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Jewish Report

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Elie Wiesel and the significance of memory

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver



In the wake of famed Holocaust memoirist Elie Wiesel’s death in July, the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in partnership with the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, commemorated his life and works. It provided the Centre with an opportunity to not only honour Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wiesel himself, but also his central message about the significance of memory and his wish for a peaceful and just world. The speakers (pictured above) at Sunday night’s event were Israel’s Ambassador to SA Arthur Lenk; SAJBD Gauteng Council Chairman Shaun Zagnoev; US Ambassador to SA Patrick H Gaspard; and the Centre’s director, Tali Nates. See page 4.

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Parshat KiTetze
Rabbi Yossy Goldman
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Where do I fit in with destiny?
This week we read Ki tivne bayit chadash... “when you build a new house, you must place a guard-rail around your roof so that you will not bring blood upon your house should any man fall from the unenclosed roof.” In the olden days, most roofs were flat and people would use them as entertainment areas.
The Hebrew wording is Ki yipol hanofel. Now, literally, hanofel means “the one who falls” which the commentators say implies that this individual was actually destined to fall off a roof and lose his life.
So the question is, if that person was, in fact, pre-ordained to fall, why is it my fault just because it happened in my house? Why am I responsible for him acting out his destiny? Why should his blood be on my shoulders?
Jewish philosophers would answer this question by saying that although we do definitely

believe in destiny and that whatever happens is part of the A-mighty’s vast eternal plan; nonetheless, every individual has an obligation to do his best to prevent tragedy. We must take precautions. Although we believe in miracles we are not permitted to rely on them.
There is a Yiddish proverb that “the man destined to drown will drown even in a glass of water”. But that doesn’t mean that you have to be the one to put his head under the tap.
In short, we believe in the concept of bashirt but we mustn’t live by it. Otherwise, why go to work? We say in the Grace After Meals that G-d is the provider for all. So if G-d will support me why must I shlep off to work?
Clearly, this is not the Jewish attitude. That’s why it is a commandment of the Torah to safeguard our health. Likewise, we are not to live dangerously by leaving flat roofs unenclosed, swimming pools unfenced, or our doors unlocked. As they say, “Trust in G-d, but lock your car!”
But is it not an expression of faith to leave it all to G-d? To put our trust implicitly in Him that He will provide? That He will protect us? The answer is an emphatic NO. “G-d helps those who help themselves.” Far from being an

irreligious statement, this is quite consistent with Jewish belief.
Elsewhere, the Torah states that “Hashem, your G-d, shall bless you in all that you do”. Meaning that we too must do. We must lay the ground work for Hashem’s blessings to work. It’s like the farmer who knows that the success of his crop depends on G-d granting rain, but the blessing of rain will only help after the farmer has tilled, ploughed and planted.
Gary Player famously said: “The more I practise, the luckier I get.”
If you want to be mazel’dig, don’t depend on mazel alone. If you want to have nachas from your children, don’t rely on the luck of the draw that they will marry the right person. Parents have to plough and plant (and pray very hard) for nachas to happen.
In the words of the Psalmist which we say in Shir Ha’maalot (Psalm 126): “He who sows with tears, will reap in joy.”

Shabbat Times		
Parsha Ki Tetze		
September 16/13 Elul		
September 17/14 Elul		
Starts	Ends	
17:43	18:33	Johannesburg
18:15	19:13	Cape Town
17:31	18:22	Durban
17:50	18:41	Bloemfontein
17:52	18:44	Port Elizabeth
17:43	18:35	East London

Joyous occasion for three barmitzvah ‘boys’

TZIVIA GRAUMAN

At the age of 38, Brett Joffe, who lives at Sandringham Lodge, connected with a Sandringham Gardens resident named Joel Druian.
When Joel discovered that Brett had never had a barmitzvah, the two agreed that it “is never too late”.
Joel began teaching Brett for his barmitzvah and last Saturday, Brett received an aliyah in the Sandringham Gardens Shul.
Rabbi Jonathan Fox presented him with a new siddur in honour of the occasion.
On the same Shabbat, Joel Druian celebrated the 56th anniversary of his own barmitzvah and recited the Haftorah beautifully.
A third barmitzvah “boy” of the day was Shabsy Mayers, who celebrated the 68th anniversary of his barmitzvah and was appointed honorary life president of Sandringham Gardens Shul for his 13 years of dedicated service.
The service was followed by a celebratory kiddush with the families of all three barmitzvah “boys” and other residents.

Joel Druian.

Brett Joffe with Shabsy Mayers.

NO MORE CLASSIFIEDS AFTER ROSH HASHANAH BREAK

After the Rosh Hashanah break, we will no longer be publishing the Classified section. This decision took into account financial considerations and the changing face of print and online media and we realised it was no longer viable. We apologise wholeheartedly to our regular advertisers and we thank them for the many years of support.

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Shimon Peres seriously ill after massive stroke

JTA STAFF

Iconic Israeli statesman Shimon Peres (pictured) remained in serious but stable condition on Wednesday morning after suffering a severe stroke the night before, said Sheba Medical Centre in Tel Hashomer Director, Prof Itsik Reiss.

“The ninth president of the State of Israel... is being treated by the best doctors in the hospital from across the medical fields. He underwent a number of scans and is currently sedated and intubated,” said Reiss.

“He is in intensive care and we are monitoring him constantly. In the coming hours we will conduct further examinations and will update regarding his condition,” Reiss noted.

A later unconfirmed Twitter comment noted “a slight improvement” in the 93-year-old’s condition.

Reiss said that doctors had opted not to perform surgery on Peres at the moment.

It was learned late on Tuesday that he suffered from a haemor-



rhagic stroke, which occurs when a weakened blood vessel ruptures (usually caused by uncontrolled hypertension).

Prof Reiss said that Peres, in the intensive care unit, had suffered “lots of bleeding”.

The veteran politician had just last week undergone placement of a cardiac pacemaker at the hospital and was discharged in good condition.

Ayelet Frish, the former president’s communications consultant, said on Tuesday that Peres had woken up with “palpitations and a feeling of constriction in his chest”.

Peres’ personal physician, Prof Rafi Walden, took him to hospital after hearing of his complaints. It is unknown whether there was any connection between the insertion of the pacemaker - to ensure a regular heartbeat - and the stroke.

Walden, who is a leading surgeon, deputy director of Sheba Medical Centre and is also Peres’ son-in-law, said that during the night Peres had been responsive and held family members’ hands.

Shortly after, Peres’ son Chemi asked people to pray for his father as he spoke to reporters outside the hospital.

“These are difficult hours for me and my family... There will come a time when we will need to take some decisions. Everything is dependent on how things develop and we don’t know more than that at present.”

He added: “The family are all gathering at the hospital and we will continue to update. We are receiving a huge number of messages from Israel and abroad from all our friends who are surrounding us with love and care. I want to tell them all that there was nothing more important to my father than Israel and its people.

“My father is one of a kind, I am praying for him and ask all those that pray to continue to pray with us. We thank everyone for your love and care.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote on Twitter that he and the entire people of Israel love him and hope he has a complete recovery.

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Messages also came in from opposition leader Isaac Herzog and President Reuven Rivlin.

The longest serving of all of Israel’s public servants, Peres completed his seven-year term of office as Israel’s president just two weeks shy of his 91st birthday.

Born in Wiszniewo, Poland, he was one of the founders of the Labour-Zionist Youth Movement and a member of the Haganah during the pre-state period. He became director-general of the Defence Ministry at age 29 and was a member of the Knesset from 1959 to 2007.

He served in different political parties, namely Mapai, Rafi, the Alignment, Labour and Kadima.

Peres spent a long period as Labour Party chairman, and held a string of government roles including two non-consecutive stints as prime minister, and over the years he was minister of Immigrant Absorption, Transportation, Information, Defence, Communications, (or Posts and Telegraphs as it was known then), Internal Affairs, Religious Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Regional Co-operation.

He served in some of these positions more than once.

Peres is one of the architects of the Oslo Accords and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994. He visited South Africa earlier this year. (JTA)

Religious leaders pledge support to Pravin Gordhan

STEVEN GRUZZ

So, a rabbi, a priest and an imam walk into the Treasury...

Last week Wednesday, four executive members of the National Religious Leaders Council (NRLC), including Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, met with Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan at his office in Pretoria.

They requested the meeting to show unequivocal public support for him and the National Treasury, and hear the minister’s side of the sustained attacks on his integrity from various quarters, particularly from the Hawks. The SA Jewish Report spoke exclusively to the Chief Rabbi about the encounter.

The NRLC urgently requested the meeting when the beleaguered minister was in China at the G20 Summit. Rabbi Goldstein said Minister Gordhan laid out the intimidation and bullying he has been facing from the Hawks (the police’s priority crimes investigative unit) since his budget speech in February, purportedly over his role in the establishment of a so-called “rogue spy unit” at the South African Revenue Service when he headed that institution.

They also discussed corruption and state capture to serve political and economic agendas. The firing of Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene in December 2015, the four-day tenure of Minister “Des” van Rooyen as finance minister, and Minister Gordhan’s reappointment

were also covered, as was how the ongoing shenanigans will hurt the poor disproportionately.

The Chief Rabbi cited the verse in the Torah (in Vayikra): “Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour.” In Minister Gordhan, he sees a man of integrity and ability being persecuted for doing his job, and asking the difficult questions about corruption in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) such as SAA, Eskom and the proposed nuclear energy deal.

But isn’t this picking sides in the ANC’s fierce, internecine succession battle? “No. It’s our responsibility to help our country,” said Rabbi Goldstein, “to take a public stand against the evil harassment of Minister Gordhan.

“It may seem an extreme measure, but the circumstances are extreme. It’s our moral duty as religious leaders, as the custodians of integrity and decency, to stand up for what’s right.”

Rabbi Goldstein observed that his predecessor, the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, apologised to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the Jewish community had not been more vocal in condemning apartheid. “We cannot be silent now in the face of the corruption that can destroy South Africa.”

He noted that South Africa has a high percentage of people affiliated to organised religions, so religious leaders, including from the Jewish community, have influence and some authority.

When asked whether he appreciated the irony in a senior leader of the South African Communist Party turning to religion for support, the Chief Rabbi chuckled: “South Africa is full of ironies”, he remarked, relating how SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande ,Minister of Higher Education, had in fact encouraged the NRLC to approach Gordhan.

“We need to move beyond the labels, and do what is in the best interests of South Africa,” said Rabbi Goldstein.

This meeting was the start of a process of activism by the NRLC, which has requested meetings with the Hawks and the “top six” leadership of the ANC to discuss these issues.

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ADAM LEVIN

In the wake of famed Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel’s death, American President Barack Obama stated: “Elie Wiesel was one of the great moral voices of our time, and to many, the conscience of the world.”

This sentiment echoed throughout the proceedings of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in partnership with the SAJBD’s memorial to Wiesel that took place last Sunday night. The date for the

memorial - September 11 - was particularly significant because it also marked 15 years since the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers.

This provided the Centre with an opportunity to not only honour Wiesel himself, but also his central message about the significance of memory and his wish for a peaceful and just world.

After introductions by the Centre’s director Tali Nates and SAJBD Gauteng Council Chair-man Shaun Zagnoev, the me-morial tributes started with an

Elie Wiesel honoured on September 11

address from US Ambassador to South Africa, Patrick H Gaspard, who said: “I honour tonight not only Elie Wiesel, but also Mrs Feingold - a Holocaust survivor who took my immigrant family in when we arrived as penniless refugees in New York.”

Gaspard fondly recalled his own encounters with Wiesel during his lifetime, as well as his love for America, one of his three adopted homelands (the others being Israel and France).

Addressing the importance of the memory of 9/11 to the evening, Gaspard said: “We are convened here on 9/11 to remember Wiesel. Wiesel said we had a sacred duty to remember. Elie Wiesel was a masterful architect of remembrance.”

Gaspard observed that while Wiesel never stopped speaking against anti-Semitism, he was also a voice, wherever needed, against other atrocities, including the genocide in Rwanda and apartheid in South Africa.

Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, spoke of Wiesel’s love for and dedication to the State of Israel. He noted that while many victims of the Holocaust lost their faith as a result of their suffering, Wiesel “redoubled his connection to Judaism and the State of Israel”.

The evening concluded with

powerful words from Holocaust survivor Don Krausz who observed that Wiesel’s key message was “to not dehumanise people”. He enforced the theme of remembrance by referencing Wiesel’s acceptance speech after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, during which he stated, in reference to the victims of the Holocaust: “We must keep their memory alive. If we forget, we are accomplices.”

Krausz read a devastating passage from Wiesel’s famed memoir “Night”, paying the final honour to a man who will forever be the messenger to all humanity.

Tali Nates, the programme director of the event recollected the immense honour she had in meeting Wiesel and hearing his words: “When you listen to a witness, you become a witness.”

Now it is up to places of memory and education such as the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre to carry on the void left by Wiesel’s passing.

Nates quoted from Professor Michael Berenbaum’s obituary to Wiesel saying: “...the world he leaves behind is in ever more desperate need of his voice”.

DEISI plans big Israel celebration later this month

SUZANNE BELLING

The great love of the Jewish State which Olga Meshoe (pictured), CEO of Defend, Embrace, Invest (in) and Support Israel (DEISI) International, possesses is a hard act to follow, even among Jewish youth.

“When I try to recruit young members among the black community, they often ask why more Jewish people their age don’t share our passion,” she told Jewish Report before her major event on September 25 at the Fountain of Life Family Church in Boksburg themed “South Africa Night to Honour Israel”.

“We are celebrating the contribution that the Jewish community has made to South Africa over 175 years and we are showing support for and solidarity with the State of Israel,” she said.

DEISI has invited all the Christian friends of Israel organisations, including Bridges for Peace, Africa Bless Israel, Africa for Israel, many pastors and the Leadership Summit.

“In fact everybody in the Jewish and Christian communities is invited. It is going to be an evening of singing, dancing and celebration for the whole family.”

(For directions and more information, e-mail events@deisi.org)

Olga’s love of Israel was passed on to her by her father the Rev Kenneth Meshoe, head of the African Christian Democratic Party, and her mother, Lydia, an ordained pastor.

Having a brother, Joshua, and a sister, Esther, she explains why she is the only one who does not have a biblical name: “Olga means ‘Holy’ and my second name is Mpho (Gift), so as the first born, my parents considered me a holy gift.”

Born in South Africa, Olga began her schooling in the US where her parents joined the well-known evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, travelling to various African countries on their mission.

Her high school years were spent in the township of Vosloorus (still during apartheid) and thereafter she studied at the University of Pretoria, where she graduated in law. “I was told because of being black I would not be able to reach that height. People at that time did not want to sit next to me.”

But she became a successful lawyer and a partner (before the age of 30) in the firm Webber Wentzel, which she has now left to devote more time to pursue her studies and the aims of DEISI. She intends to study towards an MBA degree.

“Our organisation was born of the desire to be part of something meaningful after apartheid and to counteract the aims of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).

We wanted to provide platforms of education and exposure to the truth with regard to the Middle East and Israel’s right to exist within secure borders.”

Olga has visited Israel four times. “The country is a beacon of democracy, of being able to do the impossible from being a desert to being able to export water.

“Its technology is a blessing to African countries, training them in security, agriculture and medicine. It is a forerunner in all these fields.”

Deeply involved in the church, Hope of Glory, she says, “We serve G-d in various ways through the church.”

She is not always popular on social media, but DEISI is growing despite this. “We seek enlightenment, not only by praying but through action. You can’t be an invisible friend - we have to show solidarity.

“Scripture tells us not to be keep quiet and to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

Olga says the media is deceptive regarding Israel’s role in the Middle East conflict. Israel’s adversaries are not fighting for freedom “but for the destruction of Jerusalem.

“We are all G-d’s people and they should not call for any nation to be destroyed. This is not as it is reported to be - we need a response from South Africa,” she said.

“Trust is difficult to come by but it doesn’t deter us. We have a mandate, underpinned by our faith.

“We need to stand up for Israel - especially young Jewish people - and show the world that Israel is not an apartheid state. We know what apartheid is. We have been through it.”



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Israel honours the victims of 9/11 at the ‘Living Memorial’

**ROLENE MARKS
JERUSALEM**

On a quiet hill in the Azarim Valley in Ramot, Jerusalem, a memorial honours those who perished in the 9/11 Twin Towers terror attacks in New York that claimed almost 3 000 American lives.

Known as the “Living Memorial to the victims of 9/11”, this nine metre-tall cenotaph, shaped like a waving American flag that morphs into a flame, is the only monument to those who died that exists outside of the US.

The names of all who perished on that tragic day are inscribed, including those of five Israelis; a piece of melted metal from the ruins of the Twin Towers forms part of the base on which the cenotaph stands.

The cenotaph was designed by award-winning artist Eliezer Weishoff and was commissioned by the Jewish National Fund (JNF/KKL). It bears solemn witness to a day that changed the world and brought the threat of international terror into every-one’s collective conscience. It was a day that will forever live in infamy.

Israel commemorates 9/11 every year with a ceremony at the memorial. This year was particularly poignant, marking 15 years.

Israelis understand terror all too well. We have endured being the targets of terrorists ever since the modern state was formed. The United States is our greatest ally and apart from sharing the many mutual values that are the hallmarks of our democracies, we also share a common sense of grief for the victims of the worst terror attack in modern history.

We understand that in a short moment in time lives can be

lost, our loved ones ripped from the bosoms of their families, our sense of safety and security that we take for granted, completely altered. Reality as we know it can be changed forever in the blink of an eye.

We understand the pervasive sense of fear and worry. We understand the painful sacrifice that is needed when we have to send our sons and daughters into battle.

The first victim of 9/11 was Israeli. Daniel Lewin z”l, who made aliyah as a teen and served in Israel’s special forces. An outstanding student who excelled at university, both at MIT and Haifa Technion, Lewin went on to co-found hi-tech giant Akamai, which helped revolutionise the way that we connect to the Internet. He was described by his friend Micah as having the potential to be a future prime minister. He is but one story out of nearly 3 000.

The United States and Israel are two nations united in grief. But grief does not define who we are. While we pause to reflect and remember, we also take the time to celebrate those we lost. The mastermind of the attacks, arch-terrorist Osama bin Laden, once told a journalist that the fundamental difference between us and them was that they welcome death and that we value life above all.

This is perhaps the only

statement that one could ever agree to with a terror mastermind. We may have been bowed but never broken. We will honour their lives by our continued daily efforts to be living memorials. May the memories of all who perished on September 11, 2001 be blessed.

• Rolene Marks is a passionate Israel advocate and blogger, and can be heard regularly on Chai FM.



Chief Rabbi Goldstein to headline an important American conference

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein will be headlining this month’s Jewish Women’s Renaissance Project (JWRP) Leadership Conference in College Park, Maryland, in the US. The conference takes place from September 18 - 20.

A media release from Maryland, announcing Rabbi Goldstein as the keynote speaker, makes mention of the South African Chief Rabbi’s high standing among world Jewry and the fact that the (now) 47-year-old Rabbi Goldstein, had been only 32 when he became chief rabbi.

“He has since become a popular figure in the country, a widely published author, commentator and staunch defender of Israel in a country whose government has been harshly critical of Israel.

“He also holds a PhD in human rights and international law. Goldstein has been active in promoting Jewish engagement through initiatives such as Generation Sinai and the Shabbos Project.”

The Jewish Women’s Renaissance Project (jwrp.org) was founded in 2008 to empower women to change the world through Jewish values. Its major project is “Mo-

mentum”, a nine-day, highly subsidised life-changing journey to Israel, experienced by over 8 000 women from 150 partner organisations in 26 countries. Since 2014, the JWRP has partnered with Israel’s Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.

“The JWRP Leadership Conference gathers Jewish women from across the world to hone their leadership skills and create a global Jewish women’s movement. The annual conference was launched in 2013 with 65 participants from the US, Canada and Mexico, and by last year it had grown to include 200 delegates from eight countries.”

The Conference will also honour Rachel Fraenkel and Lihi Lapid with the Pamela Claman Leadership Award, in collaboration with Israel’s Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.

Fraenkel is the mother of Naftali Fraenkel, one of three boys whose kidnapping and murder by Hamas terrorists sparked Israel’s 2014 military operation in Gaza.

Lapid is a noted author and women’s rights advocate. Her husband, Israeli politician Yair Lapid, chairs the Yesh Atid Party.



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Cyber-hatred in Israel and South Africa are cousins



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The boon and the curse of Facebook were illustrated in South Africa and Israel this week in two cases confronting the dilemma of how far freedom of speech stretches on social media.

In the Scottburgh Magistrate’s Court on Monday, former estate agent Penny Sparrow was fined R5 000 for her racist Facebook post in January comparing black beachgoers in Durban to monkeys. She was also sentenced to two years’ imprisonment, suspended for five years.

In June, the Equality Court ordered her to pay R150 000 to the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation.

Other South Africans have been punished for online racist comments, including government employee Velaphi Khumalo who said black South Africans should do to whites what “Hitler did to the Jews”.

The country’s racial history makes such remarks particularly hurtful. In Israel’s case, however, the issue goes beyond offensiveness into the realm of life and death, where Facebook becomes a platform for incitement to terrorism. Not only can one be brainwashed online with terrorist ideologies, but instructions on how to kill innocent people are easily available.

Israeli Information Minister Gilad Erdan created a flap in July following a terrorist attack by saying Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has “blood on his hands”.

On Monday, Erdan and Israel’s Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked met with Facebook officials to request removal of posts containing words such as “Intifada”, “Nazis”, “stabblings”, “shahids”, “death to Jews” and “death to Arabs”, claiming such language incites terrorism.

Although Facebook prides itself on being a liberal platform for free expression and is careful not to be seen to be controlled by any government, it generally accedes, and has removed 95 per cent of 158 inciting posts at Israel’s request.

Israel wishes social media companies to go further, however, and be proactive, not merely reactive. Thus far Facebook’s policy has been that when people complain, it reviews the complaints. But Knesset bills being prepared want the online platform to remove such postings within 48 hours, even before being asked, or face fines.

Erdan says Facebook and Internet companies are responsible for content on their platforms encouraging terrorism and must “behave actively in order to find and remove them”. In the last wave of terror, he says, the Internet was a “breeding ground for terrorism”.

Facebook has the technical ability to control incitement on its network, similar to how it prevents pornography and copyright-infringing content. The Israel Democracy Institute, however, opposes the bills, saying in their current form they disproportionately violate the right to free expression and information in cyberspace.

Reflecting the proliferation of online hate speech, a recent UN conference found that every year some 250 000 anti-Semitic posts are made public across social media platforms. An Israeli company which monitors social media found that every hour, an average of two anti-Semitic posts are put up calling for violent action against Jews, representing seven per cent of all anti-Semitic posts; another 18 per cent of anti-Semitic posts depict Jews as devil worshippers.

Some 60 per cent of anti-Semitic content is written in the United States, 25 per cent in Europe and the rest in Arab countries. Anti-Semitism is among the most prevalent forms of hate postings, together with anti-black hatred and homophobia.

Sparrow’s and Khumalo’s racist postings which caused an outcry some people thought was disproportionate, seem innocuous compared to the terrorism posts Israel and Western countries deal with, as if they’re on a different planet from ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s followers who use cyberspace to promote their murderous mission.

But defining the limits of freedom of racist expression online is part of post-apartheid South Africa’s non-racial project. When allowed to go viral on Facebook, racism which dehumanises people - even at Penny Sparrow’s level - becomes a not-too-distant cousin of terrorist language promoting actual violence.

Turned off by the Rabbinate, Israelis plan big fat Greek weddings



ANDREW TOBIN
TEL AVIV

Destination weddings abroad are almost unheard of in this country. Israeli weddings are all about family and community. And what better place to celebrate Jewish continuity than the Jewish homeland?

But this summer, a new Israeli company is challenging tradition by throwing wedding getaways on Greek islands. The one-woman start-up, called Wedaway, is tapping a market of Israelis alienated by the charedi Orthodox Chief Rabbinate, which controls Jewish marriage in the country.

“A lot of people who can’t or don’t want to get married through the Rabbinate find Wedaway online,” company founder and CEO Gal Zahavia told JTA. “But what really attracts them is the idea of a small wedding like they see when they travel or on the Internet. And Israelis love Greece.”

Zahavia came up with the idea for Wedaway from her own Greek wedding last June. She and her husband celebrated in a castle on the island of Evia. They wanted something more than the typical Israeli wedding, which often includes hundreds of guests gathered for a relatively standardised few hours of nuptials, dining and dancing. Later they officially married through the Rabbinate.

Zahavia began planning other people’s weddings this year from her home office in the central Israeli city of Kadima. This summer she has held seven weddings, with five more scheduled before the end of October. An additional five already are on the books for next year, and she expects to hire more staff and possibly expand to Tuscany.

While there is no civil marriage for Jews or same-sex marriage in Israel, the state does accept such marriages performed abroad. Cyprus, the Czech Republic and the United States are the most popular destinations. While Israelis cannot marry in Greece, as Athens requires documents that Jerusalem will not provide, it doesn’t mean they can’t party there.

Zahavia can thank the Rabbinate for most of her clients. Of the 12 couples celebrating their unions with Wedaway this summer, seven opted to marry outside Israel at least in part to protest the Orthodox authority. Four are not recognised by the Rabbinate as Jewish or have other issues with Israel’s religion-based marriage system. Just one is getting married in Israel and celebrating in Greece.

“The Rabbinate is good for my business, but I would prefer that people could get married here,” Zahavia said. “I would have clients anyway because the experience of going to Greece is very unique. Word is spreading quickly.”

Neither the Rabbinate nor the Interior Ministry in Israel were immediately reachable for comment.

Wedaway weddings are the kind of carefully crafted events exalted on wedding blogs, reality shows and social media.

One downside - or upside, depending on how you look at it - is that couples planning a Wedaway wedding have to drastically pare the invitation list. An average Israeli wedding includes several hundred guests - everyone from the couple’s parents to their favourite barista. Zahavia’s clients usually bring 40-50 people with them. Even at an average cost of \$300-\$500 per head, it can actually be cheaper than being married in Israel.

Still, cutting guests can be difficult. Family and community

are central to Israeli culture, and a wedding is the ultimate symbol of that, explained Larissa Remennick, a sociology professor at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

Wedaway isn’t the first company to help Israelis marry abroad; an industry has been around since the 1990s. In 2014, some 8 782 couples registered foreign marriages in Israel, compared to 50 797 who married in the country, according to the government’s Central Bureau of Statistics. But the businesses tend to focus on cutting international red tape, not wedding planning.

Wedding Tours is the biggest marriage abroad company in Israel. CEO Igal Lukianovsky said the company, founded in 2001, arranged 1 200 marriages in Cyprus and the Czech Republic in 2015. Of those, he said, the company helped with no more than a couple of dozen wedding celebrations.

“Maybe 80 per cent of couples make a party here in Israel with family and friends,” he told JTA. “They go to Cyprus just for the formal part, to sign documents.”

Wedaway, by contrast, is all about the celebration.

Tomer and Shir are having an egalitarian Jewish wedding with Wedaway next week. They could get married through the Rabbinate, but they come from a secular world where opting out is a given.

Tomer, 32, works for an education website. Shir, 29, is studying to be a physician. Together since 2011, they live in an apartment in central Tel Aviv. They asked that their last names not be used to protect their privacy.

“We’re secular, and the Rabbinate is very controlling toward everybody, especially women. It’s kind of forcing itself on all Jewish citizens in Israel, and we don’t want to play along,” Tomer said. “If I had tried to go to the Rabbinate, my father would have tried to stop me from doing it. In my family, it’s the obvious choice not to go.”

The couple have no plans to marry officially at all. Instead they are looking into domestic union cards, which formalise a couple’s status. In recent years, legislation and judicial rulings here have imbued domestic unions with most of the rights and responsibilities of marriage.

A growing number of Israelis are holding off on getting married, some indefinitely. The number of unmarried couples living together in Israel has risen 29 per cent in recent years - to 88 000 in 2014 from 65 000 in 2012 - according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Some attribute this trend to the Rabbinate as well.

In a statement this month about the rise in unmarried couples, Hiddush, an organisation that promotes religious freedom in Israel, wrote: “Israel’s official, state empowered religious establishment arouses disgust among Jewish Israeli couples considering marriage.

“This is due to the needless tribulations many couples experience at the hands of the Rabbinate on their paths to marriage, and due to their fear of being required to conduct their divorces via the State rabbinical courts.”

Tomer and Shir are having their non-wedding wedding next week on Evia, the island with the castle, in an egalitarian Jewish ceremony. There will be a chuppah, or wedding canopy, but no rabbi, and both of them will break glasses to conclude the ceremony. (JTA)

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com

The cost of fitting in



SUZANNE BELLING

It is the season for matric dances, which many feel are out of hand, with the hiring of helicopters and limousines (sometimes with personalised number plates bearing the name of the couple), the purchasing of designer dresses (sometimes costing in the region of R15 000), shoes, handbags and forking out for beauticians, professional make-up artists and hair-dressers.

There has been a debate in the media and on social media about whether these dances are necessary or should perhaps be banned. Those in favour say that the matric dance is the occasion which transforms a girl into a woman or a boy into a man; that these dances mark the stepping out of schoolchildren into the world and gives them their first experience as “grown-ups”.

Does the competitiveness in dress (the boys are not excluded with their designer shirts and suits) weigh heavily on parents who cannot afford these extravagances? Does it leave the matric learners feeling left out in these cases?

“It is mainly in the private schools where the parents splash out. It is a memory for the rest of their lives,” said Ashleigh Elad whose daughter is now studying medicine and whose son was a top achiever at Crawford. She feels even the parents who are stretched should save and make an effort for this metamorphosis.

“If they cannot afford top designers, there is no harm in buying a lovely dress from a boutique. The dresses or suits do not necessarily have to be designer clothes.”

But she admits she and her friends went to expense and trouble to provide clothes for the dance itself and the after party. “The custom is to purchase a long dress for the dance and a short one for the after party.”

Regarding the helicopters and limousines, she felt it was important for the matriculants to make an entrance but only in this lavish fashion if the parents were wealthy enough to afford it.

“Some people think it’s a waste, but there are ways and means for a child not to feel left out. All eyes are on the

children the night of the matric dance. “When the King David dance was held at the Sandton Sun in previous years, parents used to camp out to see their children dress up. Now that the dance is held in the Sandton Shul hall, there is usually a before party at a mansion owned by one of the parents. Everyone is invited, so the parents can go there to see their children.”

She said her son “looked like a prince and my daughter a princess. But, if there is a financial problem, there is still nothing preventing parents from buying a suit at Woolworths.”

Patsy Bagraim, whose children matriculated from Herzlia High School, did not go to outlandish expense for her daughter or son. “But my daughter still looked beautiful and my son very handsome.”

Patsy belongs to a breakfast club which feeds underprivileged children at Good Hope Seminary Primary School.

“Young children leave home at 05:30 and need to eat. We feed them and I would rather have done that than spend thousands of rands on the matric dance. My children agreed with me. Still, they looked like a million dollars.

“I don’t believe in so much extravagance when there is so much poverty, even though Herzlia is generous with its tzedakah.

“When my kids get married, they will have to elope,” says this parent who has spent her money on the less fortunate, with a chuckle.

Even in the government schools, when it comes to matric dances, parents overspend. However, one mother who did not wish to be named, whose daughter is a former head girl, said she borrowed a top from a colleague in fashion, which her daughter wore with a long skirt.

“It was perfectly acceptable - and she had to dance with the principal.”

The religious schools, however, do not have matric dances, but valedictory evenings or dinners for the matrics - separate functions or with a mechitza in the hall. With boys and girls being separated, there is not the same level of competition for the best dresses or suits. Nevertheless, these matrics are conscious of looking their best on this important night.



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Artist Hanoch Piven sparks creativity in Afrika Tikkun teens



Afrika Tikkun youth create personal masterpieces with renowned Israeli collage artist Hanoch Piven.

The saying goes that “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure”, and judging by his art, Israeli artist Hanoch Piven sees treasure everywhere. His caricatures of world-famous figures are assembled from everyday objects, which often say something about the subject: a light bulb for Einstein’s nose; a key is Madiba’s mouth.

In a media release Afrika Tikkun said that last week Thursday Piven hosted a workshop with 30 young people from the Child and Youth Development (CYD) Programme at Afrika Tikkun’s Diepsloot Wings of Life Centre. This afforded them the opportunity to become inspired by his own work and experiment and create their own through play.

After a brief talk where the artist showcased his artwork and explained his method, the youths got to work sorting through the jumble of donated objects, selecting pieces to build their own collages. Piven made his rounds, guiding the children through the creative process. Piven’s method happens to be an extraordinarily good fit for the children of Afrika Tikkun, given that his art is created using only everyday found objects. He also believes that art, and art as play, should not be underestimated as a form of empowerment.

“Art is play; it is not the real world. It is a contained area in which we can try things, we can fail, we can ‘not know’ and we can succeed, we can control. And while we might be very frustrated with the big world, in this small world we have created we are the masters, and once we succeed it gives us power.”

Piven was born in Uruguay in South America and raised in Israel. He graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1992, returning to Israel in 1995 to work for the Haaretz newspaper.

Frustrated with conventional art mediums, Piven began experimenting, creating caricatures with everyday found objects. This collage technique is what Piven now teaches in lectures and workshops across the world.

Afrika Tikkun is a non-profit organisation dedicated to developing South African youth from “Cradle to Career” through investing in education, health and social services. The organisation has skills development centres in Orange Farm, Diepsloot, Braampark, Alexandra in Gauteng, and in Mfuleni township in the Western Cape.

Hanoch Piven’s visit was made possible through Afrika Tikkun’s partnership with the Israeli embassy.

It’s nearly time for lulavs and etrogs

The Union of Orthodox Synagogues will once again be selling Arba Minim for Succot under the hechsher of the Beth Din.

Further information regarding pricing and dates of collection will follow soon.

The mailing address is: Union of Orthodox Synagogues, 58 Oaklands Road, Orchards, Johannesburg.



Sandton Sinai reflects growth of observant Jews in this area

SHIRA DRUION

The Sandton Jewish community has been steadily growing in its observance and alongside its growth, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein encouraged Rabbi Justin Treger to enter the community and build an Orthodox, more Torah-focused school to meet the needs of the more observant families.

Thus Sandton Sinai came about. It attracts Jewish parents who would usually send their children to a more religious school “on the other side of town” but don’t want to commute. About seven per cent of families are traditional and about 30 per cent are observant.

“It started 16 years ago,” says primary school principal, Melinda Chazen. “Since then, many have grown in their personal Torah observance and become communal leaders in the greater Johannesburg area. However, the educational predicament arose and many of these parents relocated, to the other side of the highway, where a more Torah focused education was available.

“As a result, Sandton has not been able to consolidate the growth of individual families into that of an entire community and has been desperate for a school that could stem this tide and simultaneously stimulate the Jewish growth of a wider group of Sandtonians.”

“The playschool and nursery school opened in 2013 with 44 kids,” says nursery school principal, Shira Finkel. “This year our playschool expanded to two classes for the first time, with 110 kids enrolled.”

“We forecast growth to an estimated 140 children in 2017,” says Rabbi Treger. “In the primary school, we have already run out of space and are building 10 new classrooms to cater for the bulging numbers. We have been blessed that all our staff are young, vibrant and completely invested in the flourishing of the school and are totally committed to the growth of our students.”

“It wasn’t our intention to stay past playschool but both my kids, husband and I were so happy that we decided to continue.” says grade one parent Yael Benjamin.

“The school values totally reflect our family values and we prefer the smaller classes which allow for undivided attention and the chance to nurture all the students equally with inclusion of everyone.”

Rabbi Treger is excited about the growth he has seen so far. “We are blessed to be witnessing young couples move into and remain in the community as they now feel secure that there is a school option for their children. I believe the school is going to have a dramatic impact on the demographics in the wider Sandton community and beyond.”



This Yiddish show wakened the heart and soul of the audience

BEV GOLDMAN

The audience laughed, cheered, and even wept a little, entranced by dynamic Cape Town singer Caely-Jo Levy, the outstanding musicians of Yid-Dish and New York-based Yiddish performer, Shane Baker - in the two performances of “A Tribute to the Wit and Wisdom of Sholem Aleichem”.

Sometimes a show just does it, just wakens the heart and soul of the audience, and this one, brought to Johannesburg by the Union of Jewish Women, did exactly that.

Full houses and standing ovations were proof positive of the wonderful performances given by this talented cast.

Yiddish reminds us of our childhoods, of those magical moments when bobbas and zeidas shared their stories and their experiences and showed us a world different from the energetic and tumultuous one we inhabit today.

Encapsulated in the magical stories of Sholem Aleichem, those fortunate enough to have been present at the Theatre on the Square on Sunday evening September 4 were caught up in the old enchanting atmosphere of the time.

A truly wonderful production with cries for encores reverberating through the theatre, must be repeated for the many who were unable to attend. The UJW gave the SA Jewish community a unique taste of our Yiddish heritage.



Caely-Jo Levy (back) with the Yid-Dish Players, Robin Cohen, Rayelle Goodman and Adi Lazar.

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SA law has gone bold on bankruptcy

NASTASCHA HARDUTH

Companies in financial distress do not necessarily have to be placed into liquidation. South African business rescue legislation - Chapter 6 of the 2008 South African Companies Act- is now as sophisticated as the US and other leading world economies and is designed to provide alternatives that facilitate the rehabilitation of a company, say SA legal experts.

“The South African government has been bold and innovative in introducing this rescue legislation and South Africans should embrace the new dispensation,” says Eric Levenstein, a director at Werksmans Attorneys in Sandton and head of the firm’s Business Rescue, Insolvency & Restructuring practice.

The legislation provides a “breathing space” which allows a business rescue practitioner to investigate the possibility of a turnaround. The practitioner, together with the company’s directors, develop and implement, if approved by the company’s creditors, a restructuring plan. According to Levenstein, the business rescue mechanism is fast being taken on board by South African companies who simply cannot pay their creditors on time and find themselves on the brink of insolvency.

“As in foreign jurisdictions, South African business rescue legislation

now provides the company with the opportunity to continue trading on a solvent basis, alternatively distributing a dividend to creditors that would be far better than what would occur in a liquidation”.

Although the test for business rescue is that of financial distress, the company must still be a candidate for rescue. “The company must have a sound business that is worth sav-

ing,” says Levenstein. “If not, then the company should be put out of its misery and placed into liquidation”.

Levenstein who has a doctorate (LLD) in this subject from the University of Pretoria and is having his doctoral thesis published as a legal text book, sees himself as a “legal corporate doctor” helping “sick” companies trade their way out of unhealthy positions of financial

distress.

He has been involved in several restructurings, including that of Pearl Valley Golf Estate, Southgold Gold Mine, Advanced Technologies, and more recently Optimum Coal Mine.

Many of these companies might have ended up on the scrapheap of discarded, failed companies if it were not for the rescue process. Most importantly jobs were saved, which

is always a good outcome and which allows a company to survive and continue to contribute to the South African economy, says Levenstein.

Levenstein also suggests that boards of financially distressed companies be forced to undergo a compulsory pre-assessment by a business rescue practitioner so that only those that are salvageable go through the business rescue process.



News

SAJBD condemns anti-Muslim graffiti in Pretoria

ANT KATZ

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies on Wednesday in a statement said it was “appalled” by anti-Muslim graffiti painted on a house in the Eersterust suburb of a Pretoria home on Tuesday. The Board also praised the government, in its statement, for disallowing the homophobic and Holocaust-denier pastor - Steven Anderson - from visiting South Africa. Minister of Home Affairs Malusi Gigaba (pictured) said the South African group that had invited Anderson was also found to have espoused Holocaust-denial and implied that this would be further investigated.

The Board said it has been consistent and tireless in its involvement and advocacy for ed-

ucation around the dangers of all forms of hate speech and hate crimes and recently made a submission to Parliament which is reviewing legislation to combat discrimination.

The SAJBD statement also hailed the SA government’s “recognition of the dangers inherent in hateful language directed against any community in our country. Slogans, such as those painted in Eersterust, have no place in South Africa and should be condemned in the strongest terms,” the statement said.

“The SAJBD calls on Government to publish the draft Hate Crimes Bill for public comment as soon as possible”, to ensure that prejudice based on religion, gender, ethnicity, race or sexual orientation, has no place in South Africa.



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Maccabi Tel Aviv FC ambassador for global Special Olympics

TEL AVIV - Maccabi Tel Aviv Football Club Foundation and Special Olympics Israel are partnering to promote greater inclusion and raise public awareness about people with intellectual disabilities through athletic competition and other related programmes.

By partnering with Special Olympics, Maccabi Tel Aviv FC joins leading football clubs worldwide including Ajax Amsterdam, Inter Milan, Tottenham and Celtic as a team ambassador.

Through this co-operation, Maccabi Tel Aviv FC Foundation and Special Olympics will give these athletes the opportunity to realise their potential, develop physically, mentally and socially and will raise awareness about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities.

Josh Halickman, head of the Maccabi Tel Aviv Football Club Foundation praised the collaboration: “Special Olympics programmes help those with intellectual challenges and aligns itself perfectly with one of the Foundation’s main goals - the promotion of social action activities.

“It is a great honour for us to raise public awareness about this most important issue and ensure that this segment of the population has the opportunity to play football and be recognised for their special abilities and talents.”

Gal Alberman, ambassador for Maccabi Tel Aviv FC, said: “As an ambassador for Special Olympics, I along with my teammates, want to help ensure that more and more athletes across the country with intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to change their lives through the joy of football. By doing this they will hearten us all with their courage and determination.” - Talking Becomes Media (g.group)

IDF and Ben-Gurion University co-operate in technological marathon

BEERSHEBA - Cadets from the IDF’s Teleprocessing Corps co-operated with mentors from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev as part of a special joint technological marathon. For 48 hours, they competed against one another in developing different applications that will address the operational needs of the Israeli security system. A weapon sight that can predict a direct hit, augmented reality glasses that can help prevent terror attacks and various advanced warning systems are only some of the ideas presented at the technological marathon.

Dozens of IDF cadets including engineers, programmers and cyber protectors took part in the technological marathon or

“hackathon”, which was conducted in co-operation with the BaseCamp Innovation Centre located at the national hi-tech and cyber park of Israel in Beersheba.

The winning application will be developed and eventually be integrated into the IDF’s operational activity.

Other ideas included a control system that sends a warning when cell phones are brought into classified military discussions. Other more combat-oriented ideas included a weapon sight that can take the surrounding conditions and terrain into account and predict a direct hit and augmented reality glasses that can detect the intention to commit a terror attack based on knowledge from social networks and real-time access to information on suspects. - Jerusalem Online

Aide wants Hebrew removed from Labour Passover greeting

LONDON - Seumas Milne, one of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn’s closest advisers, told a party worker to remove the Hebrew wording from a Passover greeting because it might look “Zionist”, it has been claimed. Milne, Labour’s executive director of communications, is said to have wanted to delete the wording “Chag kasher vesameach”, which translates as “A happy and kosher holiday”, from Corbyn’s Pesach message to the Jewish community.

According to Dave Rich, a senior official of the Community Security Trust, Milne felt “the use of Hebrew implied support for Zionism”.

Writing in the New York Times, Rich, the author of a new book on anti-Semitism and the left, said that “after some debate, Mr Milne was overruled”.

But Labour said the claim Milne had asked for the Hebrew to be removed was “categorically untrue”.

In a statement, a spokesman said the phrase had appeared in the message.

“Far from being overruled on its contents, it was Seumas Milne who signed off the full statement,” the spokesman said.

Labour said the claim was made by a “disgruntled former member of staff”.

Joshua Simons, a Jewish activist who worked in Corbyn’s office as a policy adviser for six months before quitting, has identified himself as the aide involved. Writing on the Guardian website, he claimed he was instructed to remove the message by a senior official. He did not name Milne. - Jewish Chronicle, London

Sikh landlord gives Canadian Chabad House rent free space

ALBERTA, Canada - Mainstreet Equity Corp CEO Bob Dhillon is providing Saskatoon’s Chabad House with free rent until it can find a new home.

Dhillon, who runs the Alberta-based rental company, explained that this donation of rental fees isn’t part of some established programme or initiative, rather just an isolated act of kindness.

“We wanted to help these rabbis out and that’s it,” said Dhillon, who said he is Sikh, but very close to the Jewish community.

“A lot of my shareholders are Jewish, and a lot of the people I work with are Jewish,” he said, adding that when they learned of his donation, they encouraged him to share his story, so as to encourage other landlords to follow suit.

Dhillon said he wanted to help the rabbis, because “they help humanity”.

Rabbi Raphael Kats, director of the Chabad Jewish Discovery Centre of Saskatoon, explained that for the past five years, the Chabad House operated out of residential units in a building that was owned by Triple Five, an Edmonton-based real estate company.

“The previous owner was a Jewish man from Edmonton, and he was graciously donating the rent. Now that the ownership has switched hands, Bob has also generously decided to sponsor the rent for a few months until we are able to find another location,” Rabbi Kats said.

Rabbi Kats, who estimated that he serves a community of about 1 000 Jews in Saskatoon, said Mainstreet is granting Chabad free rent until October, and in the meantime, the Chabad House is looking for a new home. - Canadian Jewish News



Male oncologists more distressed over patient deaths than females

BEERSHEBA - A new BGU research study of oncologists finds more burnout among women, but more emotional distress with regard to patient death among men at lower levels of burnout.

While overall, women reported more burnout, they also reported emotional distress and grief responses only at higher levels of burnout than their male colleagues.

Burnout is a big issue among oncologists and many studies have documented its prevalence. Yet few have attempted to determine what is associated with the high burnout rate.

Gender is an important variable to examine in this context, says primary investigator Dr Leeat Granek of BGU’s Department of Public Health. The study was published in the prestigious journal, Cancer. Granek’s previous research had determined that women feel more comfortable expressing themselves about patient death than their male colleagues. She also found that male oncologists felt more comfortable opening up to women, whether their spouses or female colleagues, than to their male colleagues.

The researchers interviewed 178 oncologists from Israel (52 of whom were women) and Canada (48 of whom were women). Delving deeper into burnout, Granek suggests looking at the cumulative stressors oncologists face on a day-to-day basis that:

“Oncologists may be able to cope effectively with patient death when they are not feeling burned out by the other challenges their job poses.

“Therefore, interventions need to look holistically at improving quality of life at work and in the process also improve quality of care for patients and their families,” she says. - Ben-Gurion University

Jewish Guild Orchestra reaches out through sweet sound of music

MARGOT COHEN

A musical tour around the world was presented to residents of Golden Acres, Sandringham Gardens and members of Second Innings last Sunday by the Jewish Guild Orchestra.

Professor Brian Buch who conducts the orchestra and is also its musical director, had his appreciative audience clamouring for more. The Jewish Guild Orchestra, although founded in 1944, has still been able to retain its fresh sound. It okays a wide range of light classical pieces and its repertoire last Sunday ranged from the operetta Gypsy Baron by Johan Strauss to the all-time Neapolitan favourite, O Sole Mio.

Expenses of the orchestra are met by

its 35 members themselves; they derive no income from its activities. The orchestra was named after its original sponsor, the Johannesburg Jewish Guild which no longer exists. Its founder was the late Dr Solly Aronowsky who served as musical director for 46 years. Its current leader is Dr Bernard Caplan.

The orchestra provides support for amateur musicians, irrespective of race or religion, to develop their skills to perform in public and to enhance their appreciation of music. It also plays to audiences who would not otherwise have access to light classical music, such as residents of old age homes, the Red Cross, Hospice and the Cancer Association.

“One of our objectives is to provide per-

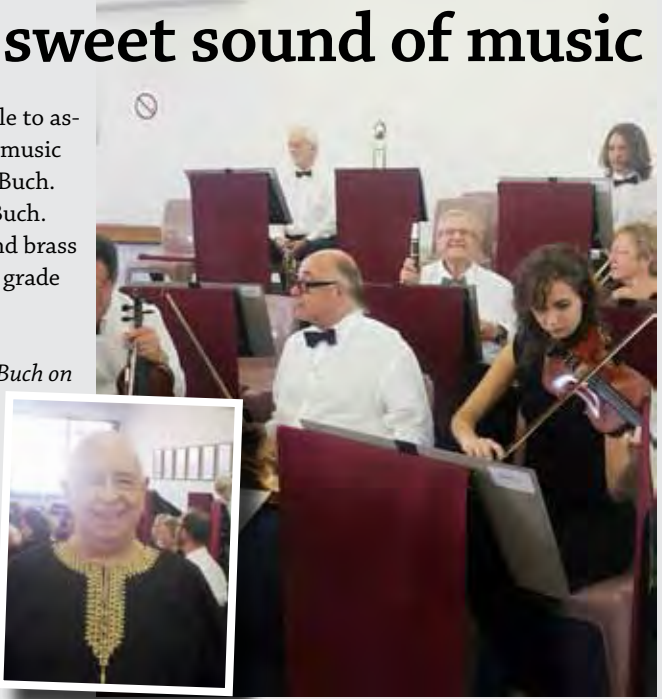
formances through which we are able to assist various charities or to promote music appreciation among scholars,” says Buch.

“We welcome new players,” says Buch. “We need female vocalists, string and brass players. We need players who are at grade 6 level.”

• For further information, contact Dr Buch on (012) 348-8653 or 071-633-0869.

The Jewish Guild Orchestra gave a delightful performance last week Sunday at Golden Acres to an appreciative audience of some 330.

Inset: Conductor and musical director of JGO, Dr Brian Buch.



With Alan’s recipes you can become a great chef in your own right

Alan Bender, executive chef at Feigels deli in Johannesburg, wears his chef’s hat as a crown, for he really is a king of Jewish cooking. From meat dishes to soups and other delights, Alan takes orders for Rosh Hashanah and his delicious meals are known far and wide. He is in demand for simchas and was recruited to cater for seders at the Vaal last Pesach! Alan has his own cooking programme on ChaiFM.



A SWEET NEW YEAR HOME-MADE KICHEL

This is the kichel recipe from the Late Great Shirley’s Deli

Ingredients

- 100 gr sugar
- 100 ml oil
- 150 ml eggs (3 xl)
- 400 gr self-raising flour.

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 160C.
- Mix all the ingredients with a hook in your mixer (or work out those muscles)
- Have a few clean baking sheets sprayed with non-stick spray.

- Oven gloves and a glass of wine.
- Roll the dough out into a 1,5 cm thick sausage and cut it into 20 cm lengths.
- With either a pasta machine or rolling pin roll the dough out as thin as you can on a floured surface. Cut it into the desired shape (I cut it into diamonds) place it onto the baking tray and bake until light brown.

Cook’s tip

This recipe is for a light kichel. For a crispier version use ½ self-raising and ½ regular flour.
I like brushing the kichel with a little oil and a dusting of sugar.
If you really want to get fancy cut apples as thin as possible on a mandolin and lay on top of the kichel for an apple crisp kichel.

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RAW SWEET POTATO SALAD

Ingredients

- 1 lemon zest and juice
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 orange-coloured sweet potato if available, peeled and finely sliced
- 1 Granny Smith apple cored and finely sliced
- 1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
- 1 red onion thinly sliced
- 3 radishes thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds
- ¼ cup packed fresh cilantro (coriander) leaves

Method:

- In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice, ginger, and oil. Season with salt and pepper.
- In another bowl, combine sweet potato, apple, celery, onion, radishes, sesame seeds, and cilantro. If you can get pomegranate rubies add them in.
- Drizzle dressing over salad and season with salt and pepper.
- A little story behind this: I am not politically correct so when I saw some of my kitchen team eating raw sweet potato, I had a comment to make and quite rightly I got one back. They challenged me to eat one raw so I did it. It is way more yummy and sweeter than carrots, so go ahead and try it and you will be amazed!

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12 SA JEWISH REPORT		Letters		16 – 23 September 2016	
Disclaimer The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report. <i>The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za</i>		Guidelines for letters Letters of up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.			
NOTHING ‘ALLEGED’ OR ‘PURPORTED’ ABOUT DESTROYED VILLAGE OF LUBYA		KOL ISHA BEING USED TO HOLD JEWISH COMMUNITY TO RANSOM		WEINBERGS PROUD OF SIX TREES PLANTED IN THEIR PARK	
<p>An article featured in the Jewish Report suggested that the ceremony held by South African Jews for a Free Palestine in Weinberg Family Park was illegal. In fact, we had written permission from Johannesburg City Parks with us at the event and showed it to a number of officials and community representatives who were there.</p> <p>The only condition for the September 1 ceremony at Weinberg Family Park was that it did not include erecting a plaque. We thus proceeded from the park to Constitution Hill where another tree-planting ceremony was held and the plaque “in honour of the people of Luby​a and all destroyed Palestinian villages” was erected. Constitution Hill now features a permanent memorial to the Naqba.</p> <p>The Jewish Report article also claims that it is merely “alleged” or “purported” that the South African Forest was planted over Luby​a, a destroyed Palestinian village. Luby​a was a village with a population of 2 730. It was occupied in an operation called “Dekel” that was part of Israel’s “War of Independence”. The exact date of occupation was July 18, 1948. The South African Forest is part of the Lavi Forest, planted over and concealing Luby​a’s remains. The uncertainty about events that is implied by such words as “alleged” and “purported” are unwarranted and misleading.</p> <p>The Weinberg Family Park was chosen as the location for a ceremony in memory of Luby​a and other destroyed Palestinian villages because the Weinberg family which fully supports the SAJFP initiative, is well known for the sacrifices it has made in pursuit of social justice.</p> <p>The site was also chosen because we as Jewish South Africans were brought up with an extremely partial version of Israel’s history and on the basis of this version we were persuaded to contribute to a fund which actually works to conceal evidence of past crimes and to appropriate land. We take it as our duty to expose our own communities to these facts and thus to give members the ability to make an educated choice regarding the causes they wish to support.</p> <p>“The Palestinian Village Under the South African Forest”, a series of meetings between a Palestinian delegation and a variety of other groups in Johannesburg and Cape Town, was an SAJFP campaign. It involved the tree-planting ceremony and several other public events. Neither BDS nor Media Review Network were partners in these events as has been suggested.</p>		<p>Really, are some people just looking for more and more glory and publicity and want to be seen as the protectors of the Jewish people and the laws of Torah in South Africa? Is this not the domain of the Chief Rabbi and the Beth Din?</p> <p>Gilad Stern and Sarah Goldstein live in Cape Town and might seem to have the needs of the Cape Town Jewish community under their control. How dare they go to other Jewish communities and dictate to those communities what they want.</p> <p>I don’t interfere in the affairs of Cape Town and they must keep out of the affairs of Johannesburg, Durban, Pretoria and elsewhere.</p> <p>Stern and Goldstein are trying to hold the Jewish community hostage and at ransom.</p> <p>There was an agreement and out of court settlement. Why did Stern and Goldstein then feel the need to go back to the courts to make the agreement legal. Do they not trust the SAJBD who they negotiated with? Obviously they did not trust the SAJBD.</p> <p>Again I ask the question: Why is the Jewish community allowing Stern and Goldstein to hold us hostage and to ransom and acting to put the Jewish community into disrepute in an open forum for ALL our enemies to see. Have we not got enough enemies that we need more enemies from within?</p>		<p>As the grandson of Violet and Eli Weinberg and son of Sheila Weinberg, I was deeply honoured that the South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP) recently chose to plant six trees in the Weinberg Family Park to commemorate the Israeli forces’ ethnic cleansing of hundreds of Palestinian villages in 1948.</p> <p>We Weinbergs have always stood for equality and justice - against oppression and exploitation the world over.</p> <p>The planting of trees in the Weinberg Family Park reminds us that the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the struggle against Zionism in Palestine are one and the same.</p> <p>As the trees grow strong, we hope so too will the struggle for justice in Palestine so we can all live together in peace.</p>	
Sydney Kanichowsky Savoy Estates, Johannesburg		ISRAEL STILL A BEACON OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST		ANDREW DUNN’S JEWISH ACHIEVER SPEECH ACKNOWLEDGED	
		<p>To say that ChaiFM removed a particular broadcaster because of their political views (or pressure from some with differing political views) is speculation. ChaiFM is interviewing many people to fill their afternoon spot.</p> <p>The truth is that there is criticism of Israel, just like there is criticism of any country because countries are made of people, and people are flawed and therefore all countries are flawed to a greater or lesser degree.</p> <p>In addition to people being flawed, there are so many differing opinions that one government, one ideology, etc cannot satisfy everyone. So we know and accept that Israel is not “perfect”.</p> <p>It’s the dictatorships that hush their critics; and there are so many of those in the Middle East that Israel stands out as a beacon of democracy.</p> <p>There can be discussion of the many ways that we can think of to improve Israeli society, but it’s just so glaringly obvious that this is a double standard when one considers Israel’s neighbouring dictatorships, where there is constant violence and lack of human rights.</p> <p>Personally, I was a fan of Steve Marks and would prefer him to return to the Afternoon Drive.</p>		<p>I salute Andrew Dunn, CEO of Richmark Holdings, for his speech at the Jewish Achiever Awards banquet.</p> <p>His acknowledgement and praise of what is undoubtedly the greatest Diaspora Jewish community was a privilege to read.</p> <p>As a former South African living in Israel, his sentiments are so welcome and appreciated.</p> <p>To Dunn I would like to say: It is my fervent wish that your words resonate within the broader, non-Jewish sector and help foster a deeper sense of understanding, appreciation and tolerance of our community and their significant contribution to the prosperity of the Republic of South Africa.</p>	
Merlynn Edelstein (on behalf of SA Jews for a Free Palestine) Johannesburg		Michele Engelberg Johannesburg		Clive Chitiz (former SA National Campaign Director, IUA/UCF) Ra’anana, Israel	
ANT KATZ <i>who wrote the article in question, responds:</i> (i) <i>City Parks’ Jenny Moodley was clear in the LotusFM podcast referred to in the story and published on our website that there was no written permission;</i> (ii) <i>It is often said that “history is written by the victors” and that may be the case here, but, that differing accounts exist is a fact;</i> (iii) <i>B oth BDS and MRN advertised the SAJFP’s events extensively; and</i> (iv) <i>SAJFP’s own web presence is on the BDS-SA website which still carries the ad on their home page that their “friends from SAJFP are hosting a visiting delegation of Palestinian activists” and lists the events.</i>		Please support our newspaper advertisers		PALESTINIAN CLAIMS ON MIDEAST LANDS ARE SPURIOUS	
SAJFP AND JVJP... SAME FEW NAMES CROP UP ALL THE TIME		Kol isha: Court order wrongly attributed In last week’s edition of Jewish Report we ran a story on the kol isha matter in which we said the applicants (Gilad Stern et al) had the Equality Court case settlement made an order of court. In fact, it was the respondents (the Cape Board) who took this course of action. We regret the error.		<p>With the hysterical and venomous anti-Israel hate culture that has swept the world over the last 16 years, it is important to confront the truth of the situation.</p> <p>The vast arsenal of evil propaganda spread in South Africa by BDS, the Media Review Network, the ANC/SACP/Cosatu, SA Jews for a Just Peace and SA Jews for a Free Palestine and others needs to be challenged with the plain truth of the history of the conflict</p> <p>Israel is not and never has been guilty of settler colonialism.</p> <p>Firstly, there was no distinctive Palestinian national identity before the adoption by the PLO of the Palestinian National Covenant in 1966. The Arabs of Palestine were never seen as distinct from the Arab nation. At no time before the 1960s did any grouping of Palestinian Arabs come to recognition as a separate nation either by themselves or by other Arabs.</p> <p>In his book “Israel and Palestine: Assault of the Law of Nations”, expert on international relations Julius Stone reminds us: “The myth of the 1966 Palestinian Covenant” that “the Palestinian people” was unjustly displaced by the Jewish invasion of Palestine in 1917 is widely disseminated and unquestioningly and dogmatically espoused in these ‘studies’ from the United Nations Secretariat.</p> <p>“Furthermore it is also necessary to recall, not only the Kingdom of David and the succession of Jewish politics in Palestine down to the Roman conquest and dispersion at the turn of the present</p>	
<p>Two fringe groups, South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP) and Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP), have featured in last week’s Jewish Report. Like all fringe groups they believe they punch far above their fighting weight. In truth one sees the same two or three names appearing time and again.</p> <p>SAJFP don’t even have a website, which must speak volumes for their grandiose claims of support. If they were to hold community meetings I wonder just who would show up – other than members of the BDS and Media Review Network, and judging by the company they keep, one can guess how balanced and impartial such a gathering would be.</p> <p>At a time when our country is embroiled in much political turmoil and when recently announced crime statistics topped 17 000 deaths in a year in a country at peace, these fine ladies waste time resources and energy on trying to destroy the only Jewish State – what a futile endeavour.</p>		More news on our website www.sajr.co.za		<p>era, but that Jews continued even after the conquest, and were in 1914 a well-knit population there.”</p> <p>The 1937 Peel Commission pointed out: “Always or almost always since the fall of the Jewish State, some Jews have been living in Palestine. Under Arab rule there were substantial Jewish communities in the chief towns.”</p> <p>We must remember that the original Palestine promised to the Jews in 1917 by the Balfour Declaration included what is today Jordan. In 1922 Britain cut off 78 per cent of Palestine, granting it to the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, and forbidding Jews from living there. The Arabs now had a state in 78 per cent of Palestine, leaving the Jews 22 per cent of Palestine and less than a fraction of the Middle East. After the 1947 UN partition vote and the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, five Arab armies attacked Israel and Tranjordan illegally occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem.</p> <p>After the Arabs forced the Six Day War on Israel in 1967, Israel seized back these lands and is under no legal obligation to hand it back to the Arabs. Indeed, it was part of the lands promised to the Jews under the original mandate.</p> <p>The pressure by the UN and the international left on Israel to give up lands without recognition first by the Arabs is illegal.</p>	
Allan Wolman Rosebank, Johannesburg		Looking for information on Moziek (Morris) Seidel Barry Seidel from Norcross, Georgia in the US is looking for information on a family member - Moziek Zaidel or Seidel - and any other surviving family. <p>“Moziek, possibly Morris, my father’s brother, was born in Konin, Poland in 1878. He was the son of Jozef Zajdel and Mindla Trauman. He had four sisters, Jehudas, Estera, Bajla and Malka and one brother, Juda Majloch (my father, who later changed his name to Max Leopold Seidel). All were born in Konin, Poland.”</p> <p>Moziek - or Morris - immigrated to South Africa, either from Poland or Germany, in the 1920s to the early 1930s. It is not known where he settled.</p> <p>“He might have changed his name to ‘Seidel’, which is the name my father adopted in Germany in the 1920s.”</p> <p>Barry Seidel’s e-mail address is barrysei@gmail.com</p>		Gary Selikow Johannesburg	

Teaching the Holocaust and genocide in the digital era

MARGOT COHEN

A new way of preserving testimonies of Holocaust survivors through holograms was presented this week by two leading voices on Holocaust and genocide matters, Dr Stephen Smith and Dr Matthew Boswell.

The programme, “Remembering the Holocaust and Genocide in the Digital Age”, continued until September 13.

Smith, who is a professor of religion and is chairman of Genocide Education at Unesco and executive director of the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation, gave his talks at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre with Dr Boswell.

Dr Boswell who has a PhD in Holocaust literature from the University of Leeds has, with Dr Smith, captivated their audiences with their knowledge, insight and innovative approach to understanding the Holocaust and genocide.

Smith has also recently become a patron of the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation.

Director of the JH&GC, Tali Nates, was involved in several of the workshops and took part in one on Monday, focusing on post-memory.

The Shoah Foundation, founded by Steven Spielberg, contains the largest archive of oral history - some 54 000 survivors’ testimonies - including testimonies from Nazi-era survivors and the Rwandan and Armenian genocides.

The information is available online to scholars. It’s a new dimension which acknowledges that survivors are few - and getting fewer - and that their stories must be preserved.

Added Smith: “This database is a treasure trove of historical memory for now and the future.”

One such Holocaust survivor, Pinchas Gutter from Poland, who has lived in Cape Town for more than 30 years, answers questions and engages with audiences through an interactive hologram that can be projected in 3D, answering questions about his experiences during the Holocaust and his life before and after.

Questions about Gutter’s gruelling experiences as a young boy during the Second World War are directly answered in a very hands-on approach.

Adds Boswell: “It’s a new way of training scholars and volunteers who want to fire questions at survivors.

“Each story is unique and each survivor responds in his or her own way, showing resilience, hope, tenacity.” There are also many survivors living in Eastern Europe, living in dire poverty, whose losses were never addressed.

“We have to learn from each testimony. Anti-Semitism is lethal and often leads to genocide - as history has shown,” says Smith. “The Holocaust targeted Jews, but hatred was made by Western civilisation.

“We are all responsible and memories must be preserved to ensure that mass murder does not recur.”

• For more information contact Shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or telephone (011) 640-3100.



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Dr Matthew Boswell, of the University of Leeds (left), with Tali Nates, director of the JH&GC, and Dr Stephen Smith, executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation.

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‘Cultivate’ stimulates young budding KDVP artists

NIRVANA ROGERS

King David Victory Park Primary recently hosted a week-long theme of art and cultural activities called “Cultivate”. A number of exciting activities and outings were organised for the learners such as a visit and tour of the FNB Johannesburg Art Fair; a workshop with world famous Israeli artist Hanoch Piven; collaborative lessons between the art departments of the high and primary school, including string art and marbelling; an interactive engagement with Artist Proof Studio (APS) where pupils were given the unique opportunity to create their own masterpiece while enjoying a paper collage workshop on famous South African icons.

To ensure that parents could also find value from the “Cultivate” week, the school organised a fun informative parent outing to Artist Proof Studio.

Kim Berman, executive director of the studio, gave parents a brief presentation on an introduction to printmaking techniques. This was followed by a walkabout by the learners and a display of their work in process.

A special opportunity of the evening was when parents were able to witness the printing of a large 20 plate etching by William Kentridge, which will be on exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Fair.

Everyone who attended enjoyed the evening and the exposure to young talented artists and learnt a lot about print-making. The week came to an exhilarating end with the grade 7s visiting the FNB Art Fair at the Sandton Convention Centre.



Gad Matisonn proudly designing his “faces” artwork with waste material at the Hanoch Piven Workshop.

KDL High dressed in pink for a good cause

JODENE HAACK, HISTORY TEACHER

It was with great anticipation that King David High Linksfield made plans to have its annual “Pink Trees Picnic”.

The purpose of Pink Trees for Pauline is to create awareness, unite communities and raise money for those afflicted with cancer in a unique way.

To demonstrate the school’s commitment to this cause, the school was wrapped in pink. A generous number of people donated their time and effort to beautifying both Club Street and the school. A sizeable amount of money, which will go towards this admirable organisation, was raised.

A big thank you to all those involved that made the day so special.

TA grade 1 Siddur Concert a huge success

RABBI MOTTI HADAR, PRINCIPAL
TORAH ACADEMY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Torah Academy Primary School was abuzz with excitement last week as the month of Elul was ushered in. Surrounded by family members, friends and teachers, the grade one boys and girls celebrated their Grand Siddur Concert.

This concert is one of the school’s highlight events. It was especially formulated to combine music, song and dance with the inner meanings, explanations and content of various tefillot-prayers. The songs play such a powerful role in making the daily repetition of the tefillot a profound experience for these boys and girls.

A special segment on Elul and the preparations for Rosh Hashanah were included, adding another dimension to the performance.

Guests were inspired by the children’s enthusiasm and joy. Their shining faces and exuberance truly set the tone for the countdown to Rosh Hashanah 5777. The culmination of the concert, and the highly anticipated moment for each young child, was when they each received their first, specially personalised, siddur.

Teachers Messody Katz, Yaffa Liberow, Chanie Bacher and Gila Ash were thanked for the hours of preparation that went into this production and for their dedication to the grade one unit in general.

The siddur concert has a powerful effect on these precious neshamot, instilling in them a love for Hashem, and a treasured means of reaching out to Him - through tefilla.

Kids and parents learn how to react in a hijacking

GREG SOCHEN

Parents from Minnie Bersohn Nursery School and King David Sandton last Sunday attended a hijack awareness, prevention and reaction course organised by Greg Sochen and run by the National Hijack Prevention Academy.

Presenter Richard Brussow has more than 20 years’ experience with the SAPS hijack units, and features regularly on television and radio shows and consults to all the major tracking companies.

The parents were taught how to recognise a potential attack, how to react, how to protect their vital organs, and most importantly, how to get their children safely out of the vehicle, among other techniques.

Everyone left the course feeling more confident and comfortable with this essential specialised knowledge.

Sochen may be contacted on sochy@iburst.co.za to attend this course.



Richard Brussow gives tips on how to react to a hijacking.

It was a real ‘Royal Shabbos’ feast at Sydenham

SUE BENJAMIN

Sydenham Pre-Primary School’s theme of Castles, Dragons, Kings and Queens ended on a high note last week. Everyone dressed up in the appropriate attire and to mark the event, everyone participated in a “Royal Shabbos” celebration.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman joined in the festivities and blew the shofar as it is the month of Elul.

While the children dined with

kings and queens, Rabbi Goldman explained to them that Hashem is the ultimate King and Shabbos is the Queen and during the month of Elul the King is very near and everyone should try and do as many mitzvot as possible.

To achieve the “royal feast”, the children were served jelly and custard after enjoying their challah and carrots.

Enjoying the festivities are Ricky Cohen; Samuel Licht; and Chad Diamond.



Batmitzvah girls explore their holiness



The King David Primary School Sandton batmitzvah girls 2016.

SEAN KORB

After a meaningful and united Shabbat hosted at Sandton Shul last week Friday, King David Primary School Sandton’s batmitzvah girls entertained parents, grandparents, teachers and fellow learners by putting on an insightful and moving batmitzvah ceremony.

The focus was on being holy and what that truly means to them. They looked at the power of Shabbat as the greatest example of holiness. We wish them all a huge mazeltov!



Grade 1 children of Torah Academy Primary School during their siddur concert.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

Elie Wiesel Memorial cements Board-JHGC relationship

Last Sunday, the SAJBD Gauteng Council and the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) held a joint function in memory of legendary human rights activist and Holocaust survivor Elie

Wiesel.
This was the first joint event to be held in the JHGC’s newly-completed premises in Parktown. The Board was proudly involved in the establishment of the JHGC, and since then has collaborated with it on a number of memorable events, including a tribute to the Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara as well as commemorating the Soviet army’s role in liberating the concentration camps.
The mission of the JHGC is to combine Holocaust commemoration and education with teaching about other genocides that have occurred in modern history, particularly those in Africa.

In doing so, it seeks to instil in its visitors an awareness of the evils of racism, bigotry and intolerance, and of what the unspeakable consequences of words can be. As Gauteng Chairman Shaun Zagnoev pointed out in his message for the occasion, the SAJBD “shares this commitment to learning from past tragedies, and applying these lessons to our own times so as to prevent such things from ever happening again”.
In his address, Holocaust survivor and educator Don Krausz stressed one of Elie Wiesel’s fundamental observations, that for an educated and culturally sophisticated nation

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

to have perpetrated such horrors required a process of dehumanisation against its victims, and that consequently the noble ideals constituting “human rights” are of limited value when one’s intended targets are not considered to be human.
Don has for many years been at the very forefront of local Holocaust survivors who have bravely borne witness to and educated the public about what they saw and experienced. In communicating his message so often and on so many different platforms, he has not only displayed enormous courage and resilience, but wisdom, dignity and above all a profound sense of humanity.

For this our Jewish community, and our society as a whole, owes Don a huge debt of gratitude.

African Jewish Congress launches ‘Jews of Namibia’

On Tuesday, the long-awaited launch of the book “The Jews of South West Africa Namibia - A History” took place in Cape Town under the auspices of the African Jewish Congress (AJC). Participants included AJC President Ann Harris and CEO Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft (who also heads up the SAJBD Country Communities Department). Associate Director David Saks, one of the co-authors, was the keynote speaker.

The AJC was established, largely on the initiative of the SAJBD, in the early 1990s to act as a representative body for the Jewish communities of Sub-Saharan African countries. It operates within the administrative structure of the SAJBD, and provides a range of services to assist in the continuation of Jewish life in the affiliate countries.

• *Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00*

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Responsible sharing

I once heard a story about a 10-year-old kid who came home complaining that a classmate had hit him. He even had the bump and bruise to prove it.
The mom flew into protective mode and, child in tow, rushed off to the home of the perpetrator to confront the bully, his parents, and anyone else who would listen. When they got there she was struck dumb by the news that her son had thrown the first punch. She hadn’t thought to ask him.

How many times does this theme, in countless variations, play out? We are too often quick to judge and to respond to a one-sided story. Although intellectually we understand there are always at least two versions of the truth, in our eagerness to believe shocking or damning information we are sometimes gullible and misled.

The world has changed and advances in communication technologies have hugely impacted our marketing and PR capabilities - as companies, organisations and as individuals. Everyone is equal and anyone can hold centre-stage. As with most progress, though, it’s a double-edged sword.

On the one hand social media is a wonderful marketing tool. We can get a message out to large audiences quickly and if it grabs attention, our work is done. People will attend the event, respond to our appeal or take cognisance of important information. It also offers consumers of goods and services a platform to voice their



ChevrahKadisha
AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE
Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff

dissatisfaction.
On the other hand, with this great freedom comes great responsibility. We have a moral imperative to be careful about what we post and be sure of our facts if we are going to take something to the public arena.
This brings me to the issue of distressed calls for help, chain letters, collection requests, etc that are sent out on social media groups like WhatsApp.
Through these mediums our remarkable, caring community demonstrates deep concern and a genuine desire to help. Many of you will agree, though, that messages are sometimes still cir-

culating long after a situation has been resolved and that inaccurate information is shared.
Please, therefore, feel free to contact us directly if you are concerned that someone may need help. We are invariably involved and already providing assistance for the long haul. Many people in our community make good use of the Chev’s knowledge base and contact us for guidance with satisfying results. We extend this invitation to the rest of you.
The community is encouraged to use our feedback address for all complaints, queries and compliments. While confidentiality may sometimes prevent us from providing details, we promise to respond to every e-mail.
May our partnership continue to thrive - Feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

Community

Healthy minds in healthy bodies is the ultimate end-goal



Ronel Zeff; Tzipora Krawitz; Georgia Lewis; Caroline Rothstein; Shani Ynclan; Danit Cohen; Danya Meyerthal; and Gita Lipschitz.

GITA LIPSCHITZ, SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

The counselling and physical education departments at King David Victory Park are running workshops this month with grade 8 - 11 learners on healthy eating.
The school was privileged to have as guest speaker, Caroline Rothstein from New York, to introduce the workshops. Rothstein presented a powerful live poetry performance about her life with an eating disorder and her healing process as a young Jewish woman.
Adolescents the world over are facing huge pressure in an age where image is everything - selfies, snapchat, Instagram - and the expectation is to aspire to look like airbrushed supermodels, she said.
The school finds that the major issue that girls

grapple with is the desire to be thin and pretty and the boys to be well-built and manly. Even without a full-blown eating disorder, there is a lot of obsessing around food, eating, exercise, gym (how much? what? when? and for how long?). Added to this is each learner’s self-esteem and body image which are intricately linked.
The learners asked Rothstein many insightful questions. She enforced the message that each person is more than their weight or physical being; they are a whole, multi-faceted, awesome person.
As Rothstein says: “I am enough.”
• *Rothstein is a New York-based writer, performer, activist and arts educator. Her video “Fat is not a Feeling” has been viewed over two million times on YouTube. www.carolinerothstein.com*

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Not many know of a little desert gem called Sapir

Yael Bekker

Almost six years ago, while I was living in the Telfed building in Ra’anana, a friend and I were keen to find a place for South African olim. We formulated an idea of a 12-month programme where the olim could be absorbed into Israeli life - learning Hebrew, working and living within an affordable community where they had the option of continuing to live and work after completing the programme.

We met with several NGOs as well as members of Knesset and private professionals and formed an association. But we couldn’t find an affordable place where the olim would stay, study and work.

One fine day... we came across an organisation which assists people who wish to move to settlements throughout Israel. Thus we discovered Sapir in the Arava.

We rented a car for two days and drove down past Dimona, along the winding mountain pass and the “moonscape” Arava road toward Eilat and turned off at the Sapir sign, some 250 kms from Tel Aviv.

Sapir services the five moshavim and two community settlements which form the Central Arava and houses the local council and its commercial arm, the Arava Development Company, as well as the schools for the area.

We were introduced to the agricultural R&D centre, Sapir industrial area, AICAT (Arava International Centre for Agricultural Training) an initiative to train students from universities in Asia, the cultural centre (which has the library, music conservatorium, centre for extra-mural activities and courses, as well as the 400-seat Rosenthal Theatre).

And, of course, there is an excellent medical centre, in addition to the search & rescue unit and the police station. This in the middle of the desert! Sapir even has a park with a small (man-made) lake!

As in every settlement, Sapir has a lovely swimming pool for those extremely hot days.

For me it was love at first sight. When we were introduced to the

mayor, I told him that I would be returning to live in Sapir, and was greeted with some scepticism. Seven months later I moved there.

As it happened, our idea did not come to fruition, but - through my enthusiasm while talking to neighbours in the building - two oleh families decided to move to the Arava; that made me very happy. I work for the Arava Development Company.

Living in the desert in a small community (140 families) is definitely a change, both cultural and environmental. The climate here is dry and hot for most of the year but in the winter months it gets very cold at night.

The Jordanian Edom mountains are capped with snow in mid-winter. It seldom rains, but when

it does, it is a drenching deluge and at least once a year we have heavy flash floods.

The mobile post office arrives once a day and we have a bank which is open only one day a week... We do have a mini-market for incidentals and were very excited two years ago when a supermarket was opened in Moshav Ein Yahav, 10 minutes away!

A car is essential here because I have children and grandchildren in Tel Aviv. The nearest city is Dimona which is 85 km away and both Be’ersheva and Eilat are 120 km away. The bus service between Eilat and Tel Aviv is reliable but tedious.

Being independent is very important to me and I love hopping in my car with my dog and driving 250

km to Tel Aviv - one can really get “cabin fever” after weeks of living and working in a small community.

Coming from the seaside town of Muizenberg with all its lush, green vegetation, the desert is a drastic change. However, the desert is interesting and has constantly changing hues from pink and purple to gold and russet. The best therapy is walking my dog in the desert at the end of the day.

I have now lived in Sapir for five years and look forward to many more in the Arava.

• *As the Telfed volunteer representative for the Arava, Bekker will be happy to supply any further information and can be contacted on 052-7977518.*



Photos supplied

World News in Brief

Poll shows Hillary Clinton trouncing Donald Trump among Jewish voters

NEW YORK - The AJC did not poll specifically on Israel as a priority, but it was a rare high note among those polled, with 73 per cent saying US-Israel relations were fairly good or very good compared to 25 per cent saying they were fairly poor or very poor.

Asked to respond to the sentiment “Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew”, 73 per cent agreed strongly or somewhat, while 26 per cent disagreed strongly or somewhat. Asked whether an independent Palestine could exist peacefully alongside Israel, 49 per cent said yes and 20 per cent said no.

Among religious streams, respondents broke down as 34 per cent Reform, 18 per cent Conservative, 9 per cent Orthodox and 2 per cent Reconstructionist. Thirty-four per cent said they were “just Jewish”.

Asked the importance of being Jewish in their life, 79 per cent said it was somewhat or very important, 21 per cent said it was not too important or not important at all.

The poll, which was carried out between August 8-28 in phone interviews by the research company SSRS, has a margin of error of 3,57 percentage points. (JTA)

Israel and US conclude 10-year defence assistance pact

WASHINGTON - Israel and the United States have concluded an agreement to extend defence assistance for a decade. Jacob Nagel, the Israeli prime minister’s national security adviser, signed off on the deal with his US counterpart, Susan Rice, on Tuesday, and there was a formal signing ceremony at the State Department on Wednesday. The Israeli and US governments issued a joint statement announcing the deal without providing details.

The package, according to reports, will be for \$38 billion over 10 years, up from the \$31 billion over the last decade but below the \$45 billion sought by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

It was unclear if the deal represented a real increase because missile defence co-operation was rolled into the agreement; previously such co-operation was considered separately. The provision to include missile defence in the overall package makes it harder for Israel to appeal to Congress for increases.

Additionally, the deal over time reportedly will roll back the approximately 25 per cent of the funds Israel may spend on defence equipment manufactured at home. Instead, the money must be spent on equipment manufactured by the US defence industry. (JTA)

Trump adviser endorses Netanyahu claim of ‘ethnic cleansing’ by Palestinians

WASHINGTON - An adviser to Donald Trump and his presidential campaign backed up Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s claim that the Palestinian demand for a removal of settlements amounts to “ethnic cleansing”.

“The prime minister of Israel correctly observes that the Palestinian demand to remove all Jews from their ancestral homeland in Judea and Samaria is nothing short of an attempt at ethnic cleansing,” David Friedman, a longtime lawyer to the Republican presidential nominee and an adviser on Israel to his campaign, told Haaretz on Sunday.

Judea and Samaria are biblical references to the West Bank.

“The State Department should be ashamed of their misguided reaction to Mr Netanyahu’s remarks,” Friedman told the Israeli daily. The Obama administration last week described as “inappropriate” Netanyahu’s claim that Palestinian opposition to settlements amounts to “ethnic cleansing.”

“We believe that using that type of terminology is inappropriate and unhelpful,” State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said.

In the video posted last week to Facebook, Netanyahu likens residents of the settlements to Arabs born in Israel. (JTA)

‘Cheers to Sarajevo’ – a voice that will not be silenced

PETER FELDMAN

Aimee Goldsmith is a young Johannesburg actress and playwright who is leaving her mark on the local theatrical landscape with thought-provoking productions. Fresh from her stint as Lola, a French prostitute, in *Waiting for Jack*, the former King David Linksfield learner is now tackling a new production at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square in Sandton, *Cheers to Sarajevo*, a play she co-wrote and also stars in. It also features Duane Behrens, Chris van Rensburg, Yiorgo Sotoropolis and

Julian Kruger. Giving background, Goldsmith told Jewish Report that she experienced aspects of the former Yugoslavia at the age of 14 when she took part in a karate competition in Novi Sad. “It was my first time travelling to Europe and the first time I had encountered the reality of war, not only physically, but also psychologically. “I’ve been acting for 14 years and started at the Johannesburg Youth Theatre under Joyce Levinsohn. I performed in a number of productions there until I matriculated. At King David my drama teacher Clara Taub instilled in me a passion for theatre.” Goldsmith met Croatian Lidija Marelic at Wits who also harboured a terrible experience of the war in her own country. The two women, both in theatre, decided there was a story that needed to be told and *Cheers to Sarajevo* was born. The theme was the power of women to maintain love and hope in war. “We knew we did not want to show any side as being the aggressor but rather make war the enemy. What better place to set our play than in Sarajevo where all people lived side by side. “We began by interviewing former Yugoslavs living in South Africa. We spoke to people from all fronts of the war and watched countless documentaries and movies.” The overwhelming task made them want to give up at times, but

then they remembered why they were telling the story. “It has a voice that will not be silenced and this was the incentive to keep pushing. “As the ‘born free’ generation in South Africa, our responsibility is to honour the freedom struggle and its heroes by attempting to forge a new future that embraces our diversities. It is important that we don’t romanticise our past and forget its destruction. Overcoming hate was what gave birth to our new nation, and it is that same hate that can easily undo it.”

• The play opens on September 20 and runs until October 8.



Aimee Goldsmith and Duane Behrens.

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NOTICES

We wish to express our sincere appreciation for all your love and support received during our time of loss. Thank you all for the acts of kindness shown to our family on the passing of our beloved mother Heather Berman z'l. Thank you for being there for us. Regards Bernard and Peter Berman, Riva Flax and Debbie Hirschowitz

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What's On

16 – 23 September 2016

Friday (September 16)

• Chabad House, with Rabbi Ari Kievman, is running a five-week crash course including fascinating insights of the High Holiday prayers. The course which started yesterday (Thursday) and will run over five Thursdays from 19:00 - 20:30, takes place at Sandton Central Shul, Chabad's Goodness & Kindness Centre. Course Fee: R500 (Bursaries available). To register: (011) 440-6600.

• UZLC hosts Bonaventure Kageruka, a Rwanda genocide survivor on "How I Survived Genocide". Marlene Bethlehem will chair the meeting. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (September 18)

• JVPJ hosts the second Offline event about the silencing of voices in the community. Deep Fried Man will be interviewing Damon Kalvari, followed by an open floor for those who wish to Speak out, face to face. Time: 17:00 – 19:00 in the community centre behind Beit Emanuel.

• RCHCC screens the BBC film, based on a true story, "The Man Who Crossed Hitler". Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René or Hazel (011 728 8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378 or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

• RCHCC hosts an exhibition of paintings by Jason Margolis. Time: 18:00. Exhibition closes Sunday October 30. Hours: Monday - Thursday 09:00 – 16:00. Friday 09:00 - 12:00. Sunday 18:30 - 21:30. Contact: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378.

• Light music, with composers and lyricists that have become legends in their field, such as Ray Conniff, George Schearing Sigmund Romberg etc, you can listen to. Venue: Roosevelt Park Recreational Centre. Time: 14:00. First timers free. Information: David (011) 678-9725 or 076-574-1446.

• The Old Arcadian Association is honouring David Solly Sandler. David is a former Arcadian and a noted Jewish historian and author whose Jewish books are sold worldwide. Through the total proceeds from sales of his books, over R1,2 million has been donated to Arcadia. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, Sandringham. Time: 14:00. Contact: Jules Gordon 082-552-3148.

• Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts David Solly Sandler of Perth, who will launch his books "Our SA Jewish Heritage" and "Our Litvak Heritage" and discuss his many other compilations on SA Jewry. Venue: HOD. Time: 19:00. Cost: R25 (incl tea & refreshments). RSVP: Hannah (011) 485-2188.

Monday (September 19)

• UJW adult education division hosts Prof Vishwas Satgar, associate professor in International Studies at Wits, on "From Climate Change to Food Crisis". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

• JH&GC in partnership with the High Commission of Canada hosts the opening of a new exhibition, "Children of War: Broken Childhood". Venue: JHGC, 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Time: 19:00. Seating limited. Booking: shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100/2148. No charge for admission but donations welcome.

Tuesday (September 20)

• Rosh Hashanah Charity Market takes place at the Norwood Mall in the Centre Court. "Jewish Life in the South African Country Communities" will be on sale. These volumes record the unique history of the Jews who settled in the country towns and villages across South Africa dating back to 1820. The market will run until October 2. Times: 09:00 - 16:00 on weekdays and 09:00 – 13:00 on Sundays. Information, and submission of material: E-mail museum@beyachad.co.za or (011) 645-2598 or www.jewishcountrycommunities.co.za

Wednesday (September 21)

• CSO hosts "Fight or Flight?" with Robyn Cowen and the CSO. Key points include: Communicating with our children about crime and trauma without instilling panic; Fear for our children when going out; Coping with trauma; Global terrorism etc. Venue to be confirmed on registration. Time: 19:00 - 20:30. Cost: R180 (incl refreshments). To secure your space e-mail or call by Monday September 19 to facilitate catering and the printing of materials. Contact: Robyn 084-888-0084 or Andy 082-857-7156.

• SACRED and Beit Emanuel Shul present a talk by Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked on "Universal Peace in the Jewish Tradition". Venue: Beit Emanuel Shul's- Slome Auditorium.

Time: 18:30. Open to all faiths. RSVP rabbijuliamargolis@gmail.com or 076-673-0750.

• Chev Social Services Enrich 2016 presents "The Intelligent Divorce". Divorce is never easy but there are strategies to make it easier with Leonard Carr. Venue: Jewish Life Centre, 2 Gayre Drive, Strathavon. Time: 19:45. Cost: R50 (incl light refreshments). Booking: Sharon (011) 532-9616 or enrich@jhbchev.co.za

• UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer Dept of English at Wits on the seventh lecture on "Enjoying Contemporary Poetry". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Sunday (September 25)

• JH&GC in partnership with the University of Leeds, UK hosts a series of lectures and workshops on "Remembering the Holocaust and Genocide in the Digital Age. The series run from today, September 5 to 13. See http://transnationalholocaustmemory.org/events/ for more information.

• Second Innings hosts Darren Sevit on "Hatzolah Medical Rescue - Eighteen Years Of Life". Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (September 26)

• UJW adult education division hosts Prof Peter Delius, Wits University historian and author on "The Squandered Treasure of a Forsaken World - Bokoni 1500 – 1820". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (September 27)

• RCHCC hosts a talk by former American diplomat J Brooks Spector' on "Trump and Clinton - After the First Debate - Now What? (Who Won Who Lost, and What Does it Mean, Anyway?)". Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R80 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378 or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

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New-look Highlands Park returns to top-flight football once again

JACK MILNER

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” says Juliet in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet.

An old name, with strong Jewish connections, has suddenly reappeared on the South Africa soccer scene as newly revamped Highlands Park made its first appearance in the Premier Soccer League on Tuesday night. They were initially due to make their debut last week but their opposition, Sundowns, had to play a Champions League match. Highlands finally kicked off its much-awaited return when the team met Baroka FC in the match the promoted teams played at Makhulong Stadium in Tembisa on the East Rand. Highlands won the game 2-1 - a very good start.

It was undoubtedly a softer introduction to the top-flight football than having to first take on Sundowns, but perhaps this was a match they were expected to win and therefore there was a lot



Co-chairman and technical director of newly promoted Highlands Park, Larry Brookstone (right), talks to coach Allan Freese.

more pressure on them. However, despite conceding a penalty in the sixth minute and being down 0-1, Collins Mbesuma equalised in the 32nd minute and Charlton Mashumba scored the winner in the 56th minute to give Highlands a deserved 2-1 victory.

I remember the excitement as a 12-year-old in 1965 when Sean Connor arrived at King David High Links-field to teach us arithmetic. The word was out he had been brought from Scotland to play for Highlands Park, the team closest to most learners’ hearts at the time. This was going to be a real honour to be taught by a man we were certain to revere.

How disappointing it was for us when he stepped into our classroom - our Form 1 class was the first at the school for him to teach - and we could not understand a word he was saying! His heavy Scottish accent made everything he said sound like Lewis Carroll’s Jabberwocky. But his stay at King David was a lot longer than that at Highlands and he eventually retired as headmaster of the Primary School more than 10 years ago.

The original Highlands Park was founded in 1959 and was active until 1983. In 1971 the club merged with Powerlines to form Highlands Power FC but it later changed its name back to the more well-known - and revered - Highlands Park FC in 1973.

During those glory years the team boasted players like Santoro, Stan Jacobitz, Walter da Silva, Freddy Kalk, Julie Kaplan, Charlie Gough, Joe Frickleton, Sean Connor, Bobby and Ronny Hume, Willie McIntosh and also prominent in the 1970s was Martin Cohen,

Ahead of the 1979 season, the club signed a five-year sponsor deal with Dion. The club name was duly changed to Dion Highlands FC in 1979. In February 1980 the official name was changed to Dion FC. The club was referred to as “Dion Highlands FC” from 1981 to February 1983.

The club played its last official professional match at February 12, 1983, where it lost the final of the BP Top Eight Cup 0-2 to Orlando Pirates. Ahead of the 1983 season, the club’s league franchise for the NPSL, was purchased by Jomo Sono. The new club name became Dion Cosmos and in 1984 was renamed Jomo Cosmos.

Highlands Park came and went, but more recently was slowly

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revived from the amateur ranks by its owners Larry Brookstone (technical director and co-chairman), Hadley Lasarow (shareholder/director), Sinky Mnisi (shareholder/director and general manager) and Brad Kaftel (shareholder/director and co-chairman).

Allan Freese is head coach. Freese had two good seasons’ experience as a head coach in the PSL for Platinum Stars, where he achieved an unprecedented double in 2013-14 of the MTN8 and Telkom Knockout trophies, beating Orlando Pirates in both finals.

His teams are said to play simple, uncompromising and effective football. He has two assistant coaches in Les Grobler and Thierry Mulonzo.

The team got promoted to the Absa Premier League for the 2016/17 season following a 2-0 win over Mbombela United at Makhulong Stadium in June. The team dominated the playoffs, winning all three games.

Highlands wasted little time in signing on 13 new players by mid-July, including Collins Mbesuma, Zamuxolo Ngalo, Thanduyise Khuboni, Charlton Mashumba and Junior Sibande. It also has a wonderful prospect in midfielder Mothobi Mvala, who impressed during South Africa’s 1-1 draw against Brazil at the Rio Olympics, although he did get sent off during the match.

Unfortunately for Highlands by missing that last match against Sundowns they will have to play catch-up as most teams will have already played two matches.

But the club has had a good start and it will be interesting to see whether the new-look Highlands Park team will be able to revive its glory days of the sixties and seventies.

News

Unconventional launch for unorthodox wines

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Johannesburg suburb of Bez Valley does not have a strong association with kosher product launches, but it and Yukon House played host to the launch of Zandwijk’s new label Unorthodox Wines last week Thursday evening.

It was fitting that the launch of the wine took place on the doorstep of Doornfontein and Bertrams, suburbs which many Jews first called home when they arrived in this country many years ago and before the demographic northward shift started.

Zandwijk was the first and remains the only fulltime kosher wine-making estate in South Africa. It released its new 2014 Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon blend and a 2016 Sauvignon Blanc. The name seemed strange for a Mevushal Kosher Wine.

“We value our kosher identity as something different - wine with a twist perhaps,” said Oren Kaplan, whose family owns Zandwijk wine estate. “We have therefore added our bold twist too. A new perspective on age-old traditions. We trust you will find the new range to be out of the ordinary, refreshing and relevant, familiar but clearly different.”

Winemaker Jean van Rooyen describes how the red wine blend was made. The Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon were made separately, grapes picked at optimum ripeness to make a full bodied wine. The Merlot spent seven months in both American and French oak and the Cabernet Sauvignon seven months in French oak. The wine was blended just prior to bottling.

A closer inspection of the label allows one to see irreverent Jewish images, from a ram playing the trumpet, to a kosher hot dog stand, to a yeshiva bocher sitting at a shtender under a pomegranate tree with a boom box at his feet.

As Wayne Sussman, manager of Unorthodox Wines, says: “Each image personifies the label. Each image celebrates what we want to achieve with this wine.”



Photo: Shawn Brown

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