

I seldom read the Jewish Report in full, and much less write letters, but when my husband asked me to read Geoff Sifrin’s Taking Issue column in last week’s paper regarding the peace process in Israel, I did so, and literally felt sick to my stomach. Sifrin ends his column expressing a scene with Benjamin Netanyahu shak-ing hands with Marwan Barghouti to thunderous applause as they receive the Nobel Peace Prize, for achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace. Sifrin asks: Is it naive, wishful thinking? I am a 79-year-old Safta with Israeli citizenship and I cannot imagine anything more hurtful and offensive to the pure emotions of any Israeli/Jew than to release the arch-terrorist Barghouti. This man who is serving five life sentences in an Israeli jail, can be likened to the worst Nazi war criminal; Barghouti organised the brutal killings of hundreds of Israeli men, women and children. Only one year ago he urged the Palestinian Authority to immediately end security co-operation with Israel and called for a Third Intifada. He refused to present any defence for charges brought against him, maintaining that his trial was illegal and illegitimate. Marwan Barghouti is without a doubt one of the biggest Jew-killers since the Nazis, and if given the chance (as Sifrin suggests) he would, with relish, attempt another Shoah in our Holy Land. Now can you understand why I feel sick to my stomach? In my opinion the Jewish Report erred in allowing Sifrin to express his hurtful sentiments in our only Jewish newspaper.

**Miriam Davidowitz
Golden Acres, Johannesburg**

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND FOR GERMANY

During the Second World War, Germany murdered six million Jews while the Europeans stood by and in some instances gleefully assisted. Now they are being replaced [in Germany] by millions of Muslims. One can’t help but wonder which group was or will be beneficial to Germany and Europe. Perhaps this is Hashem’s revenge. Good luck to Germany and Europe. What goes around comes around.

**Hymie Radomsky
Johannesburg**

TWO-STATE MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION IS ‘ANTI-TORAH’

I would like to ask Geoff Sifrin and all those in favour of a two-state solution, the following questions: Are you in favour of the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Is-raelis from their homes, schools, synagogues, businesses, and community centres and hand G-d’s precious gift of land to an implacable enemy? Is it not virtually certain that any land surrendered by Israel to any Arab entity will eventually fall to extremist Islamic forces, as happened in Gaza? I would submit to Sifrin (and former President De Klerk) that any territorial concessions in the “Land-for Peace - Two-State paradigm” are inimical to the Zionist ideal of Jewish sovereignty and self-determination. To those who maintain that Palestinian Arabs across the 1967 lines be incorporated into the permanent popu-lation of Israel, one must ask whether Hashem restored sovereignty to His people after nearly 2 000 years of exile to die in the name of democracy and give equal rights to psychotic murderers, and hordes of their supporters. Would it not be better to identify the Palestinians - as they have themselves declared - as an implacable enemy, and implement a policy that reflects this fact? The only moral policy Israel could undertake is to offer non-belligerent individuals generous relocation grants to allow them and their dependants the opportunity to seek secure lives in any of the 22 Arab states in the vicinity. It is understandable that many might feel a sense of discomfort and aversion to the concept of the word “transfer”, but the crucial question must be asked: Who in fact has the moral high ground? Those who promote the establishment of yet another Muslim tyranny in the

MEL GIBSON SPOOF SPOOKS JEWISH REPORT

A news item headed “Mel Gibson’s daughter marries a Jew” appeared in the November 6 issue of the SA Jewish Report. You correctly cite The Daily Currant as the source of that story. However, since Purim is still some months away, I presume you’re unaware that The Daily Currant is a satirical news blog and that the story is a fabrication.

**Prof David Benatar
Rondebosch, Cape Town**

Alas, Prof Benatar, you are so right! - Editor

historical and spiritual heartland of Eretz Yisrael, or those who promote non-belligerent Palestinians with the opportunity of building a better life for themselves elsewhere? Sifrin and all those supporting a two-state solution, must explain a moral anomaly: Why is expelling Jews from their land to facilitate the establishment of an Islamic terror state considered morally acceptable, even commendable, while the notion of paying Arabs to leave their homes to prevent the establishment of a tyrannical state, considered morally reprehensible? Each time Sifrin writes a column suggesting a policy which would put Israel into a dangerous situation, he is proposing solutions which are in direct violation of Torah commandments. He is correct that Israel needs a leader to bring a lasting peace to Israel. But this leader must be one who will follow Torah law as closely as possible. “You shall drive out all the inhabitants of the Land and settle in the Land. Those that remain will be thorns in your sides and pins in your eyes. If you do not drive them out, I will do to you what I meant to do to them” (Num 33: 50 -55). Israel must begin to be Biblically correct and not politi-cally correct. I found it offensive for Sifrin to suggest that convicted Jew-killer Marwan Barghouti be released in order to make “peace” with Israel. This is the most hurtful idea to the pure emotions of any Jew.

**Choni Davidowitz
Golden Acres, Johannesburg**

Rafi’s been living in SA for many years

Last week SAJR published a report on Eric Kinstler’s 100th birthday, including that his son Rafi lived in Israel. That is incorrect. Rafi has in fact been living in South Africa for many years. We regret the error.

More news on our website
www.sajr.co.za

What’s on the web

Exciting holiday reads on our website

This is our last print newspaper for the year. Our next issue will appear on January 15. But news will regularly be posted on the website www.sajr.co.za during this period. Updates, and reader-posted content such as letters, blogs, comments and op-eds will be updated six days a week (Sundays to Fridays). Historically, our web-readership has gone above the average every January. While the website has fewer unique users, and many, many more from places outside of Johan-nesburg, web usage is for longer periods of time and users visit more pages per visit than they do any other time of the year. Do you get the weekly SAJR newsletter directly from Jewish Report? The now ubiquitous weekly Jewish Report news-letter is also distributed to communal mailing lists of various Jewish and Christian Zionist organisa-tions. This has resulted in some of the Jewish Report

subscribers “un-subscribing” from the SAJR-sent newsletter and get-ting them from other organisa-tions. A problem this poses is that many of these organisations also close shop over the holidays, while Jewish Report will continue to send out the newsletter with all the latest Jewish news and information from SA, Africa and around the world. So, to be sure you get your weekly link to the Jewish world, simply go to www.sajr.co.za and fill in your e-mail address in one of the green blocks you will find on the right hand column of each and every page. Over the past two years Jewish Report Online has published over 11 700 unique content items and our online archives offer users PDF print editions back to 2009. Be the first one on your block to get all of the Jew-ish Report news, and then some...

World News in Brief

1 300-year-old olive press uncovered at Ancient Shiloh

JERUSALEM - A 1 300-year-old public olive press was recently unearthed at the Ancient Shiloh archaeological park in the Binyamin region of Judea and Samaria. The olive press is proof that aside from being the capital of ancient Israel for 369 years and housing the Ark of the Covenant, Shiloh was also the region’s main manufacturer of olive oil. Researchers arrived at the conclusion due to the uniquely large size of the olive press, which was discovered during the most recent excavation at Tel Shiloh, headed by archaeologist Dr Ofer Gat. Another olive press was found nearby in 2011. The presses’ size and their proximity to one another indicate the public nature of the oil-manufacturing industry and its importance, and its scope. A large stock of charred olive pits was found near the press, along with shards from terra-cotta candles and light cones characteristic of that period. (jns.ORG)



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

On the other hand, we were able at the same time to strengthen our existing relationships with government as well as to create new ones at all levels. This culminated in our national conference, where we received the assurance from President Jacob Zuma and other members of his government that we continue to be valued as strong partners in building our country.

On the Middle East front, notwithstanding the continuing wave of lone wolf terror attacks on Israelis, 2015 was a relatively quiet year for Israel militarily.

As a result, we saw a sharp drop in local anti-Semitic activity, with a little over 50 incidents recorded as opposed to more than three times that number during the previous year.

Working with the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Board lodged various complaints of hate speech, as well as laying criminal charges with the police and instituting civil proceedings in the Equality Court. Some of the former cases have been resolved, with retractions and apologies being received and accepted, with the remaining cases still pending.

Bringing perpetrators of anti-Semitism to justice is unavoidably a slow and complex process, but we remain committed to following each and every one

through to a satisfactory conclusion, no matter how long it takes. The Board evaluates each incident on its merits and is careful not to overreact, but when it comes to gross acts of anti-Semitism - verbal or otherwise - we will continue to send out a firm and clear message that such behaviour comes with consequences.

The Board looks to lead the community in being an identifying, participating component of the broader society. In this regard, two initiatives in particular stand out. One was our very uplifting 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter function on June 23, in which we were honoured to have as speakers former President Kgalema Motlanthe, anti-apartheid veteran Leon Levy and Johannesburg Executive Mayor Parks Tau.

The other was our participation, in partnership with Chabad, in the Heritage Day carnival in Pretoria. Our float was an ark containing a library stocked with books donated by Jewish school learners, and this was formally presented to a local school in need of such a facility.

On a more sombre note, the Board in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal was again called upon to co-ordinate the Jewish community’s relief efforts on behalf of xenophobia victims.

Like any other Diaspora community, South African Jewry faces its own unique challenges, yet it continues to be strong, united and Jewishly vibrant.

On the Yom Kippur of 1841, Jews in Cape Town came together for this country’s first Jewish religious services. Next year, we will be celebrating the 175th anniversary of this event, which marked the formal birth of SA Jewry as an organised communal entity.

In the meantime, I wish everyone a very safe and restful end-of-year break and everything of the best for 2016.

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

Continued from page 6

Presidential hopefuls make their pitch...

powers, struck with Iran over its nuclear programme.

Trump, for one, said he would send everyone back to the negotiating table, assuring the room that inking a better deal would be “so easy”. Bush said he would reinstitute sanctions against Iran lifted as part of the deal. And Cruz declared: “We need to nominate a candidate who has the clarity to stand up and say: ‘If you vote for Hillary Clinton, you are voting for the Ayatollah Khamenei to have nuclear weapons’,” referring to Iran’s supreme leader. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida vowed to “shred” the agreement.

There was also a near-universal declaration of revulsion for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel. Cruz indicated that as president, his administration would strip federal funding from universities that divest from companies that do business with Israel.

Rubio blasted the new EU resolution to label products made in the West Bank settlements, saying that the policy was tantamount to anti-Semitism. He also promised to “call on university and religious leaders to speak out with clarity and force on this issue the same way... they speak out against racism and bigotry”.

The room generally received the candidates warmly, but their votes may be few: Jewish voters consistently skew Democratic. Obama won the 2012 presidential election with about 70 per cent of the Jewish vote, and Jews overwhelmingly support social issues that fall in the progressive column, including gay marriage and abortion rights.

Each of the speeches had moments of direct Jewish appeal, sometimes to mixed effect. Trump was introduced as a “mensch” with “chutzpah”.

“This room negotiates deals, perhaps more than any room I’ve ever spoken to,” he said.

Not all of the effort was well received: Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon running for the nomination, spent his time on stage woodenly reading from “Ally”, a book written by Israel’s former ambassador to the US, Michael Oren. Then, in the same monotone, he read his own prepared remarks, several times mispronouncing Hamas - it sounded more like hummus.

Other candidates to speak were former New York Governor George Pataki, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum and former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina. Kentucky Senator Rand Paul missed the event, citing Senate votes.

As raucous as the crowd was at times, it may not be about votes at all but about dollars.

Adelson, the RJC’s main funder, helped sustain the 2012 campaign of former US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich. (JTA)



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Kids shouldn’t be at a loss this holiday

SUZANNE BELLING

Having a year-end break on the coast with the children, takes away the holiday problem: what to do with the children. But for those remaining in the inland cities, or living far away from the beaches, parents face the difficulty of keeping the children occupied during the long summer weeks.

For Johannesburgers, the first thing that comes to mind is **Camp Gan Yisrael** which has become a household name throughout the Johannesburg Jewish community, and each year its attendance increases steadily.

This December over 650 have registered for the camp. “Many age groups fill up very fast and I have parents calling at all hours begging for a place for their child,” says Rabbi Pini Pink, who co-directs the camp together with his wife Rochie.

The children have a fun, action-packed and educational schedule, filled with Jewish-themed activities and games.

Head staff hailing from as far away as California, Montreal and Australia lead a team of energetic leaders in giving the kids a memorable experience. The day camp caters for children from the age of three till the end of grade 6. From grade 6 till the end of high school, Gan Yisrael has an overnight camp, based at its campsite in KwaZulu-Natal.

For more info about the camp you can go to www.cgijoburg.co.za.

Shopping centres provide a variety of entertainment and activities.

Sandton City has a Lego pit, with 80 000 Lego bricks to keep kids entertained for hours, as well as four performances a day of the popular Paw Patrol series.

Balfour Park offers painting, rides, gaming and arts and crafts. Norwood Mall has many



Chanukah-related activities until December 14.

Cavendish Square in Claremont, Cape Town, invites the young to decorate their own gingerbread man from 11:00 to 15:00 between December 14 and 23.

Each of the major cities has a lot to offer during the school holidays.

Among the Johannesburg suggestions:

- Yeesh Fun for Kids, Woodmead, with supervised play facilities and a coffee bar for adults - winner of the 2010 Leisure Options Best Indoor Party award;
- Red Bus City Tour, a hop on, hop off excursion to interesting spots in Johannesburg, with holiday specials for children;
- Cradle of Humankind, about an hour’s drive out of town, with an interactive and informative learner centre - this is where homo Naledi was discovered recently;
- Planetarium, showing the stars, with experts

on-site to answer questions;

- The Sci Bono Discovery Centre in Newtown;
- Gold Reef City, with its exciting rides and exhibits;
- Johannesburg Zoo and Zoo Lake;
- Wild animal feeding zoo at Midrand.

In Cape Town there is:

- Picnic in the Company Gardens, ball games or feeding the squirrels;
- Cool-Runnings, Durbanville, for a thrilling but safe bobsled ride on a steel track;
- V & A Waterfront has special children’s holiday programmes, apart from its many regular attractions, including the aquarium.
- Mouille Point mini train, plus the adjoining park and promenade, ideal for walks and picnics;
- Museums, particularly the SA Museum and the SA National Gallery, both in the Company Gardens;
- Ode Molen Eco Village, Pinelands, with a jungle

gym and slides, as well as pony rides, plus facilities for adults to eat and relax;

- Bugz Family Playpark, Kraaifontein, with both outdoor and indoor play areas, with pedal cars, a train, horse rides and magic shows;
- Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Durban attractions include:

- Day trip to Umhlanga Lagoon Nature Reserve, on a 30-minute guided hike to see the many birds and mammals;
- Children’s play area at Moses Mabhida Stadium, with lawns and room for cycling and skate boarding;
- Fun World, with dodgem cars and aerial cableway over the city;
- uShaka Marine World and Sea World Aquarium and Theme Park;
- Virginia nature reserve in Durban North;
- PheZulu Safari Park with its crocodile and snake park;
- Groovy Balls Adventure Park with its rides and rolling in giant balls;
- Durban Botanical Gardens, with its “living fossil” cycads.

Pretoria has its own set of attractions:

- Ludwig’s Rose Farm, a few kilometres north of Pretoria, with thousands of roses and tractor rides on weekends;
- Friends of the Rail, with rides on a working train;
- African Window Museum (formerly the National Cultural History Museum);
- Grove Mall Ice Rink;
- The Pretoria Zoo;
- Fountains, the picturesque picnic spot;
- Go Kart Fun and Menlyn Park.

Of course, if there is spare cash, there are some good holiday movies and some theatrical productions, including Janice Honeyman’s pantomime “Sleeping Beauty” at the Mandela Theatre.

Things to do in Durban

ALANA BARANOV

Our tropical sun-kissed eastern shores have always been known as South Africa’s playground and there’s nowhere better to spend the December holidays than in Durban.

A heady mix of British colonial history, vibrant Indian culture and proud Zulu heritage, Durban is arguably the country’s melting pot, nestling alongside some of the best beaches in the world.

The key attraction of the Golden Mile is undoubtedly uShaka Marine World. Part water park, part marine aquarium and sea world, this is the perfect place to learn about our oceans and their creatures while having fun in the sun.

You can catch the legendary open-air double decker Ricksha Bus on a whirlwind tour of the city’s main attractions including the Emmanuel Cathedral, Durban City Hall and the Victoria Street Market.

Or head for the North Beach area by hiring a bike, skateboard or even catch a ride in one of the unique Durban rickshaws to explore the promenade.

Durban is best known for its awesome “wavescape” - from kayaking at Umgeni River, to jet-skiing at Blue Lagoon, surfing at Bronze Beach or stand-up paddle boarding off Adding-ton Beach.

Boat charters can also be hired for round trips around the Durban harbour.

For adrenaline junkies, be sure to take the plunge at Moses Mabhida Stadium on its Big Rush Big Swing, the world’s only stadium swing and the largest of its kind.

Be sure to browse some of Durban’s famous markets like the Shongweni Farmers Market for fresh produce or the Wonder Market in the Chris Saunders Park in Umhlanga for food, music and

shopping.

The place to be is undoubtedly the resort village of Umhlanga Rocks. Stroll along its promenade, explore the natural wonder of the mangroves, splash in the rocks at Granny’s Pool or enjoy cocktails in the Lighthouse Bar at the Oyster Box Hotel.

No stay is complete without a visit to the Sharks Board where you can learn more about these predators. From Umhlanga, you can also organise deep-sea fishing trips or go dolphin viewing at daybreak.

Inland, the Valley of a Thousand Hills is just 30 minutes from town. Besides the traditional Zulu villages, a must-see is the century old Umgeni Stream Railway train that takes families on day trips through the picturesque valleys. Then there’s the St Lucia and iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

Durban is also a short day trip away from some of the country’s most outstanding game and wildlife reserves, like the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe Game Parks, as well as the beautiful Drakensberg Mountain range and the historic battle fields of KwaZulu-Natal that can be toured with private guides.

For vintage furniture shopping and local farm stall treats, arts and crafts, there’s the Midlands Meander, just a short drive out of the city. Stop at each of the gourmet restaurants, chocolate shops and other delights nestling in the tranquil setting. A favourite stop is the Nelson Mandela Capture Site, where a breathtaking memorial and information centre marks the spot where Mandela was arrested in 1962.

The Aliwal Shoal, just off the Sapphire Coast by Umkomaas, is a popular destination for Scuba divers and snorkelers alike.

Up the North Coast, you can explore South African history with a visit to the home of Albert

uShaka Marine World, Durban.



Luthuli and the Phoenix Settlement, a commune built by Mahatma Gandhi.

The North Coast offers many child-friendly holiday options - Flag Animal Farm, a butterfly park and lesser-known spots like the Litchi Orchard where you can pick litchis.

Durban also boasts some of the best golf courses in the country, such as the old world charm of the Royal Country Club, as well as casinos; nightclubs and the largest shopping mall in the southern hemisphere, Gateway Theatre of Shopping.

From a Jewish perspective, Durban has much to offer. Chabad of the North Coast has activities for every day of Chanukah, as well as its famous Shabbat hospitality and family-centred events throughout the holiday period.

The Durban United Hebrew Congregation is having its Chanukah Party on December 13 at 18:00, with daily prayer services and a mikveh,

while the Durban Progressive Congregation is having its communal lighting of the chanukiot on December 11.

The kosher Circle Café, under the supervision of the Johannesburg Beth Din, serves up delicious breakfasts, lunches and tea time treats. Situated in the Garden of Remembrance at the Durban Holocaust Centre, the Circle Café does outside catering and can be booked for events.

The DHC Gift Shop, located in the café, has a unique range of décor, gifts and homeware. All proceeds from the Circle Café and the Gift Shop go towards the educational programmes of the Durban Holocaust Centre.

- *For information on Durban, visit the Durban Tourism website <http://www.durbanexperience.co.za/WhatsOn/Pages/Welcome.aspx> and for more information on Jewish Durban, check out www.cknj.co.za.*

Make the most of the Mother City



CINDY MORITZ

It’s easy to fall into old habits when visiting Cape Town, but don’t be fooled by its sleepy reputation - there’s much to do in the Mother City over summer.

Find your own Map to Jewish Cape Town when you arrive at the airport or get it at any Visitor Information Centre. It will give you a great overview of Jewish life in the city and includes useful contacts.

Use it to find details for Jewish Cape Town’s hidden culinary gem, Coffee Time at Astra, which rolls out the most delicious kosher lunch buffet daily during season, except on Shabbat.

For entertainment, head straight to the Fugard Theatre in District Six, to see “Bad Jews” which ends its extended run on December 31. Superbly cast, with Lara Lipschitz as “religiously opinionated” cousin Daphna and Glen Biederman-Pam as her nemesis, secular cousin Liam, it’s a must-see.

Summer is time for outdoor movies and music, so check the Galileo Cinema schedule for screenings at Kirstenbosch, the V&A Waterfront and other venues.

Hire a chair and blanket for a relaxed viewing

experience under the stars, and bring your own picnic if you like. Kirstenbosch Summer Sunset Concerts happen every Sunday evening. Go early to park nearby and bring your own blanket, cheese and wine. Book ahead for both.

If you’re a rugby fan, word is the world-class Springbok Experience at the V&A Waterfront is more than a museum.

If you’ve done Lion’s Head, there are some great walking tours of Cape Town - free historical tours leave every day from Greenmarket Square, or if you’re up for adventure, take an underground tunnel tour in the city’s unused canals and rivers.

While we all love Clifton 4th, there are other fabulous places to share your smoked turkey bagel.

Pack up early and drive to Boulders near Simon’s Town, where the African penguins entertain and you can enjoy a great swim. Check the tides before you go as the beach becomes a sliver at times and your may not find a spot.

Done the Winelands? Now follow the Nedbank Green Wine Route, an international first that acknowledges responsible environmental production. It includes Backsberg if you want to stock up on kosher wine.

Not so slaapstad after all!

Opinion and Analysis

Imaginary Palestinian narrative to deny Jews their history



BARBARIC YAWP

David Saks

The discovery last week of a seal impression bearing the name of King Hezekiah (Chizkiah), during excavations near the Temple Mount makes one marvel yet again at the effrontery of those who accuse the Jews/Zionists of robbing the “indigenous” Palestinian people of their land.

The inscription on the seal reads, “Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz, king of Judah”. Chizkiah HaMelech is ranked with David and Shlomo as among the most righteous of Jewish kings, which was certainly not the case with his father.

Both David and Hezekiah, though, were Jewish kings who reigned in the Biblical Land of Israel nearly 15 centuries before the emergence of Islam and the Arab-Islamic colonial occupation of Eretz Yisrael that swiftly followed.

As we know, the Hezekiah bulla won’t have any impact on Islamist and leftist propaganda against the Jewish State, just as all the previous archaeological discoveries have failed to make any difference.

Actually, the prevailing claim now goes that Hezekiah, like all the kings and prophets before and after him, were in reality Palestinians, while

today’s Jews are colonial usurpers from Eastern Europe (or Central Asia).

When it comes to denying Jews their right, historic or otherwise, to Israel, historical evidence has never come into it. As always, though, archaeological windfalls of this nature reinforce our sense of connection with Eretz Yisrael as the cradle of our heritage as well as the physical land of our forebears. During the seemingly endless centuries of exile, it was no more than an abstract reality.

Politically-driven attempts to fabricate an imaginary Palestinian narrative while writing the Jewish people out of history altogether do, nevertheless, raise some interesting questions about a people’s right to a particular piece of land.

In the US, for instance, the claim generally made by, and on behalf of, the Native American population is that “their” land was “stolen” from them by white European settlers. The same is said for the Australian aborigines.

But this is noit entirely accurate. It is certainly true that gross injustices were inflicted on the native populations of both countries, and that this resulted in their being forcibly dispossessed of territories they had occupied for centuries - millennia in the aborigines’ case.

For all that, let’s look at the prevailing demographics at the time of European settlement, from the 1600s in the case of the US and late 1700s in that of Australia.

Continued on page 18

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Steven Krawitz looks at his favourite books of 2015

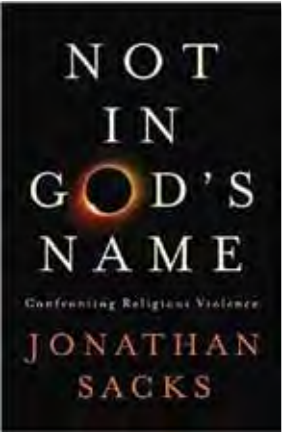
STEVEN KRAWITZ

As a bibliophile and sometime reviewer of books on ChaiFM radio, I have to make many choices about what to read. There is so much top quality writing out there that one needs to be highly selective.

What follows is a list of books published in 2015 I have read and want to recommend, and books I would like to still read.

JEWISH INTEREST

Not in G-d’s Name by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. Hodder & Stoughton.



In this powerful and timely book, Rabbi Sacks explores the roots of violence and religion.

Killing a King by Dan Ephron. Norton.

Published on the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, this book investigates the assassination and explores the impact this tragic killing has had on Israel. The Rabin family and Yigal Amir co-operated with Ephron on the book.

SOUTH AFRICAN INTEREST

The Secret Society by Robin Brown. Penguin Books. An interesting exploration of Cecil John Rhodes’ plans and success in creating a secret society that would guide and steer the British Empire. For once it is comforting to read about a non-Jewish organisation’s striving for world domination.

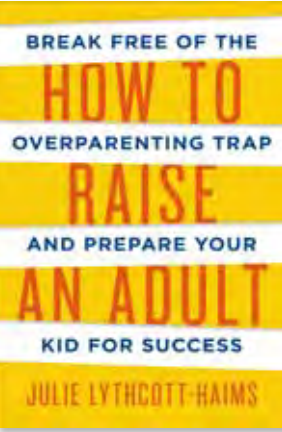
An Empty Coast by Tony Parks. Macmillan. A thriller set in Namibia and South Africa, involving mercenaries, the CIA and buried secrets from the Bush Wars of the ‘80s. Park is an Australian author who divides his time between Sydney and the Kruger Park and is tipped as the next Wilbur Smith.

SOCIAL ISSUES

So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed by Jon Ronson. Picador.

While you are posting pictures of your holiday on social media platforms, take the time to read these cautionary case studies of the damage and devastation we can so easily inflict on others by simply retweeting or responding and how we are all part of the phenomenon.

How to Raise an Adult by Julie Lythcott-Haims. Bluebird books for Life.



An anti-helicopter parenting manifesto that sets forth an alternative philosophy for raising preteens and teens to self-sufficient young adulthood, written by a freshman dean from Stanford University. If you think you’re not a helicopter parent, read the first chapter (free sample from Google Play Books) and then once you have confronted the awful truth, (because which Jewish South African parent is not?), go out and get yourself a copy of this book and save your relationship with your children.

TRUE ADVENTURE

No Picnic on Mount Kenya by Felice Benuzzi. MacLehose Press.

A reissued classic about an Italian soldier who breaks out of a POW camp in Kenya during the Second World War to climb Mount Kenya. Thrilling and electrifying.

BUSINESS

The Rise of Robots by Marin Ford. OneWorld. The scary possibility of robots replacing people in many highly skilled occupations from a major Silicon Valley player. Winner of the Financial Times McKinsey Business Book of the Year Award.

FICTION

Neapolitan Quartet by Elena Ferrante (My Brilliant Friend, The Story of a New Name, Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay, The Story of the Lost Child). Europa.

The intricate, emotional and psychological story and study of female friendship between Elena and Lila, set in Naples from 1950 onwards. If your book club has not bought this Italian sensation, indulge yourself in all four.

New York Sagas: A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara. Picador.

One of the most talked about books of the year, shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Jude, a victim of the most terrible sexual abuse as a child, is the centre of a group of four young men living in New York. This is a story about friendships and how they change, about the miracles love can perform and the limitations of love. Not for the faint hearted.



City of Fire by Garth Risk Hallberg.

In 1970s New York, a huge cast of characters brought pulsatingly to life are all connected to the murder of a college student in Central Park and a summer night when the electricity grid overloads and the city is plunged into darkness and madness. One of the most hyped and anticipated novels of the year.

Dictator by Robert Harris. Hutchinson.

The final instalment of Harris’ Cicero trilogy, set in the Rome of Julius Caesar. This is a study in politics, pure and simple, by a master writer who has shared the last 12 years in the company of Cicero, one of the greatest statesmen and orators of all time. Do yourself a favour and read Imperium and Lustrum first, then finish off with Dictator.

The Last Century Trilogy by Jane Smiley (Some Luck, Early Warning, Golden Age). Mantle.

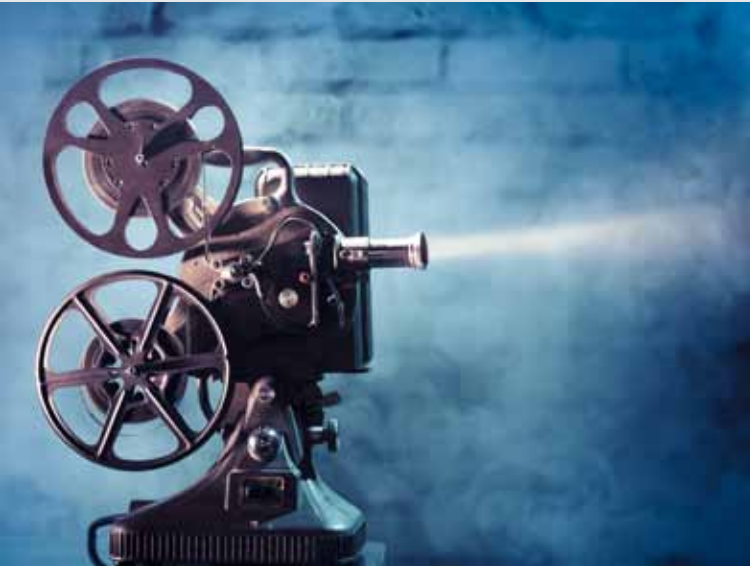
Five generations of the Langdon family, starting in Iowa in 1920, spreading across the US and ending in 2019. Smiley has achieved a work on the scale of Dickens and Tolstoy and guaranteed for herself a place among the hallowed names of American letters.

Career of Evil by Robert Galbraith. Little Brown. Private detective Cormoran Strike’s third outing. Galbraith is the pen name of J K Rowling, who has proved her talent as a crime writer.

Shanghai Redemption by Qiu Xiaolong. Mulholland Books.

China is the rising world power. Xiaolong is one of China’s rising crime writers. This is the ninth Inspector Chen book. Crime fiction is a good way to get to know a country. Enter the Dragon and enjoy the ride.

Jolly good holiday fare this December



PETER FELDMAN

December is the month when some of the most entertaining and thought-provoking films are released and there are a number of excellent productions to see during the holidays.

Screen veteran Maggie Smith, who featured in the popular TV series “Downton Abbey”, portraying the Dowager Countess of Grantham, does a complete character turnaround in “The Lady in the Van”.

Directed by British theatre producer and director Nicholas Hytner, the film is based on playwright Alan Bennett’s encounter with a woman, Miss Shepard, who lived in a van parked on his Camden Town property. Smith is superb as the crusty, acerbic old woman who refuses to move and her testy relationship with Bennett forms the basis of this outstanding film.

Another highlight this December is “Carol”. Set in 1950s New York, a department-store clerk, played by Rooney Mara, who dreams of a better life falls for the charms of an older, married woman, exquisitely visualised by Cate Blanchett. Heady moments lift this production above the mundane.

The story of Frankenstein has come out in various permutations over the years. “Victor Frankenstein” is another fresh version, effectively evoking the famous tale through the eyes of Frankenstein’s devoted assistant Igor, played with great vigour by former Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe. Frankenstein is conjured up by an over-the-top James McAvoy. There are plenty special effects and the era of early London is well captured in tone and texture.

For the young there is a wonderful revitalised version of “The Little Prince”. Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s timeless classic gets a 21st-century makeover by blending two narratives into one; a modern little girl discovers the story through interaction with an eccentric neighbour, The Aviator. Director Mark Osbourne (Kung Fu Panda) has fused different animated styles for great effect.

Another crowd-pleaser for the young (and quite a few adults) is “Snoopy and Charlie Brown - The Peanuts Movie 3D”. Directed by Steve Martino, the film features Charlie Brown who has a crush on a new neighbour but is too shy to talk to her, resulting in a misdirected adventure as he sets about trying to impress her.

A notable work is “He Named Me Malala” by renowned documentary filmmaker, Davis Guggenheim, about schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai who made world headlines when she was shot in the head by the Taliban in Pakistan for speaking out about girls’ education in the country. She was 15. A wonderfully uplifting work in which we get to know the world’s youngest Nobel Peace Prize-winner a little better.

“Testament of Youth” is an engrossing war epic about Vera Brittain, a fiercely independent woman who abandons her studies at Oxford to become a field nurse during the First World War. Based on Britain’s classic 1933 memoir, James Kent has fashioned a superb slice of English period drama in his directorial debut, impeccably capturing the era and all the dramatic elements that contribute towards creating a first-class film.

The new James Bond film “Spectre”, with Daniel Craig, is worth adding to your list, as well as Stephen Spielberg’s “Bridge of Spies” and “Brooklyn”, about a young immigrant who leaves post-war Ireland to start a new life in Brooklyn, New York.

It’s worth mentioning that Woman in Gold, with its strong Jewish theme, gets my vote for one of the top productions of the year and is available on DVD. In 1907 socialite Adele Bloch-Bauer sat for artist Gustav Klimt. The film centres on the restitution battle, decades later, between the Austrian government and Maria Altmann, (Helen Mirren), Bloch-Bauer’s niece, for this dazzling gold-flecked portrait.

- TV series worth watching:**
- Blue Bloods (Mnet-101)
 - Fortitude (BBC First 119)
 - Eggheads (ITV Choice 123)
 - The Chase (ITV Choice 123)
 - For the Love of Dogs (ITV Choice 123)

Greece will not follow EU labels on Israeli products

ATHENS - Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias has informed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Greece will not follow recently implemented European Union guidelines to label Israeli products from Judea and Samaria, the Golan Heights, and eastern Jerusalem. Israel and Greece agreed on extensive bilateral co-operation in economic matters, technology, science, education, trade, energy, and agriculture following last month’s meeting between Kotzias and Netanyahu. Greece joins Hungary in its defiance of the EU’s directive to remove “Made in Israel” labels from Israeli products originating beyond the 1967 lines. (JNS.org)

Genetic screening is a timely necessity, Jews are told

SHIRA DRUION

The Jewish gene pool, despite being a source of great talent, has given rise to some genetically linked complications, particularly in the Ashkenazi community.

“Though many people have heard of Tay-Sachs disease,” says Katrina Sarig, director of Jnetics, a charity dedicated to improving the prevention, diagnosis and management of Jewish genetic disorders in the UK, “there is little awareness of the other genetic disorders that are relatively more common among Jewish people. These vary in severity, but include conditions that are fatal in childhood and others that may lead to chronic disability and a shortened lifespan.

“No cure exists for the vast majority of these disorders. However, thanks to scientific developments, it is now possible to greatly improve their prevention and management. We believe that knowledge is power, but understand that in the case of genetic disorders, it can also raise difficult issues,” says Sarig.

There are many precautionary measures that have been put in place to prevent giving birth to children with genetic diseases and Jnetics provides a lot of information on its website.

Ashkenazi Jews are carriers of a number of diseases, known as autosomal, recessive genetic conditions. This means that being a carrier will not cause any symptoms but should two carriers marry, there is a 25 per cent chance that each child will be affected.

These generally fatal diseases are more common in people who have Jewish ancestry than in the general population, but are not exclusive to the Jewish community.

Scientists and doctors to date have identified over 30 conditions which are relevant to people with Jewish ancestry. Some particularly affect those of Sephardi ancestry and some of Ashkenazi ancestry.

Sephardi disorders tend to be specific to the “community of birth” and do not affect all Sephardi Jews to the same extent, according to information provided by Jnetics. This means that disorders that are more common among Sephardi Jews from one region, for instance Tunisia, tend to differ from those that are more common among Sephardi Jews from areas such as Syria and Morocco.

The diseases are more prevalent in the Jewish community because for a very long time, Jewish communities were small and isolated, which meant members tended to intermarry within their own communities.

As a result, over the course of many generations, abnormal DNA was passed on

within an ethnic community, even when that community was no longer small and isolated. Thus most ethnic groups have genetic disorders which are more common in that population than in the rest of the world.

“The carrier rates are high in the Ashkenazi community,” says Rabbi Yossi Chaikin of Oxford Shul in Johannesburg and director of Dor Yesharim SA, which tests for genetic diseases.

“Dor Yesharim screens for the genes and will inform a couple who are intending to meet one another, that they are both carriers of the same disease. If that is the case and both are carriers, they should be strongly discouraged from dating with an eye to marriage.”

Rabbi Chaikin says that ideally the cross-checking of these genetic conditions should take place before a couple even meets, or as early as possible in the relationship, in order to ascertain whether they are both carriers of the genes.

If this is done too late, and the couple find out that they are genetically incompatible but are already emotionally connected to one another, they are faced with the very difficult choice and will need to seek rabbinic advice and genetic counselling to help them decide if they should go ahead with their relationship or go their separate ways.

He explains that up until a decade ago, couples who knew they were carriers of the same disease, had only once choice: to fall pregnant naturally and to test the foetus early on in pregnancy at the end of the first trimester.

If the foetus was affected, the pregnancy would need to be terminated. However, this scenario presented huge halachic challenges, not to mention the emotional and ethical toll it took on the couple.

The choices are much wider today. The latest reproductive technology methods allow for Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) which means babies will be conceived in a similar way to IVE, with the additional step that the foetus is screened for the suspected diseases before it is returned to the mother’s womb.

This method is usually sanctioned halachically (rabbinic advice must be sought in each individual case) and has ensured many healthier children are born, but incurs huge financial costs for the couple and is emotionally challenging.

Rabbi Chaikin says that “although PGD is an option, the preferred and recommended route is to have a Dor Yesharim screening and cross-checking done before a relationship develops”.

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Coordinator of Jewish Student Life

The Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town is seeking to employ a half day Coordinator of Jewish Student Life.

The Coordinator will be expected to plan, implement, and oversee student-oriented programming, as well as help students create a meaningful Jewish life at UCT.

For additional details, see www.kaplancentre.uct.ac.za



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www.jdap.co.za

An initiative of the South African Jewish Museum (SAJM).



Chanukah across the Jukskei

DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

The Pretoria Jewish community celebrated Chanukah with a car parade from the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation in Groenkloof.

A large crowd placed their specially made Chanukiahs on their car roof tops, forming an impressive procession of vehicles who drove through the streets of Pretoria to Wingate Park Country Club for the function.

The group sang Maoz Tzur after Rabbi Levi Medalie lit the first candle on the giant menorah. A delicious meal of lasagne, cheese blintzes and donuts followed, with the playing of a Chanukah bingo. All the children received chocolate Chanukah gelt and played games.



The car parade driving past Jaffa, the Pretoria home for the aged.

Another accolade for Marlene

SUZANNE BELLING

Veteran communal leader Marlene Bethlehem recently notched up another post on her already formidable CV. She has been appointed chairman of the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre, succeeding the late Ernest Leibowitz, who passed away recently.

- “I am totally overwhelmed and humbled for three reasons:
- My closeness and affection for Chief Rabbi Harris;
 - It is an honour to uphold the memory of Ernest Leibowitz; and
 - It is a vital opportunity to work with Ann (Harris) and Rabbi (Dovid) Hazdan,” she told SA Jewish Report.

Bethlehem is proud, too, to be associated with Hazel Cohen and Rene Sidley, the professionals of the RCHCC.

Bethlehem’s communal work was inherited from her mother, Dolly Palm, who was involved in the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society and had chaired Arcadia Jewish Children’s Home.

Her achievements, however, went even further after she rose to great heights following her career as a professional tennis player.

She has three priorities in her life - family, the Jewish community and sport.

Not everyone knows her tennis background. She was on the international tennis circuit from 1959 till 1962, when she won the Wimbledon Plate (consolation event) for ladies’ singles in England and later that year won the Dutch International ladies’ doubles in Holland.

She was a professional coach from 1964 to 1985 and in 1974, during apartheid, was the official coach to the first-ever black SA women’s tennis team.

Some might remember her “match” against late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris (zt”l) to raise funds for the Benevolent and Emunah. “I miss him terribly - he was such an inspiration,” said Bethlehem, who with him and other rabbis, represented the Jewish community at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Bethlehem also recently took over the portfolio of country communities chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, succeeding Mr Justice Ralph Zulman.

Her commitment to the community has been acknowledged in awards from the

Edenvale Jewish Community, the Hebrew Order of David and a medal for meritorious service from the Union of Jewish Women.

She is also a trustee of the Christa Maria Will Trust, which fights anti-Semitism and promotes relationships between Jews and people of other denominations.

Bethlehem chaired the committee for the disbursement of the Swiss Banks’ Humanitarian Fund for Needy Holocaust Survivors in 1998 and in 2006 was the first and only South African elected vice-president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in New York.

It was as chairman of the executive committee of the JWBS (elected honorary life president in 1987) that Bethlehem impressed some of the top leaders of the Jewish community.

Gerald Leissner, backed by Mervyn Smith and Professor Michael Katz, all urged Bethlehem to become involved in mainstream leadership.

So successful was she in her initial position of chairman of the then Transvaal Council of the Jewish Board of Deputies in the early 1990s, that she became the first woman national chairman of the Board (1995 to 1999) since its inception in 1903, followed by national presidency of the organisation (1999 to 2003).

With her history as an advocate for human rights and equality, her term fortuitously coincided with Nelson Mandela’s tenure as president of SA.

“I was privileged beyond belief to have an association with him.”

She treasures a plate presented to her by the former president, inscribed with the words, “To Marlene Bethlehem, a fine lady, who has deserved our admiration and respect.”

Bethlehem had a strong bond with Mandela’s successor Thabo Mbkei, “a scholar and an intellectual”. In 2004 he appointed her deputy chairman of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural and Linguistic Communities.

Bethlehem has had a good innings on the SAJBD on which she still serves. She is married to Dr Brian Bethlehem and has three children and six grandchildren.

“A leader must have a moral and ethical approach and be passionate about the cause,” she says.

Present generation’s struggle is economic empowerment



Deputy Minister in the Presidency Buti Manamela; Minister of Small and Medium Enterprise Development Lindiwe Zulu; Gavin Watson, CEO of Bosasa, winner of the Step Up 2 a Start Up Trailblazer of the Year award; Dr Bertie Lubner, 2014 Trailblazer of the Year; Nomvula Mabuza, executive director of the NYDA; and Vivian William, director and shareholder at Regenesys Business School.

At a glittering event in Sandton last week, the winners of the Primestars Step Up 2 A Start-Up Trailblazer competition were awarded with prizes including bursaries and electronic goods. The Step Up 2 initiative builds the skills of high school learners to one day become successful entrepreneurs.

According to a press release from Afrika Tikkun, one of the nine central challenges outlined in the National Development Plan is that too few people work. While it is true that 37 per cent of youth aged 18 - 24 do not work, it is also true that the potential is tremendous.

The youth bring a great deal of innovation, which only needs to be harnessed.

The winner of Step-up 2 a Start Up Trailblazer of the Year, is Gavin Watson, CEO of Bosasa. This annual award, which was first given to Bertie Lubner, founder of Afrika Tikkun, in 2014, is given to social benefactors who have pioneered in the area of entrepreneurship and youth development.

Watson has for many years been active in skills development. He emphasised the importance of building teams in accomplishing anything of worth, and was praised in turn by his core team from Bosasa as being one of the most accessible and innovative CEOs in South Africa.

Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister in the Presidency, said at the function: “Young people will be putting our

country onto the map through their ideas.” There were plenty of ideas ventured during the evening - from an instrument to break down communication barriers, to a mobile application that connects commuters and taxi drivers, and a product to be installed in townships to prevent fires.

Keynote speaker, Minister of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Lindiwe Zulu, encouraged the learners to find their own ’76, just as her generation had to. But while her ’76 was political freedom, this generation’s struggle would be for economic empowerment.

“The government has realised that political power without economic empowerment is meaningless,” she stressed, but cautioned that just as the struggle fought in 1976 was for the freedom of all people, the struggle for economic empowerment should be for the benefit of all.

Marc Lubner, CEO of Afrika Tikkun, a strategic partner to Step Up 2 A Start Up and one of the prize-givers at the ceremony cautioned the winners that to be an entrepreneur is a very challenging but rewarding venture.

“We believe that in order to break the poverty cycle, we must enable South Africa’s youth to find employment or, better still, to create it themselves. This initiative will certainly promote and facilitate a culture of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit amongst school going children and certainly complements Afrika Tikkun’s Cradle to Career Model and Programmes”.

Sydenham tots wow everyone with their talent

OWN CORRESPONDENT

“The epitome of naches,” is how Rabbi Yossy Goldman of the Sydenham-Highlands North Hebrew Congregation, described the Chanukah/end-of-year concert of the middle group at Sydenham Nursery School last week.

“This is a school of love and nurturing,” he said.

Principal Sue Benjamin welcomed parents and grandparents to the concert held in the actual shul, while teachers Jacqui Miller and Moira Berkowitz conducted the little stars.



Photo supplied

Make sure that the collective memories are being kept alive

Jewish Digital Archive Project (JDAP) is appealing to the South African Jewish community - or southern African expats - to make sure that “those old memories remain, once you’re gone”.

JDAP is a website archive that aims to preserve the social history of the southern African Jewish community, with its “guiding principle” being to ensure those shared generational memories are accessible to subsequent generations.

The project is being undertaken by the South African Jewish Museum, with the support of the Kaplan-Kushlick Foundation. It kicks off its appeal with the question: “What are you going to do with that dusty box at the back of the cupboard? The one filled with old black and white photos, documents and other bits and pieces from your family’s past? What will happen to these memories in the future?”

JDAP says in its appeal that Jews with southern African roots have settled all over the globe. “Despite this broad footprint, many of these Jews have retained close links with South Africa and they have remained a distinct cultural grouping with shared

memories and common experiences. However, the progeny of these expat South African Jews have less and less a connection to their past, in the same manner as contemporary SA Jews no longer have a connection or affinity to the shtetls of their forebears.”

JDAP offers the opportunity to make sure that SA family history is not forgotten, becoming less relevant from generation to generation.

“We’ve designed JDAP to not be an academic archive, but rather an open communal space whereby southern African Jews are able to share and explore their shared heritage.

“JDAP is using digital technology which allows for anyone to create, record and share their family history.

“Individual family histories are kept intact as collections, allowing for distant relatives to easily find this material and add their own familial tree to it. Community events and organisations are represented as well.”

JDAP is therefore asking people to upload material and explore the archive adding insight and information to the content where relevant.

UJW brings light to those in need

CINDY KREE

The Union of Jewish Women, Johannesburg, joined over 40 000 volunteers worldwide on Mitzvah Day 2015, with their special project “Bringing light to the people”.

Working together with other faith groups - representatives of the Mormon Church, members of Bet David Shul, and other community members - the UJW brought light and laughter to families across many communities.

In keeping with the theme of Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, the project focused on bringing lights to families living in squatter camps in and around Johannesburg - the thousands who live in abject poverty in informal settlements.

These families have no access to electricity, no lights, no heating, and are forced to rely on paraffin lamps which, while being fairly ineffective, are at the same time frighteningly dangerous and have resulted in tragedies too numerous to mention.

The project began on November 22, when 150 solar lights were distributed to some of the most indigent families gathered at the Assemblies of G-d Church in Katlehong. The UJW was joined by a group of volunteers, including a prospective bride and groom and their retinue, who involved themselves in this project as part of the build-up to their wedding day.

On November 24 the UJW, together with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, joined hands and distributed 60 lights to the Alexandra Aids Orphans Project. This was a very special day for all those involved, allowing volunteers to bear witness to the incredible difference a light can make to those in need.

The final part of the project took place on December 1. The UJW, working with and through outreach organisation Afrika Tikun, distributed 200 lights to excited recipients in Orange Farm.

The remaining lights will be distributed in February under the auspices of the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI).

Waverley Shul celebrates Chanukah in style

OWN CORRESPONDENT

On Monday November 7, Waverley Shul celebrated Chanukah with candle-making, a magic show, and an entertaining “Waverley’s Got Talent” show.

Shul members really got to showcase their talents and the audience enjoyed gymnastics, guitar playing, singing, including the Waverley choir, and even rabbis did their stint!

To end off, the shul had an inspirational candle-lighting, with Chazan Elton Krawitz leading the ceremony.



The Waverley Shul choir led by Joel Sacher.

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATES OF THE BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV, BASED IN HYDE PARK, JOHANNESBURG, HAS A VACANCY FOR AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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- To ensure the continuity of existing programmes which include current fundraising programmes;
- To evaluate with the President and executive, the appointment of relevant sub-committees in order to assist in Fundraising, PR and general support for the work that is being undertaken, on a voluntary basis;
- Prepare a budget, illustrating anticipated income and expenses, to coincide with the budget periods of BGU.

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- Report on the progress of existing joint scientific and research programmes;
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Personal Profile

Competent, highly motivated, assertive, honest, person of integrity, friendly, initiative taker who is flexible and has good attention to detail and who is passionate about Israel and South Africa. A go getter, enthusiastic, willing to work hard and fast, quick learner, someone who feels that no small task is too much to ask of them!

Experience and Skills

- Several years' experience in general management.
- Good interpersonal relationship building skills and presentation skills.
- Competent in MS Office package, especially Word, Excel, Outlook.
- Good project scheduling and organisational skills and ability to plan.
- Excellent verbal and written communication in English.
- Numeracy skills, an ability to draw up, allocate and manage budgets.
- Relevant experience in Community and Skills Development and Capacity Building.
- Organisational skills, ability to structure, organise and analyse information and processes in a logical and meaningful way (numeric / non-numeric).
- Team member management – working co-operatively with team members or independently and be accountable.

The remuneration, which includes the use of a car, is to be negotiated, depending on time commitments and experience.

Applicants are invited to submit their CVs to Herby Rosenberg, Vice President of South African Associates of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev by email to herbyr@afrikatikun.org or contact may be made by telephone (011) 325 5914 to arrange an appointment for an interview.

Yossi Sarid, an eloquent man of conviction, passes on

WAYNE SUSSMAN

Yossi Sarid (pictured) was one of Israel’s most enigmatic citizens. Last Friday his regular column was published in Haáretz. His columns typified the contradictions of the man. A secular Jew to his core, yet, almost without fail, his columns would weave in biblical and Talmudic references.

Sarid was a superb parliamentarian. When he entered the Knesset in 1974, he became a darling of the media. His fierce, principled attacks on those whose policies he disagreed with, and those whose values and integrity he questioned, were legendary.

He was former Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir’s right-hand man. He made an immediate impression on voters and on the Labour Party, and many saw this young prince as a future leader of Labour and a future prime minister.

For Sarid, principle was more important than position. In 1984, when Labour entered a government of national unity with Likud, the party who had been responsible for Israel’s incursion into Lebanon, he threw away that veritable ladder to the top and went into the political periphery and joined Ratz (a predecessor to Meretz).

Sarid knew his party would never be a majority party; he knew his opposition to the unity government would draw the wrath of most of those who held him in such high regard when he entered the Knesset.

He would lead Meretz and help the party win 10 seats in the 1999 election. He served in Yitzhak Rabin’s government as minister of environment and in Ehud Barak’s government as minister of education. He had a passion for education and made his mark in this portfolio.

I only met Yossi Sarid once - during the Lebanon War of 2006. I was travelling with Zev Krenigel in the northern part of Israel. We happened upon moshav Margaliot.



We travelled up a winding, single track road, along the Lebanese border. The police told us to go to the bomb shelter. There we met with anxious residents, many of whom were of Kurdish descent.

I had never met Kurdish Jews before. During our halted exchanges, I found out that Yossi Sarid was a resident of the moshav. I was taken aback. Sarid was Ashkenazi, urbane, and a man of letters, and here he was living among those on the periphery of society, many who would certainly never even think of voting for his party.

I asked them why he was not at the bomb shelter. They said he was looking after the chickens. The police had now told us to either stay in the shelter or consider going back to the centre of the country. I said that I was not leaving until I met Yossi Sarid. Eventually, a convoy was arranged and we set off to find Sarid at the chicken coop.

My moment had arrived. I would get to meet Sarid. As we got out, a Katyusha rocket landed about 50m from us. The noise was deafening and the dust

had enveloped our surrounds.

The policeman chaperoning us ordered us to return to the shelter immediately. I refused to miss out on my opportunity. I disobeyed him and walked to the coop. Out sauntered Sarid. Despite the fact that his chickens had almost been transformed into schnitzel, he was very nonchalant.

He told the policeman to relax and wanted to know what two guys from South Africa were doing in Margaliot. The more important question was, why was he not in a shelter. He retorted that the “chickens could not take care of themselves”.

Sarid was unapologetic about his love for his country, but he remained deeply concerned and critical about the occupation and settlement expansion and about the gap between rich and poor. He never became leader of Labour, nor did he become close to becoming prime minister, but then again, how many leaders, how many politicians, would remain with the forgotten chickens and crops during a time of a national crisis?

World News in Brief

Netanyahu rejects Kerry’s ‘one-state’ assertion



JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday rebuffed US Secretary of State John Kerry’s assertion that Israel is headed for “a one-state reality” in the absence of a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kerry had said at the Saban Forum in Washington, DC: “Current trends are leading [toward] a one-state reality... The one-state solution is no solution at all for a secure, Jewish, democratic Israel living in peace. It is simply not a viable option.”

Netanyahu said a day later: “I want to make it clear: Israel will not become a binational state.

“For there to be peace, the other side will have to decide [if] it wants peace. Unfortunately, that is not what we are seeing,” he said, noting how chief Palestinian Authority negotiator Saeb Erekat recently paid a condolence visit to the family of a terrorist who tried to kill Jews, “thereby giving encouragement and support for terrorist actions”. (JNS.org)

Opinion and Analysis

Continued from page 13

Imaginary Palestinian narrative...

Accurate figures are impossible to establish, but scholarly estimates for the population of the US in 1600 range from two to seven million, in other words, as being at most barely half the population of modern-day New York.

The aboriginal population of Australia was considerably less - the upper-estimate puts the figure at no more than 1,25 million whereas according to some it was as low as 315 000. Today, the US is home to some 300 million people and Australia to 20 million and they could both easily incorporate four or five times as many (China, only slightly larger than both countries, has nearly 1,4 billion people).

Thus, when Europeans began arriving, North America (from Mexico upwards, at any rate) and Australia were barely settled at all. The question is, could those already living there reasonably claim to have exclusive rights to so vast, rich and as yet undeveloped part of the world, simply because they were there first?

Obviously not - whites migrating from an overcrowded Europe surely had a right to make new homes for themselves in a largely unsettled North America and Australia. In a perfect world, the native populations would have recognised that the days of their having the entire land to themselves were over and that they would have to adjust accordingly - no more relying on occasional buffalo hunts, for example, but getting down to disciplined crop growing and livestock raising like everybody else.

For their part, whites would have dealt tactfully and sensitively with the locals they encountered, helping them to make the transition as smoothly and painlessly as possible. Human beings being what they are, of course, what inevitably occurred was a series of violent confrontation, with the weaker side going under.

Even with regard to South Africa, the “you stole our land” charge so central to the whole approach of the EFF and their ilk is not so straightforward. Fair enough, one might say such a thing about the northern and eastern parts of the

country, but what about the whole Western and Southern Cape region?

Here, the indigenous people at the time of the first European settlement were the Khoisan people – “Hottentots”, as we called them in the bad old days. Apart from the fact that strictly speaking, they today no longer exist as a distinct racial grouping, having

been absorbed into the large mixed-race “Coloured” population, they were very different from blacks of the type who constitute the majority of the South African population today.

So far as the Western and Southern Cape go, the latter are relative newcomers, in most cases having only arrived during the last hundred years or so. This underlined for me the absurdity of this year’s #RhodesMustFall campaign at UCT, where black students railed against white colonial usurpers despite being in a part of the country where whites had preceded them by centuries.

This underlined for me the absurdity of this year’s #RhodesMustFall campaign at UCT, where black students railed against white colonial usurpers despite being in a part of the country where whites had preceded them by centuries.



The partners and staff of Grant Thornton would like to wish all their Jewish clients a Happy Chanukah.



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Today Friday (December 11)

• UZLC hosts Gideon Shimoni on “650 000 Hours - If You Are Lucky”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (December 13)

• RCHCC shares in the light of Chanukah, music that will uplift the soul, “I Raise My Eyes” with Mark Samowitz and Jonny Sklaar. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 20:00. Donation: R100.00 (incl refreshments).

Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rhcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

Sunday (December 20)

• Cape Town Holocaust Centre hosts an exhibition opening: “World Holocaust Memorial Series” by Abigail Sarah Bagraim. Opening address by Sir Mick Davis. Time: 17:00. Exhibition runs December 20 - 27 at the CTHC. Entrance is free, donations welcome. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP: (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za

Tuesday (December 22)

• JJAC hosts a movie night “Star Wars: The Force Awakens”. Venue: Sandton City. Time: 19:00. Meet at bottom of escalator at the movies and decide what to see and book from there to see the movie. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za with “”Star Wars” in the subject line and your name and cell number in the body of the e-mail.

Tuesday (December 29)

• JJAC hosts a movie night at Sandton City. Time: 19:00. Meet at bottom of

escalator at the movies and decide what to see and book from there. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za with “”Movie 29 December” in the subject line and your name and cell number in the body of the e-mail.

Thursday (January 7)

• JJAC hosts a table tennis, pool and games evening in the youth centre of Sandton Shul. Time: 19:00. Cost: R25. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za with “Table Tennis and Games Evening” in the subject line and your name and cell number in the body of the e-mail.

News

Brazilian Jews move to Israel



Fabio Erlich, standing left, with his family and other Brazilian émigrés in the Israeli city of Modiin.

MARCUS MORAES
RIO DE JANEIRO

For four years, Ilana Lerner Kalmanovich rode a hot and crowded bus three hours each day to reach the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where she was studying for degrees in physical education and nutrition.

Police raids into nearby slums, or favelas as they are known, often blocked the freeway, and stray bullets from gun battles with criminals were a constant threat. Even on the Federal University campus, the oldest and among the most prestigious in Brazil, Kalmanovich felt unsafe. Robberies were commonplace and, every now and then, corpses were found in the nearby woods.

So, in 2007 Kalmanovich moved to Israel. She had spent a whole year there a decade earlier on a youth movement programme and fallen in love with the country. And though she holds German citizenship and could have built a new life for herself in Europe, there was never any doubt she would make her home in the Jewish state.

“Israel is the place where I feel at home, happy, among my people,” Kalmanovich told JTA. “We say ‘Shabbat shalom’ to the bus driver, to the garbage man, to the sales clerk. Everyone shares mostly the same social and economic level. We all celebrate the same national holidays. It’s like living in a huge kibbutz of eight million people. Here I am the rule, not the exception.”

Kalmanovich is not alone. Immigration to Israel from Brazil has more than doubled in the past four years, from 191 in 2011 to over 400 so far this year. The average growth in aliyah for all of Latin America in the same period was just seven per cent. Though it has approximately half the Jewish population of neighbouring Argentina, Brazil has sent more immigrants to Israel for two years running. An estimated 120 000 Jews live in Brazil.

“They seek a better future,” said Gladis Berezowsky, 58, who helps run Beit Brasil, a nongovernmental organisation based in Israel established in 2014 to assist Brazilians seeking to move to Israel.

Brazil, a nation of 200 million, is facing its steepest recession in a quarter century, with the economy expected to shrink by almost two per cent this year - down from more than seven per cent GDP growth in 2010. The Brazilian real has shrunk 138 per cent compared to the American dollar in the past five years and the inflation rate has edged up to 10 per cent.

The country is also one of the bloodiest on earth, with more

than 58 000 dying a violent death in 2014.

“More people are killed every year in Brazil through intentional violence than anywhere else on the planet, including most of the world’s war zones combined,” said Robert Mughah, a research director of a Rio-based think tank.

“The absurd violence in Rio was postponing our plans to have children,” said Silvia Brafman, 33, who moved from Brazil’s second-largest city to Haifa in late October with her husband. “The high unemployment rate and lack of opportunities were the second reason to head for Israel. The current stabbing wave here does not scare us at all. What really frightens me most is the language, which can delay my entering the job market.”

Fabio Erlich, 33, moved last year with his wife and three daughters to the central Israeli city of Modiin, they secured jobs at two Jerusalem yeshivot before he arrived.

“We wanted to give our children a better quality of life in the educational, social and religious fields,” Erlich said. “Israel allows you to be a Jew with no limitations, not only in the outside but mainly deep within. Finding a job in Israel made our big Zionist dream come true.”

Brazilian Jews have traditionally boasted an upper-middle-class life, but things are changing. Several Jewish day schools have merged or are merging in order to survive, while administrators at some of them say the number of scholarship applications has never been higher.

“We have seen a 100 per cent rise in requests recently,” said Yehoshua Goldman, the chief Rio representative of Chabad, which runs Lar da Esperanca (Home of Hope), an organisation for Jews in financial need.

“The hi-tech market here is very vibrant,” said Carlos Cohen (36), who moved to the coastal city of Netanya with his family in 2012. “You only remain jobless if you want to. We are proud to call this place ours, where we can truly put our citizenship in practice. Urban violence here is nearly zero, the safety feeling is absolute. We now can finally raise our family in a better place.”

For Martin and Michele Teitelbaum, being robbed in broad daylight in Higienopolis, an upscale and heavily Jewish neighbourhood of Sao Paulo, Brazil’s largest city, was the last straw. In 2010, they took their three children - ages 2, 5 and 7 - and headed for Raanana, a city in central Israel with a large population of immigrants from Europe and the Americas.

“In Brazil I was merely one more trying to survive,” Martin said. Life was sort of superfluous there, with many inverted values,” Michele added. “Here in Israel we value what must be valued.” (JTA)

New kid on the block golf croquet looks a real hit



Ruben Ezekowitz playing golf croquet with Lone Bowker, Dave Higson-Smith and Gisela Muller.

JACK MILNER

Long before soccer, cricket, rugby and basketball ruled the sports earth, there was croquet. Forms of the game go back more than 1 000 years but a form of the game as we know it was being played in England in the early 1600s.

The oldest document to bear the word croquet with a description of the modern game is the set of rules registered by Isaac Spratt in November 1856 with the Stationers’ Company in London. This record is now in the Public Record Office.

In 1868 the first croquet all-comers’ meeting was held at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire and in the same year, the All England Croquet Club was formed at Wimbledon, London.

The All England Club still exists but not much croquet gets played at Wimbledon these days!

However, anyone who has played it, will vouch that it can be a lot of fun and there is an opportunity for Johannesburgers who are willing to try it out.

The Golden Mallet Club plays at Hilson Bowling Club (entrance between the TA Girls’ High School and Dolls House) on Louis Botha Avenue from 09:00 on Tuesdays and Fridays.

A game lasts about 45 minutes and players of all ages are welcome. Mallets can be loaned and coaching is provided.

Ruben Ezekowitz is the contact at the club and can be reached on 083-284-1828.

Maccabi South Africa unfolds its exciting new image

JACK MILNER

As promised in an article which appeared last month, Maccabi South Africa has launched its new corporate identity and online home.

As part of its strategic evolution, Maccabi SA conducted a thorough brand and communications analysis during the course of 2015.

“The two key areas identified were the need for a refreshed image to accompany our new strategic direction, as well as improved communications platforms to better connect with our audience. In simple terms, we needed a bit of a make-over,” said Maccabi in a media release.

The previous scroll logo has proudly represented Maccabi SA’s heritage and achievements for 20 years, however, the timing was right for an update. The new modern logo, developed by Johannesburg creative director Dave Doubell, consists of a Magen David enclosing stylised Hebrew text that reads, from right to left, “Maccabi”.

“It presents a strong connection to our roots and our global family as the Magen David and Hebrew font is inspired by the logo of our governing body, Maccabi World Union (MWU).”

The logo of Maccabi World Union has also been incorporated by many federations for their own emblems, and by Maccabi SA using it as well, it creates a link between Maccabi SA and its worldwide counterparts.

“The two shades of blue in our logo are a connection to both MWU and Israel, while the green and gold sporting colours of South Africa represent our enduring national pride. Overall, we think the new Maccabi SA logo is a fitting illustration of our revitalised identity and corporate vision. We hope that the emblem is one which the Jewish sporting community can relate to and be proud to be associated with.”

The brand makeover includes the launch of an informative and user-friendly website - www.maccabi.co.za – which now serves as its core communications tool. The site is packed with a variety of content including the latest Maccabi and community sporting news and nachas, information of upcoming events and the 2017 Maccabiah, photo galleries and 80 years of Team Maccabi SA’s achievements since 1935.

“We look forward to engaging and connecting with the community via this website as well as through our growing social media channels on Facebook (Maccabi South Africa) and Twitter (@MaccabiSA).

“We are proud and excited to embark on this new era for Maccabi SA, dressed for success in our new brand identity and with a fantastic new online home.”

Maccabi SA feels it is appropriate that it launches during Chanukah, which celebrates the re-dedication of the Temple following victory over the Seleucids by Judah Maccabee, after whom the movement is named.

Maccabi SA has a variety of exciting projects planned for 2016, and of course is eagerly looking forward to the 2017 Maccabiah in Israel, the organisation promises.



Wishing you a

Happy Chanukah



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Community

Yeshiva College spreads loving kindness

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Gemillut Chassadim (acts of loving kindness) activities are integral to the ethos of Yeshiva College.

At the end of the 2015 academic year, the learners of Yeshiva College put together two collections. The first included a large assortment of text books, which were distributed to a school in Orange Farm, courtesy of outreach organisation Afrika Tikkun.

The second collection included boxes of stationery, which were donated to Yeshiva College’s outreach school, Iphuteng Primary.

A generous donation by a stationery company allowed Yeshiva College to give back to those in need.



Pictured are Rabbi Avraham Tanzer; Mike Thobejane (principal of Iphuteng); and Mpho Ramokgadi, collecting the donated stationery.