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Achievers all - igniting the soul of Africa



It's come and gone. The Absa Jewish Achiever Awards last Sunday at Vodaworld in Midrand saw the crème de la crème of the Jewish community - and a host of non-Jewish guests as well - paying tribute to Jewish achievers in fields as diverse as industry, outreach, arts and sport. The theme this year was "Igniting the Soul of Africa" - and the evening was testimony to the myriad ways in which SA Jewry clearly do "ignite" the "African soul". Pictured are Howard Sackstein, chairman of the board of SA Jewish Report, who is also Achievers chairman; community stalwart Marlene Bethlehem, winner of the KIA Community Service Award; the indefatigable human rights lawyer George Bizos, who received The Chivas Humanitarian Award in Honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris Z"L; Wendy Appelbaum, who with her husband Hylton, received the Lifetime Achievement Award in honour of Helen Suzman and Bertie Lubner, on behalf of the Donald Gordon Foundation; and surfing great Shaun Tomson, who received the Richmark Art, Sport, Science & Culture Award. See pages 3-13.

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‘Winds of Change’ for children



Parshat Re'eh
Rabbi Asher Deren
The Shul - Cape Town

Though Cape Town may be known for its gusty winds, the “Winds of Change” speech delivered by UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on a visit here to Parliament in 1960 is probably even better known, marking a critical point in the British Commonwealth’s decolonisation policy and an early sign of our own changes to come.

As he summed it up: “The Wind of Change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.”

As a child I read another speech about the “Winds of Change”, not by the Prime Minis-

ter, but by the previous Rebbe, reflecting on his own childhood in the Jewish season of change, the month of Elul.

“Though summer still lingered and the day was bright and sunny, there was a change in the air. One smelled the Elul-scent; a Teshuvah wind (Wind of Change) was blowing. Everyone grew more serious, more thoughtful... All awaited the call of the shofar, the first blast that would announce the opening of the gates of the month of mercy...”

In this week’s parsha we read Moshe’s famous words: “Bonim atem laHashem Elokeichem” (“You are Children of G-d”)

The essence of a child is their parent: emotionally, intellectually and in the most literal form genetically. This is what they are created from - the seed of their parents, and this is who they are.

As “Children of G-d” our entire essence and being is only that: G-d. No sin, no crisis

of faith, and no level of ignorance or indifference, can change that. But, as every parent knows, what may have been obvious in an embryotic state is lost and forgotten with the passage of time.

So then we have the months of Elul when we, the children - like the previous Rebbe reflecting on his childhood Elul, or we as the Children of Hashem reading the parsha that reminds us of our “child” state oneness with G-d - are able to feel our Divine consciousness as a spiritual fact.

For this reason we begin to blow the shofar every day, we recite an extra three chapters of Tehillim to complete it by Yom Kippur, we add chapter 27 to the daily prayers, we add in Torah and tzedakah, and we generally try to improve and elevate our daily conduct and lifestyle (see www.TheShul.co.za/Elul for more on what this month is bringing).

And so, to paraphrase the great speech given in Cape Town 53 years ago: “The Wind of Change is blowing through this community. Whether we like it or not, this growth of Divine consciousness is a spiritual fact.”

So let’s join the movement now.


Shabbat Times		
September 2 / 29 Av		
September 3 / 30 Av		
Parshat Re’eh		
Starts	Ends	
17:38	18:27	Johannesburg
18:11	19:04	Cape Town
17:24	18:14	Durban
17:43	18:34	Bloemfontein
17:43	18:35	Port Elizabeth
17:34	18:26	East London

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Go-Getters persevere – and Cape Town woman gets her get!

BRIAN JOSSELOWITZ

A Cape Town woman who was granted a get recently, said she felt “relief but not quite belief” until the document was in her hands.

The woman - E C - who does not want to be identified, was married for 13 years and her civil divorce was granted over a year ago. She said she has three children and it affected them badly.

“I did not make the get part of the settlement as the divorce was too difficult and had taken about three years with huge expense - so I just wanted it over and I knew the get would prolong it as I had asked for it in 2012 a few times and been refused,” said E C. She had however asked the Beth Din in Cape Town to speak with her former husband – which they did but without success.

“My ex-husband just did not want to grant the get, although this year he did ask the Rosh Beth Din to offer me one, but with certain conditions, so I rejected it. I was not interested in fighting further as there had been so much stress already that I decided enough was enough,” she said.

“Then one of the women behind the Go-Getters campaign called and asked if I wanted help and I told her that I did not think so as I was not interested in another Jewish marriage and would not sign another get, given how the law is written.

“However, I met with her and she explained to me the work Go-Getters had been doing and about the support they were giving to another agunah (“chained woman”). I was still reluctant to proceed, but she encouraged me to make another call to the Beth Din and to set up another meeting.

“It was all different now as I was no longer alone. The Go-Getters were in my corner and they gave me good advice. I met with the Beth Din but they wanted to include other family matters and my children in the process, which did not suit me.

“The Go-Getters encouraged me to write another letter to the Beth Din outlining my concerns and then the rabbi understood that the get needed



to be granted separately from the other issues,” E C said.

The breakthrough came for her when another get-refuser, Anthony Sherman, was named, shamed and excommunicated. E C said she knew her get would “come shortly”.

“My ex-husband agreed to give me a get although he still wanted to attach terms which were not in my children’s interests, but he re-

lented and gave me the get. Without the support of Go-Getters I would definitely not have a get today. I would not have fought for it and would not have been assertive enough to demand it in the end.

“I was amazed to meet this unbelievable group of women who selflessly were prepared to stand up and fight for what is right with nothing in it for them.”

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SA Jews have a role to play in moral leadership – Howard Sackstein

MICHAEL BELLING
PHOTOS BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER AND JASON CROUSE

The Absa Jewish Achiever Awards nominees are a story of personal triumph and sometimes liberating struggle, Howard Sackstein, chairman of the Awards and of the SA Jewish Report board of directors, said at a breakfast, hosted by Absa - the event’s main sponsor - for the award nominees last week Friday.

Over 100 people, including senior Absa officials, SA Jewish Report directors and businesspeople attended the event at the Four Seasons Hotel in Johannesburg.

This is the 18th year of the Awards, a figure that in Jewish tradition represents life and survival, Sackstein said.

The last few months have illustrated “the fruits of our democracy”, but there is uncertainty - “each morning we wake to a roller coaster.

“We have choices. Is this the spring of hope or the winter of despair, is this the epoch of belief or the epoch of incredulity?” he asked

“South Africa still represents a world of opportunity. It is our role as leaders in this country to be leaders in morality, ethics and good governance,” he said.

Independent political analyst Daniel Silke said South Africa is facing some fundamental challenges and changes.

“It is an important and necessary phase of our democratic maturity that the party in power begins to feel the heat.”

This is an era of marginal power in the country. The ANC is no longer certain of victory. The effects of this will be felt everywhere.

“This is brand new for us. There is a new type of fluidity in South African politics.”

Much of the negativity relating to the ANC revolves around leadership.

A second major trend is the blurring of lines in South African politics - what Silke terms the DA/EFF axis.

“It might make some feel uneasy, but it also enables us to transcend some of the lines that have divided us.

“For the moment, the marriage is good for South Africa. It is a remarkable turnaround.”

An additional trend was diluted stereotypes - “the ancestors are not against the opposition - the sky is not going to fall in with a DA administration,” Silke said.

However, hard work will be required in overcoming bureaucracies and even possible sabotage by unhappy staff.

It is also important for the DA to form a good relationship with the ANC, to facilitate provinces and metros working together.

Economic conditions play a large role in politics today and the ailing economy has had a marked impact.

“The politics and economics intersect.” But economics have taken over to lead politics. The question is how the politicians can take back control.

Jeff Gable, head of Africa non-equity research at Absa/Barclays, said economic growth in South Africa has slipped since 2011, even as the global economy has stabilised.

Several of the problems in this country are specific to South Africa and do not depend on the world economic situation.

Electricity supply from Eskom has been a binding constraint on the economy for several years, but not this past year.

Gable referred to several current problems. Consumer spending is under significant pressure with lacklustre retail sales growth and slowed spending on expensive durable items.

Consumer confidence is weaker than at any time since the transition in the early 1990s.

“There is a crisis of confidence. It doesn’t matter if you look at it across income groups, race groups or regions,” he said.

There is also “an awful lot of debt out there”, made worse by interest rate increases.

“The strain is becoming apparent.”

He pointed out that arrears in household mortgage payment are increasing.

While many jobs are advertised, a shortage of skills meant there are often insufficient qualified candidates.

The political climate was mentioned in recent surveys as a factor holding South Africa back.

Among the other key issues are:

- Volatile financial flows;
- The country’s credit rating - a downgrade to junk status is likely in December;
- Interest rates;
- Labour relations.

Master of ceremonies Kudzi Samushonga, head of Absa business banking in Gauteng, said the Jewish Achiever Awards were a highlight not only on the Absa calendar, but on the South African calendar as well.

Banie Claasen, managing executive, Absa retail and business bank, Gauteng south, in thanking the participants, reiterated Absa’s commitment to the awards, saying the bank had recently extended its sponsorship by a further three years.



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The traditional Achiever breakfast hosted by the event’s main sponsor, Absa, was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Johannesburg



Reeva Forman, Howard Sackstein, Jewish Report Chairman and Kumari Moodley, General Manager: Marketing and Corporate Relations, Barclays Africa Group Limited.



Dionne Ellerine Hirschowitz, Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership and Absa Unlisted Award nominee, Dina Diamond, Jewish Report Board Member and Anthony Wald, Absa Entrepreneur nominee



Geoff Rothschild, judge on the Absa Panel; Banie Claasen, Regional Managing Executive, Retail and Business Banking Gauteng South, Barclays Africa Group Limited; and Petrus Balt of Absa.




Shantal Pillay and Marie-Lou Okoko of Absa.

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Jewish Report board members Benjy Porter; Herschel Jawitz and Shaun Matisonn with Achiever nominee Anton Ossip (second from left) .



Petrus Balt of Absa and Reeva Forman.



Jeff Gable, Head of Research and the Chief Economist at Barclays Africa Group Limited.

A sizzling Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2016

VANESSA VALKIN

This past Sunday night at Vodaworld in Midrand was the 18th annual Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

It was again a magnificent night of celebration, recognising the astounding achievements of a community, small in numbers but so mighty in impact. The theme this year was “Igniting the Soul of Africa” and the evening spoke to the myriad ways that SA Jewry have contributed to igniting the “African soul”.

By 16:30 Vodaworld was buzzing with excitement and anticipation as guests literally walked the red carpet and were interviewed for video by Achiever Awards board member, Dina Diamond, who looked stunning in green.

After delicious cocktails ahead of the reception, generously sponsored by Chivas, the community’s most important ben-

efactors and leaders, nominees and their friends and family, past winners, key sponsors, and others, entered the main banquet hall. Guests were in awe of the beautiful décor, orchid centrepieces as well as the unforgettable first course of beetroot cured salmon, horseradish cream, avocado mousse and other delectable bits.

In his welcoming address, Jewish Achiever Awards Chairman Howard Sackstein, remarking on the incredible journey South African Jewry has made in its 175-year history, asked the question: “Who in their wildest dreams, while carrying coal in the Free State, could have dreamt that a group of penniless refugees escaping persecution, would be able to tell a story of how to ignite a nation?

“This is the inspirational and extraordinary story of our history. And we at the SA Jewish Report are there every week to tell stories about, and to, our community.”

All the money raised from sponsorships and seat tickets at the gala are used to support the free publication and distribution of the Jewish Report newspaper and its digital content, Sackstein explained.

He also thanked Absa, the principal sponsor: “Absa are our backstop, our backers and our brothers. We have no doubt that you will continue to support Absa to reciprocate their warm and generous support to ourselves and our community.”

Then followed a special tribute to the late Bertie Lubner, a long-time Jewish Report board member and great benefactor and innovator for social upliftment in the Jewish community.

His son Marc spoke lovingly of his father and the many remarkable philosophies by which he lived his life. He recalled how his father would say: “Take time when you stop at that street corner. Even if you don’t give

the beggar anything, take time to talk to him as a human being... You make your life by how much you give.”

Awards were handed out throughout the night to a group of formidable people who have contributed to Africa in different ways. As Andrew Dunn, CEO of Richmark, said when he presented the Art, Sport, Science and Culture Award: “I could only shudder to think that if that relatively small group of refugees fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe had not chosen South Africa as their new home, how different our landscape would be today.

- “One hundred and seventy-five years later, these very same families and offspring, making up a mere total of 75 000 people, have become South Africa’s Nobel laureates, sports heroes, struggle icons, Constitutional Court jurists, artists, musicians, doctors, entrepreneurs, academics, industrialists...”
- The KIA Community Service Award went to community stalwart Marlene Bethlehem.
- The Richmark Art, Sport, Science & Culture Award went to surfing great Shaun Tomson.
- The Lifetime Achievement Award in Honour of Helen Suzman and Bertie Lubner went to the Donald Gordon Foundation represented by his daughter and son-in-law, Wendy and Hylton Appelbaum.
- The Chivas Humanitarian Award in Honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, zt”L, went to renowned human rights lawyer George Bizos.
- The Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award went to young property tycoons Greg Blend and Grant Friedman.
- Winner of the Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award was Judge Sharise Weiner.
- The Absa Entrepreneur Award went to

- Barry Taitz of Blue Cellular.
- Winner of the Absa Unlisted Company Award was Dionne Ellerrine Hirschowitz.
- Winner of the Absa Listed Company Award went to Michael Metz.

In what was the longest of the speeches but a most astounding story, George Bizos, winner of the Humanitarian Award, described his lifetime connections to the Jewish community. Particularly memorable was his tale of how, as a penniless immigrant working in a shop in Jeppe, a Jewish customer named Cecilia Feinstein, shocked and dismayed to hear that he did not go to school, proceeded to take on the responsibility of his schooling from that day on.

Both Judge Sharise Weiner, winner of the Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award, and Dionne Ellerrine Hirschowitz, winner of the Absa Unlisted Company Award, spoke of the importance of being role models for women and inspiring them to believe that anything is possible.

As Hirschowitz said in her acceptance speech: “To all the women out here, I hope I can inspire the idea that it is possible to drop your kids at school and be at the office at 07:30!”

During proceedings, guests also feasted on delicious slow-cooked beef with red onion marmalade and chicken paupiette; while dessert included warm chocolate fondant with silky ganache, lime ice cream and crackled honeycomb - all prepared by the formidable Stan and Pete Caterers. The audience also had many good laughs due to witty host John Vlismas, entertainment was jaw-dropping aerial acrobatics by Art of Synergy and the entire event was organised by the very capable group, Digital E.S.P (Event Strategy and Procurement).




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Melvyn and Helen Fraser.



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Nicci Raz; Reeva Forman; and Tanya Joselowsky.



Judge Sharise Weiner and Wendy Appelbaum.



Marc Lubner; Niki Yudelman; and Uri Krost.

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Seen at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2016



Dina Diamond; Jodi and Neville Starkowitz.



Vanessa and Ian Neuburger.



Rabbi Yossy Goldman and Charles and Candy Kramer.



Mark and Dan Stillerman and Hylton Appelbaum



Billy and Michelle Gundelfinger; and Lisa Gundelfinger Koppel



Ran Neu-Ner and Gil Oved with winner Grant Friedman



David Hodnett, of Absa presenting the award for Absa Listed Award to Michael Metz with Eric Samson

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The Jewish Achiever Awards banquet, paying tribute to Jewish - and other - achievers in a wide array of fields, from business to the arts has deservedly carved a top place for itself on the Jewish social calendar. This year was no exception. Last Sunday’s function at Vodaworld lived up to the high expectations established over many years. This was indeed where the movers and shakers of the community every year meet and socialise.

Israeli Ambassador to South Africa **Arthur Lenk**: “It’s a beautiful evening. It is wonderful and right to celebrate the Jewish community and those who step outside Glenhazel and Sea Point to impact on the whole of South Africa.”

Anthony Wald, of Apricity Capital, a nominee for the Absa Entrepreneur award: “The event is fantastic. It allows people the opportunity of showcasing businesses and talents. It is also an opportunity to network and discuss ideas with other talented individuals who have already got to the top of the mountain

“I also got to meet Shaun Tomson and bought his book. Achievers is fabulous all round and well-organised, both this event and the (Absa) breakfast. It is really well-run and co-ordinated.

“I think it is fantastic for the Jewish community. It exposes all my business associates and partners to a wider field. I am not involved in the Jewish community and this is a great way to get exposure and show off talents.”

Dr Selma Browde, veteran politician and activist, said: “I think it is a wonderful forum to show what people have achieved. They have done interesting things, not just making money, but making a contribution; for example, one nominee who started an ambulance service.

“It is good to know what people are doing and what an achievement is - a lot of people think an achievement is just making money, but it has got to do with more than just looking after yourself.”

Shaun Tomson, former world surfing champion and winner of the Richmark Art, Sport, Science and Culture Award: “The event is a fantastic way for the community to get together and celebrate people who are purposeful and passionate about their life’s work.

“I think it is good for the Jewish community. Positive role models raise the bar for everyone and are a strong influence not just on the Jewish community, but on the entire secular community.

“My vision in life is to create a positive wave that flows around the world that everyone can ride on and share. I believe community gatherings like these are part of the way to keep the wave flowing.”

Ann Harris, who presented the Chivas Humanitarian Award in memory of her late husband, Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, zt”l: “It’s wonderful to recognise service to the community, even if it is ancillary, like business, in whatever way it is done. “I also love to see young people coming up, as time makes gaps in community leadership. “I do think it’s good for the Jewish community. People have community interests in different ways, but most people are interested in seeing people move to the top. It’s very nice to have a glamorous occasion and for me it’s nice to meet people I haven’t seen for a long time.”

Reeva Forman, community leader, who recently received the Bertie Lubner Award from the SA Jewish Board of Deputies: “This occasion is amazing. It not only brings the Jewish community together, but highlights the incredible contribution of the community to develop South Africa. I am very proud of that.”

Rebbetzen Rochel Goldman, a nominee in the Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award: “It was amazing to receive the nomination for Women of the World (WOW).

“I don’t see this as a competition, but as recognition of what people have contributed to South Africa.”

“**Su Lubner**, daughter of the late Bertie Lubner, to whom tributes were paid at the Achievers’ banquet: “It is very important that we remember the good everyone is doing.

“Hopefully, we will inspire everybody to play their own small part. Like a stone in the water, the ripples will spread.”

National chairman of Betar **Hadley Shapiro**, of Medi Response, and a nominee for the Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneurs Award: “It’s a beautiful concept. It’s important to recognise leadership and to inspire others in the community.”

David Cohen, actuary: “I think it is a great event. It is my first time, so I don’t really have any expectation. I am here with my girlfriend, whose father worked for Bertie Lubner.

“It is a good way to bring all Jews together, networking and celebrating each other’s achievements. It is definitely good for the community and, as a young professional, it is a great thing to strive for in my career.

“Fundraising for the SA Jewish Report keeps everyone connected at the end of the day, which is also good for the community.

“I am involved in the Jewish community privately, but not publicly. I have not been involved in other Jewish events.”

Lisa Chaitowitz, secretary of Yeshiva College: “This is my 14th year here. My husband is one of the auditors and judges from Grant Thornton.

“I think the Achievers is a fantastic event and does wonders for the community. It is an amazing thing to recognise the achievements of the people in the community and for them to be acknowledged.

“I enjoy the event - it’s the premier Jewish social event of the year - as well as being able to be among all the successful achievers.

“It is good for the Jewish community, bringing community members together. It also creates publicity for how successful the Jewish community is and how much they contribute to this country.”

Gina Taitz, wife of Barry, the winner of the Absa Entrepreneur Award: “I think it’s a great way to honour Jewish achievers and for the community to recognise their hard work and success.”

Tanya Joselowsky, of The Pop - balloon décor events and a nominee for the Absa Entrepreneur Award: “I think the Achievers event is a unique opportunity. I feel very privileged and humbled to have been nominated. It inspires me to grow even bigger.

“The event is classy, top of its game. I’ve realised how much of a contribution Jewish businessmen and women have made and the role they play in the wider community. That is most inspiring for me.

“It is good for the Jewish community. The people I have met are making a real contribution to South Africa. The event is important because it introduces me to people I have never met before and makes it possible to network.”

“**Arthur Goldstuck**, of World Wide Worx, a nominee in the Absa Unlisted Company category: “I think this is a wonderful way for the community to acknowledge its own and recognition of achievements that would otherwise have gone unrecognised.

“It is a wonderful affirmation of the role that members of the community play that might go unnoticed in the broader environment.

“Because the entire business landscape is changing so rapidly, a lot of fascinating businesses that make a big difference in people’s lives tend to be overlooked, because of the emphasis on blockbuster names. This is a chance for some of those businesses to get a little limelight.”

Annabel Linder, theatre personality and Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award nominee, quipped: “I had to answer a lot of questions, including what my turnover was. The only turnover I have is when I turn over in bed.

“At a time like this, it is wonderful to be rejoicing because there is not much to rejoice in at present.”



The acrobats had the audience gasping in disbelief.



Howard Sackstein



Ann Harris

Photos: Jason Crouse



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All South Africans owe a debt of gratitude to our Jewish community

ANDREW DUNN
CEO, RICHMARK HOLDINGS

This was Andrew Dunn’s speech at the Jewish Achiever Awards banquet.

“On behalf of Richmark and all our Jewish partners, friends and clients, it is a great privilege to be able to present the Jewish Achiever Award for Art, Sport, Science and Culture.

“When my chairman, Gavin Varejes, kindly asked me to present this award, he failed to warn me that I would need to make a speech and address a room filled with representatives of a culture, a religion, a nation of the greatest past, present and future leaders in literally every field measured by mankind.

“Our esteemed guest John Smit would no doubt refer to this as a hospital pass of biblical proportions. And I might add, not being Jewish puts me at a serious disadvantage. What could I possibly say to a room of overachievers on the grandest of scales!

I could only shudder to think that if that relatively small group of refugees fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe had not chosen South Africa as their new home, how different our landscape would be today.

“On August 15 the Jewish population of South Africa celebrated their 175th anniversary of communal life in this beautiful country we all call home. No race will ever be able to replicate the enormous contribution you have made to both the South African and the world skylines. Of this I am sure.

“In preparing for this daunting talk, I have been humbled by the findings of my research. The computer I use was founded by Michael Dell, the search engine was jointly founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the social media platforms of WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube were founded by Jan Koum, Mark Zuckerberg and Susan Wojcicki respectively.

“Add to this the immeasurable contribution to television, film and video with the likes of Columbia Pictures, Universal, DreamWorks, 20th Century Fox...



the list and fields go on and on.

“Growing up we shopped at Pick n Pay, frequented Nandos, insured with Liberty, holidayed at Sun City... sang and danced to the music of Johnny Clegg, admired the artwork of Irma Stern and William Kentridge, watched in awe as Shaun Tomson shredded up the coastline and became South Africa’s only surfing world champion. In 1995 I celebrated with 40 million fellow South Africans thanks to the magic of Joel Stransky and later that evening thanks to Meyer Kahn - all blissfully unaware of just how much my everyday life was made possible and better by the Jewish community of South Africa.

“At this stage of writing I found myself at a loss for words... I could only shudder to think that if that relatively small group of refugees fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe had not chosen South Africa as their new home, how different our landscape would be today.

“One hundred and seventy-five years later, these very same families and offspring, making up a mere total of 75 000 people, have become South Africa’s Nobel laureates, sports heroes, Struggle icons, Constitutional Court jurists, artists, musicians, doctors, entrepreneurs, academics, industrialists...

“Furthermore, with around 0,002 per cent of the worldwide population, more than 20 per cent of all Nobel Prizes have been awarded to Jews. And let us not forget that of the 10 Nobel Prizes won by our South African citizens, five were awarded to Jewish South Africans - four in the field of science and one for literature.

“To the Jewish community of South Africa please take a bow... all South Africans will forever be in awe and indebted to you.”

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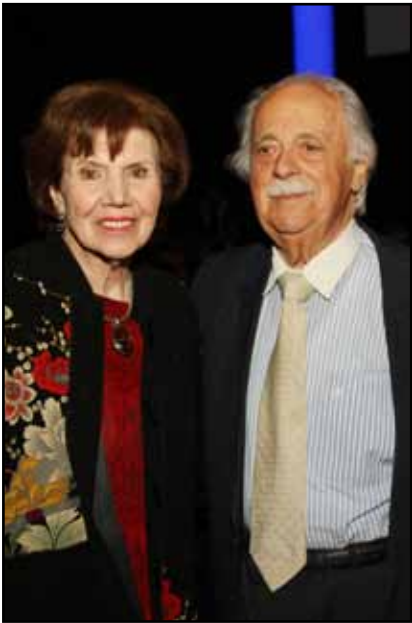
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Law Society looking whether Bobroffs are practising in SA ‘by proxy’

ANT KATZ

Elaine Bobroff, wife of lawyer under-investigation, Ronald Bobroff, is believed to have joined her husband and son Darren and his family in Australia where the two Bobroffs high-tailed it to six months ago when the heat was turned on them in South Africa for alleged Road Accident Fund transgressions. It is not clear whether Elaine - charges against her had been dropped - will return to South Africa.

New reports surfaced this week that the suspended Bobroff father and son may have continued to take on new cases in South Africa, while living in Australia.

This week Moneyweb published an exclusive story on how the agency had trapped Ronald Bobroff - whose website is still running - and showed the paper-trail they had used to entrap him. A fictitious enquiry was sent via the Robert Bobroff and Partners website (which the Law Society says should not exist) by a fictitious new claimant Moneyweb had set up, called “Mandi Lottering”.

New reports surfaced this week that the suspended Bobroff father and son may have continued to take on new cases in South Africa, while living in Australia.

The fake mail-trail led a Bobroff family member who replied. The next mail came

from Ronald himself, typed all in capitals - so possibly written by him personally - in which he tells her how she should act and says that another well-known Johannesburg attorney would contact her. This lawyer has since denied any involvement.

But the Law Society of the Northern Provinces (LSNP) is not taking the new Moneyweb revelations lying down. Thinus Grobler, director of the LSNP, said this week: “The Law Society has, with concern, noted the facts relating to the continued use of the Ronald Bobroff & Partners website by suspended attorneys, Ronald and Darren Bobroff.”

Grobler added: “This issue will certainly be followed up by the Law Society in liaison with the curator (of the company).”

While a slew of investigations is said to have revealed over R1 billion in “misappropriated, missing or underpaid funds to clients” and “massive tax evasion, fraud and money-laundering” charges are being consolidated, the investigations are far from over yet.

Estelle Veldsman, an attorney who works on members’ affairs at the LSNP, has been appointed spokesman on the Bobroff case. Asked about the new allegations that the Bobroffs are practising, using their website and seemingly being assisted by local parties, Veldsman told Jewish Report on Tuesday: “We have addressed enquiries in this regard and getting legal advice.”

She said that winding up the Bobroff matter was a massive task. A dedicated curators’ team at the LSNP have the experience and the manpower to do so, but the curators were still receiving between 120 and 180 e-mails a day. “We have had over

The Bobroff father-and-son pair were not allowed to act as attorneys in South Africa as they are currently suspended from the roll of attorneys.

4 600 e-mails since mid-July” she said, “and that does not even include the phone calls.”

Veldsman says the Bobroff father-and-son pair were not allowed to act as attorneys in South Africa as they are currently suspended from the roll of attorneys.

The Bobroffs were the subject of a long-running case which attempted to have them

disbarred when, just prior to Easter, they did a runner to Australia - after telling the Hawks investigative unit they would hand themselves over to them for questioning, after the weekend.

The judgment against them was already being considered when the pair absconded, says Veldsman, but on March 23 the LSNP brought an urgent application to have the business placed under the control of an LSNP-appointed curator.

On April 26, the order suspending the Bobroffs from the Roll of Attorneys was granted and the “Striking off Application” has been set down for a hearing on December 6.

• Read more about this on Jewish Report Online.

Louis Botha Corridor in full ‘implementation mode’



An early perspective drawing of the area where the first station on the Louis Botha Corridor will be built, starting in the first week of October.

ANT KATZ

What should Johannesburgers expect from the Louis Botha Avenue Corridor? Where and when will it be happening? What about the unique needs of the large Jewish population in the area? Many questions are answered; some remain unanswered at this stage.

In Jewish Report’s series on the Louis Botha Corridor, this week the paper pose readers’ questions to the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA).

The JDA has been planning to hold a public meeting on the issue, says the city’s Senior Development Manager, Siyabonga Genu. It has been slightly delayed due to the city’s change of management, from the ANC to the DA et al, but Genu told Jewish Report this change is not expected to result in any changes to the masterplan for the city, as all political parties have rallied behind the project.

With the new Executive Mayoral Management Team now in place, Genu plans to schedule a public meeting to be attended by the requisite new city fathers.

“We are looking at the pedestrian walkways to the stations,” Genu told SAJR, “as we realise we are going to have to upgrade the pavements within a radius of one kilometre of the stations.” This is one of the key issues the city wants to discuss with residents living in the area.

Another is: “We want input from the Jewish community due to their high walking traffic needs” which cover Shabbos and chagim. One of the reasons is the importance of the needs of the observant community who may need to cross Louis Botha, but cannot press buttons to stop traffic at intersections.

Genu has promised to advise Jewish Report as soon as the meeting is set, but he expects it could happen as soon as next week. JR Online will keep you updated so keep checking with our website - www.sajr.co.za

The timeline - what to expect...

STATION CONSTRUCTION: The first station will be built on the corner of Louis Botha Avenue and Louis Road, at the intersection where Pick n Pay is, and construction is set to begin the first week of October. This will eventually link to the East/West Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit System line to Rosebank. The stations will all be “closed”, which means that one will not be able to access the enclosed boarding platforms without an access card or ticket.

END OF MAJOR ROADWORKS: Genu says the JDA is aiming for this to be completed by February 2017. This target date applies specifically to the non-Bus Rapid Transit (BRT or Rea Vaya) infrastructure and stations.

LAUNCH DATE OF THE BRT: The expected launch of the Rea Vaya bus service is July 2018.

THE ROUTE EAST: Genu says the current planning is for this to now run along London Road at the northern edge of Alexandra township. He confirmed that at this stage Ekurhuleni Metro has put their plans to join the project on hold and therefore Johannesburg will build the route up to the N3 motorway and be ready, should Ekurhuleni choose to join at a later stage.

ADDED STORMWATER ISSUES: The JDA realised last year that, while they are installing bulk stormwater systems along Louis Botha Avenue as part of the project, they will still require additional services in the peripheral region - Patterson Park is one example.

“Money has been allocated in this financial year for planning an additional bulk stormwater upgrade,” says Genu, as well as additional funds for implementation next year, as an extension of the project.

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Multi-coloured quilt of community: Young Jews speak out



Gavriel Dirmeik; Joey Avinir; David Bilchitz (moderator); Jaydon Krok; Sheryl Benjamin (who organised the panel); Matthew Gordon; and Joshua Sehoole.

DAVID BILCHITZ

The riches of a community can be determined by the quality of its young people. If the panel I chaired at Limmud Johannesburg is anything to go by, the future of the South African Jewish community is in good hands.

One of the central values of the Limmud organisation is the value it places on the rich diversity of Jews. Being different is often particularly difficult for young people growing up: on the one hand, there are personal struggles for some to work out their own identities; on the other hand, many social pressures make it difficult to stand out.

Sheryl Benjamin, a legendary maths teacher in the Jewish community and a long-standing Limmud volunteer, organised a panel of five young people who were asked to speak about their own Jewish journeys, as well as the struggles and challenges they faced in the community.

Joey Avinir began by explaining his own heritage which involved Malay, German and Jewish dimensions. He spoke about the experience of being mixed race within King David and how he had been the subject of racial slurs from some of his peers.

He refused to let race define him. He identified as a “spiritual atheist” and, while he did not believe in formal religion, he was particularly attracted to the warm, communal dimension of being Jewish.

Matthew Gordon, on the other hand, strongly identifies as religiously observant. At school, he also came out as openly gay. He was often asked how he reconciles these two facets of his identity.

Matthew, however, stated that he sees no contradiction between these two and that his sexual orientation in no way affects his religious identity. He also had a positive experience at King David when he came out, with general acceptance from his peers and teachers.

Jaydon Krok found himself under attack for expressing leftwing views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He spoke out against the fact that many facets of the Jewish community appear to be closed to a diverse range of opinions and wish to marginal-

ise those who feel a connection to Israel but express criticism of the Israeli government.

He too mentioned the fact that there seem to be unspoken assumptions that bright Jewish students should be actuarial scientists and accountants rather than exploring the entire spectrum of career opportunities.

Joshua Sehoole grew up as a Christian and found that he could not accept many of the doctrines. He began exploring other religions and describes his discovery of Judaism as “love at first sight”. He embarked on a process of study and practice and, despite the opposition of his parents, he decided to convert to Judaism. He has never looked back and has found a comfortable home within the Progressive Jewish community.

Last but not least was Gavriel Dirmeik who had been very religiously observant and attended the Hirsch Lyons School. He had, however, decided as he entered his teenage years to go to Crawford. While Crawford was expressly committed to the acceptance of religious diversity, he had found there were many social pressures to reduce his level of religious practice.

He had now taken off his kippah and was grappling with what level of religious observance he was comfortable with.

Each of the panellists fielded a number of questions from each other and the audience. Each question provided a number of rich insights from these perceptive young people. Many panellists agreed with the importance of schools and other Jewish communal institutions becoming more accepting of diversity.

The standing ovation at the end of the session demonstrated the appreciation of the audience for the authenticity and integrity of each of the panellists. Hearing their stories highlighted the fact that for young and old alike, there is a warm, welcoming and embracing space at Limmud Johannesburg.

• David Bilchitz chaired the panel on which this article is based. He is a professor at the University of Johannesburg and chairman of Limmud International.

Catholics now see Jewry as ‘dearly beloved elder brother of Church’

STAFF REPORTER

There was a capacity attendance at Monday evening’s function at Beyachad, where Rabbi David Rosen spoke about the extraordinary revolution in Jewish-Catholic relations that has taken place over the past 50 years.

One of the world’s foremost Jewish leaders in the field of interfaith relations, Rabbi Rosen was in the country last week to participate in the 50th anniversary commemorations of Nostra Aetate, a landmark declaration in which the Church decisively turned its back on more than 15 centuries of anti-Semitic dogma and embarked on a new era of outreach to and friendship with the Jewish people. In recent decades, he has been at the forefront of ongoing efforts to build bridges of friendship and understanding between the two faiths, for which work he has been recognised by, inter alia, being awarded a Papal knighthood by the Vatican.

Rabbi Rosen felt that world Jewry had

From being objects of opprobrium, considered literally to be in league with the Devil, Jewry had been described as the “dearly beloved elder brother of the Church” by the late Pope John Paul II. “There is nothing comparable in history to this,” Rabbi Rosen commented.

With regard to Zionism and Israel, a similarly dramatic shift had taken place in Catholic thinking. This was despite the reality that the Vatican had to proceed cautiously in this area for fear of antagonising the Arab states and thereby put Christian minorities living there in danger.

Rabbi Rosen related how Theodor Herzl had been told by Pope Pius X that the Church would never recognise Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land until such time as Jews recognised the Christian Saviour. Today, the Vatican had solid diplomatic relations with Israel and was staunchly opposed to attempts to delegitimise it.

Rabbi Rosen recounted how Pope John XXIII had spearheaded these epochal shifts



yet to grasp the full significance of the Church’s transformation in terms of how it views not only Jews and Judaism, but the State of Israel.

Previously, Jewish suffering and humiliation was attributed to their heinous crime of “Deicide” and rejection of the true message of Christianity, resulting in their being rejected in turn by G-d and their “Chosen” status inherited by Christendom, the “New Israel”.

Now, in place of the doctrine of supersession and theological justification of anti-Semitism, Catholics were being taught that the validity of Judaism as a faith was unquestionable, that the Covenant between G-d and the Jewish people had never been abrogated and that anti-Semitism itself was un-Christian.

in Church thinking and how his successors, in particular John Paul VI, Benedict XVI and the present Pope Francis, had continued his legacy.

In response to a question as to why the Vatican was apparently so silent on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere, he said that in fact a great deal was being said and done, but little of this found its way into the mainstream media.

Within Israel, Christianity was flourishing, but it had also to be acknowledged that Jewish extremists had been guilty of anti-Christian attacks.

Rabbi Rosen was introduced by SAJBD Gauteng Council Chairman Shaun Zagnoev, while Gauteng Council member David Cohen gave the thanks and closing remarks.



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Bottle is still half full in SA, land of opportunities

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

The Jewish community has a moral responsibility to promote transformation and optimism is critical for the ability to thrive. These were the take-home messages from a panel discussion titled “Thrive or Survive - Embracing Change in our Time”, at the SAJBD Cape Conference last Sunday.

Lisa Klein, head of M & A at Discovery Limited, spoke of a negativity bias as opposed to an optimism bias. “Our biases determine the way we see the world, the decisions and the choices we make,” she ssaid.

The negative narrative portrayed South Africa as being “on the edge of a precipice”, whereas the “optimistic picture” acknowledged the “other” South Africa. “Our achievements since 1994 have been quite remarkable,” she added.

“People forget the ANC inherited a virtually bankrupt state and turned it around. We have a vibrant democracy with four major metros controlled by the Opposition, an independent judiciary, a brilliant Public Protector and a free press.”

Regarding the Jewish community, the narrative went that it was getting poorer, people were emigrating and that it was a dying



Panellists Yaron Weisenbacher; Lisa Klein; Alana Baranov; and guest speaker Rabbi David Rosen at the Cape Board Conference last Sunday.

community. On the contrary, she said. There was “real wealth” in the community, noting that 17 per cent of the country’s GDP comes from Jewish-led companies.

The emigration rate was one to two per cent a year, a figure that remained constant “and we have built amazing institutions. The probability is that the community is here to stay.

“Choose the optimism bias!” she exhorted the audience, appealing for engagement as “active citizens”.

Alana Baranov, vice-president

of the Council of KwaZulu-Natal Jewry, noted that the country’s transformation remained incomplete. “Inequalities need to be urgently addressed alongside the entrenched attitudes of bigotry.

“Our community, with its position of privilege due in many ways to the legacy of apartheid, has a moral responsibility to use all the resources at our disposal to address these issues.”

Yaron Weisenbacher, a 27-year-old, said that starting a coffee shop two years ago had opened his eyes to the South African reality.

“I learned about employees and how hard it was for them living on R3 500 a month - the speaker next to my bed cost that!” he exclaimed.

“I started learning their language 10 months ago and I live in a different South Africa. The reaction I’m having is totally different to what I received before - just saying ‘Hello’ to somebody in their language.

“As Jews in this country, we need to teach our children to talk to other South African children.”

On a point from the floor by

Claudia Braude regarding the alienation by the community of those with left-wing views on the Israeli-Palestinian situation, Baranov stressed the need for unity in diversity and respect for differing opinions, which would make for a “much stronger community. There needs to be an open and honest conversation on these topics as well,” she said.

Picking up on the theme, Rabbi David Rosen, who was the keynote speaker at the conference, commented that it had been wonderful to have been part of Limmud, which he described as “a paradigm for the kind of diversity that should exist in a community.

“What’s good for the Palestinians mustn’t be considered to be bad for Israel and vice versa,” he said, referring to a “tendency to adopt a zero sum approach” to the situation.

“Tolerance is not enough to thrive. We need to be able to see ‘the other’ not as a threat but as an enrichment,” he added, conceding that this was a challenge. “We in Israel need to see that as well.”

Rabbi Rosen, a world figure in interfaith relations, presented Gwynne Robins with an interfaith award. Lester Hoffman, treasurer of the Cape Board, described her work promoting interreligious understanding as having been “pivotal” to the success of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative.

World News in Brief

Abbas: Palestinians ready to join peace initiative

PARIS - The Palestinians are ready to participate in a peace initiative, the office of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has said.

“We are ready to participate in any regional or international initiative with the objective of a comprehensive and fair solution,” the president’s spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeina, said in a statement, the French news agency AFP reported on Monday.

The statement comes amid unconfirmed reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin is arranging a meeting between Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Kremlin could not confirm such a meeting, AFP reported.

The Israeli news website Ynet reported last Sunday that an Abbas-Netanyahu meeting under the auspices of Putin would take place around October, citing unnamed Israeli and Palestinian officials.

The Palestinians favour the French peace initiative launched in June at a one-day summit in Paris of foreign ministers from two dozen countries aimed at rebooting peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians, who were not invited to the event. The ministers proposed an international conference to further talks between the two sides by the end of the year without setting a date.

Israel has baulked at the initiative, saying it enables the Palestinians to continue to avoid the direct talks Israel wants and compromise.

Abbas and Netanyahu last met officially in 2010, but it is believed that since then they have held secret meetings. - (JTA)

Demonstration by Polish soccer fans features burning Jews in effigy

LODZ - Several dozen soccer fans in Poland hung a banner containing anti-Semitic language at a train station in Lodz at a demonstration that featured the burning of Jews in effigy.

Approximately 50 men were photographed on a bridge at

the Lodz Kaliska station on August 26 with a banner reading “19.08, today the Jews got a name. Let them burn”, followed by an obscenity, the Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper reported.

The message referenced to the Lodz team, which was founded in 1908 and many Poles associate with Jews because of the rich Jewish history of Lodz. The city in central Poland had a large Jewish population before the Holocaust, partly because it was a capital of the local textile industry.

The fans, some wearing balaclavas, set fire to at least three puppets hanging from the bridge and are understood to symbolise burning Jews.

Police are looking for the demonstrators, who are suspected of incitement to racial hatred and intimidation, the daily reported. - (JTA)

Lithuanian art exhibition is travelling far and wide

MARGOT COHEN

The opening of an exhibition by leading Lithuanian contemporary artists, exploring the Jewish cultural influence on Vilnius, the capital, revealed great interest in past times. It is titled Zakhor, the Hebrew word for “remember”.

The event took place at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre (JH&GC) this week. An introduction was given by Lithuanian Ambassador Sigute Jakstonyte, who said that since the exhibition opened a year ago in Vilnius, it has travelled to Berlin, Cape Town, and will then move on to Tel Aviv and Buenos Aires.

Vilnius is a multicultural city and this has been shown by the artists. Their vision of the city shows that it was once a world centre hub of Jewish learning and one of the largest Eastern European Jewish, religious and cultural hubs.

Prior to the Holocaust there were some 200 000 Jews in Lithuania; now there are 5 000. Tali Nates, director of the JH&GC said the Jews were “an amputated” group. Of more than 100

synagogues that existed before the war, only a single one remains intact. However, it is functioning and there is even a Jewish school.

The connection to South Africa is very real, said Nates, pointing out that most of the European Jews who immigrated to South Africa during the period 1880 - 1930, had come from Baltic states like Lithuania and Latvia.

Martynas Taujanskas, Third Secretary at the Lithuanian Embassy, described the many fascinating buildings in Vilnius, dating back to the 12th century. There are examples of Gothic, Baroque and Classic architecture, he said.

Pictures of the narrow cobbled streets and seeing the faded Yiddish on the walls of the Ghetto houses was for many who attended the opening of Zakhor, very moving. The exhibition is on for a month.

Lithuania is now a member of the European Union and of Nato since 2004. “Our function is to build bilateral relations politically, culturally and economically with South Africa” said Taujanskas. The Lithuanian Embassy opened in South Africa a year ago.



A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Limmud and the ‘Broad Tent’ philosophy

This year’s Limmud festival has just concluded, with well-attended programmes in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. As in previous years, Board members, both professional staff and lay leaders, featured on the programmes at all three centres, either as speakers or panellists.

The Board’s Communications Department was also once again responsible for publicising the event and obtaining wider media coverage for some of its distinguished international speakers.

An annual festival of Jewish learning, culture and debate Limmud has injected an added dimension of vibrancy into our communal life since its introduction in South Africa some 10 years ago.

The SAJBD has been an enthusiastic supporter of the initiative from the outset. We fully endorse Limmud’s stated aims of providing “safe spaces” allowing for the full range of opinion on the issues of the day to

be expressed and respectfully debated.

We may disagree, but must always be prepared to speak, and listen to one another. Limmud’s goals are admirable ones. In order for them to be fully achieved, every participant must be afforded due courtesy and consideration, both by the audience and by those speaking on the same panel.

Those responsible for organising Limmud’s programmes have a particular duty in this regard and should lead by example.

Building bridges

A number of other positive community events have taken place over the past week, among them the annual SA Jewish Achiever Awards, Cycalive and various functions involving Rabbi David Rosen, who as explained last week, was brought to South Africa to participate in the 50th

anniversary commemoration of the Catholic Church’s ground-breaking Nostra Aetate declaration. What all of these events had in common was that all were to a greater or lesser extent about building bridges of friendship and understanding, both within and outside the Jewish community.

In Cape Town the Board, in conjunction with the Green & Sea Point Congregation, hosted a conversation between Rabbi Rosen and Bishop Graham Rose, moderated by Rabbi Dov Wineberg.

Our Durban branch, in conjunction with the KwaZulu-Natal Zionist Council, Religions for Peace and other faith communities, held a Nostra Aetate function



Above Board

Jeff Katz

National Chairman

at the Durban Jewish Centre, where Rabbi Rosen spoke and representatives from a range of religious faith groups gave messages.

On Monday at Beyachad, Rabbi Rosen spoke to a capacity audience about the Catholic Church’s extraordinary transformation from an institution implacably antagonistic towards the Jewish people as a matter of religious dogma to one committed to promoting respect for and friendship with what it today considers to be a “beloved elder brother”.

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

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A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Dedicated to the cause

Every year we hold a Long Service Awards ceremony for staff across the Chev. The recognition is awarded at five-year intervals, beginning after five years of service and continuing up to 35 years and beyond.

There is no doubt that it takes a specific quality of character and considerable competence and loyalty to hold a position for 20 years and more. It is indicative of the individuality and uniqueness of each person and suggests staying-power and the flexibility to adapt to change.

Many long-servers have advanced up the ranks over time - from care workers to nurses

to nursing managers and from kitchen workers to chefs and catering managers - but some have been content to remain in the positions they have always held, as professionals in their fields, accumulating experience and expertise.

As I and my fellow Exco members hand out the award certificates, I am always humbled by the thought of how much knowledge and skill has accumulated over that period of time in a specific position.

Not only that, but also by how much change some of these people have seen over the years - changes in management, in medical treatment techniques, in psycho-social philosophies and policy-making.

We all know that change is constant and inevitable and that, paradoxically, there is nothing new under the sun. The point is that nothing stands still.

Long-servers are particularly deserving of recognition and special appreciation in today’s fast-paced, changing world where people are quick to change jobs in pursuit of new opportunities and cutting-edge advances.

Developing staff loyalty is a major challenge for HR teams everywhere as it reduces the costs associated with recruitment, induction, training and familiarising newcomers with the company culture.

That is one of the reasons the Chev has instituted a vibrant, multi-faceted culture campaign over the past four years. When employees are deciding whether or not to change companies they are undoubtedly also looking for signs that they are appreciated.

I have noticed a particularly encouraging trend again this year: the largest percentage of longest-serving awards (20 years and over) are invariably handed out to our medical and clinical staff.

These professionals have amassed a wealth of training and proficiency with which they competently serve the community. They are dedicated to the Chev’s cause and I sleep well at night confident in the high calibre of our doctors, nurses, care-workers and rehabilitation therapists. We are all fortunate to have and retain them.

May our partnership continue to thrive!
feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha



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ANC stalwarts talk tough at Limmud



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

When Rivonia Trialist and ANC freedom fighter Denis Goldberg - who spent 22 years in jail for anti-apartheid activism - told a packed auditorium at Limmud last weekend that too many good people in the ANC had been silent for too long about President Jacob Zuma’s anti-democratic behaviour and “now we are speaking out”, he evoked enthusiastic applause.

Goldberg was “optimistic” about the country’s future and lauded the establishment of democracy. But he was scathing about the ANC, of which he had been a member for most of his life, and “not sure [it] could restore itself as the upholder of democracy”.

Several sessions at Limmud - the 10th since its founding in 2007 - at Johannesburg’s Indaba Hotel addressed contemporary South African issues and Jews’ place within it, in addition to numerous other debates about Jewish identity, spirituality, history, arts, culture, and Israel, presented by local and international speakers.

Goldberg was part of a panel called “The State of the Nation”, which included former Reserve Bank Governor Tito Mboweni, who stressed the need for vigorous defence of democratic institutions such as the Public Protector, the courts and the media.

For Mboweni, a disappointing failure of post-apartheid South Africa was the lack of social integration. Rich and poor, and black and white, he said, still lived largely in the separate areas they inhabited during apartheid.

On the economic front, he punted the idea of making Johannesburg an international financial centre by removing exchange controls and other financial hindrances.

In another session, political analyst Steven Friedman said the recent local government elections had decisively shifted South Africa into a positive era of competitive politics. He pointed to important implications for the Jewish community, who needed to get rid of two patronising myths: The assumption

among many Jews and other whites that South African masses do not vote rationally; and that the ANC, which seemed to believe it was ordained to be in power forever, would not go peacefully into opposition.

The elections proved the opposite, he said. Indeed, the masses demonstrated that they understood clearly that the ANC, with whom they had strong emotional ties, had lost its moral compass, and voted accordingly by reducing support for it; and furthermore, the ANC adhered to democratic principles and went peacefully into opposition in key places such as Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane and Johannesburg. This showed, said Friedman enthusiastically, that “we are actually living in a functioning democracy!”

Finally, he warned, the huge economic divide between rich and poor in South Africa cannot continue if the country is to remain a functioning democracy, and all Jews needed to ask what they could do in their individual lives to help eliminate this divide.

Other sessions on Africa included an insightful talk on rejuvenation of Johannesburg’s inner city with a Jewish twist to it by Lael Bethlehem, who has been professionally involved in this. The CBD’s decline from 1980 to 1990 was so severe that 50 per cent of its commercial value was lost as businesses fled elsewhere. Today, however, creative entrepreneurship has put the inner city well on the way to recovery.

Limmud 2016 was an unqualified success, in its range of topics and the number and calibre of participants. Sadly, some people in South African Jewry still refuse to have anything to do with it, claiming it contradicts Jewish religious principles, despite the intensive, open Jewish debates, the many kippah-wearing Jews who attend and the adherence to kashrut, Shabbat and other religious aspects.

It is a great pity: the boycotters are missing out on excellent Jewish learning. Since its founding, Limmud’s trajectory has been ever upward, part of the growth of Limmud worldwide. If this year is anything to go by, Limmud 2017 will be even better.

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

Pravin Gordhan saga a proxy for tough choices



DANIEL SILKE

It’s just got the feel of Groundhog Day. Reports of the possible arrest of Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan (pictured) this week are nothing new. Conjecture about political interference in Treasury has been part of our political discourse for almost a year.

A possible replacement of a credible Finance Minister is once again a possibility. It’s all distressingly and depressingly familiar.

Gordhan now finds himself under immense pressure. Put politics aside for the moment, he has a narrowing window of only a few months to attempt to stave off a dreaded ratings agency downgrade. He has been at pains to confess that concrete action in now required quickly to rescue the ailing economy and global perceptions. Time is fast running out.

So Gordhan has to crack the whip - if he still has one. And there’s the rub. Threats of imminent criminal charges have one single purpose, namely to intimidate the most important Cabinet minister at the most critical time in our recent economic history.

Gordhan’s desire to consolidate fiscal spend, undo patronage networks and rent-seeking, and fundamentally alter the ethically moribund state of many of the core state-owned-enterprises, threatens many used to years of privileges and perks. No wonder the man is under pressure.

But it increasingly seems as though Gordhan is isolated. He certainly has received no visible support from President Jacob Zuma. In fact, the silence from the President is in itself deafening. This adds to the perception that the Hawks are being used as a proxy agency intent on doing the political bidding of factions seeking to protect their turf.

These events also have to be seen in the context of the ANC’s recent announcement that Zuma has taken control of parastatal (SOE) strategy.

Again, perceptions of linkages between the President and the troublesome national airline (SAA) suggests that Gordhan’s efforts are being undermined. It’s a sorry state of political fiefdoms gone rogue with compromised leadership impotent or just unwilling to restore good governance.

These risks are well-documented by the ratings agencies. We cannot say we have not been warned that this untenable situation of our own doing is a key criterion for a downgrade.

So Gordhan now has a stark choice. The forces against him are serious in attempting to rein him in. Whatever perks they wish to preserve, they threaten at worse, his longevity in office or at the very least, his ability to exert political will in taking rectifying actions.

Gordhan will have to weigh up these choices before him. With the backing of a substantive portion of South African civil society, the

business community and major factions within the ANC (and DA), he is not without a support base.

Given the gravitas of both his supporters - and his critical position as a bulwark against excess - he is not going to fold up and leave without a considerable fight.

He is a canny operator with enough political savvy to fight levels of intimidation that most ordinary mortals would have found severely debilitating.

Gordhan’s supporters know the consequences of either his arrest or a forced resignation. There are no prizes for guessing that South Africa’s political credibility has been severely compromised in the past and sets itself up again for a compounded effect should he go.

The country barely got a “get-out-of-jail” card after Nenegate, but a Gordhangate would leave us - and the currency - reeling.

Whoever his replacement would be and no matter how talented, he would be tainted with the brush of political interference and being a lackey of those determined to get their hands on Treasury and the proverbial cookie jar.

It’s a perception that even the most sophisticated amount of political spin and PR won’t change.

Any talented (but politically compromised successor) - of the likes of Brian Molefe - would face an immediate run on the rand, a likely downgrade and resultant onerous costs of borrowing on financial markets.

No matter how populist any non-Gordhan administration might wish to be, money would simply cost more or not be available. Under such conditions, already creaking state coffers would have difficulty dolling out favourable salary increases to civil servants, resulting in political pressures already being felt.

So, for those who wish to protect the status quo - which may still include President Zuma - the best bet might be to hold Gordhan to ransom with pending charges yet keep his face on the door to the office to prevent a larger meltdown.

For Gordhan, this is a highly problematic scenario that is likely to make his job impossible to execute in any meaningful way.

Gordhan therefore has to make a tough choice: capitulate to pressure or precipitate a governmental crisis by sticking to his guns. Either way, South Africa enters another sea of uncharted waters as differing factions weigh up their strengths and weaknesses.

The Gordhan saga is really a proxy for the future battles within the ANC over governance, ethics and leadership. Whichever way the dice falls, the tough road ahead will be felt in differing degrees or difficulty.

• Daniel Silke is an independent political analyst, author and keynote speaker specialising in South African and international politics.

Around the Jewish World

Row over shul’s cancellation of talk by Zionist group

LONDON - The chairman of one of the United Synagogue’s largest congregations has defended the decision to cancel a meeting featuring a speaker from the Israeli Zionist group Im Tirtzu next month.

Douglas Altabef had been due to speak at Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, in north-west London, at a meeting organised by the UK advocacy group Campaign4Truth.

Jeffrey Davidson, HGS chairman, rejected claims that the shul had bowed to pressure from more left-leaning organisations in cancelling the event.

Im Tirtzu has been outspoken in opposing the work of the New Israel Fund and of Israeli human rights organisations such as B’Tselem and Breaking the Silence.

The visit was criticised last week by NIF’s UK branch and Yachad, the campaign group for a two state-solution.

In a Facebook post, Campaign4Truth accused “far-left” Yachad and others of

pressuring the synagogue to pull out. But Davidson said this week: “I can confirm that I was not approached by either Yachad or NIF in this matter.

“Those who did approach me, however, included key, mainstream and balanced elements of the community.”

Writing to Campaign4Truth, Davidson said the prospective event had not been discussed with any of the synagogue’s officers.

He wrote: “I am sure you will appreciate that, as simply a shul and local communal body whose members hold a wide diversity of opinions, the controversial nature of views expressed by, for and against Im Tirtzu are such that it is not appropriate for us to be associated with them.”

A different venue has been found for the meeting, entitled “Reclaiming Zionism”. - Jewish Chronicle, London

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Exposing young people to entrepreneurial skills

SUZANNE BELLING

The Step Up 2 A Start Up initiative encourages schoolchildren to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, find jobs, create businesses and help the country prosper.

Its new project was launched recently at the Crown Reef Convention Centre in Gold Reef City - the third phase of a three-year programme, described as a major revitalisation of business skills and leadership among young South Africans

It began in 2014, with “think big, start small, act now”, dealing with the services industry, followed by the “maker movement” - “design it, make it, sell it”.

This year the focus is on social and environmental entrepreneurship, “my planet, my people, my purpose”.

“Our aim is to inspire and upskill South African secondary school learners to find innovative solutions to society’s most pressing problems,” said Martin Sweet, MD of Primestars Marketing, who started the programme with key business and government partners.

Over 30 000 learners, mostly from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, have benefited from it.

Jewish outreach organisation Afrika Tik-kun is among the leading supporters of the initiative.

Keynote addresses were delivered at the launch by Small Business Development Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, Water Affairs and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane and Robert Kiyosaki, international business speaker and author of “Rich Dad, Poor Dad”.

Sisulu said: “Partnership between Step Up 2 A Start Up and my department has been crucial. The department and the private sector should have started this a long time ago. It is the SMME sector that will create jobs in this country.”

Mokonyane said this was about investing in the future. “Exposing young people to entrepreneurial skills is key. A knowledge-based education is what we have to encourage. The advantage of being young is that you can think out of the box.”

Said Kiyosaki: “The problem is that our schools are not doing enough to inculcate an entrepreneurial spirit in the classroom. There is a lack of financial education at schools.”

A national social entrepreneurs’ competition for grade 9 - 12 learners requires them to identify an environmental or social problem in their schools or communities that can be solved by developing a product or service.

They must research the elements involved and give a presentation on it, with a description of how it can improve their school or community, based on a toolkit provided to them.

Successful candidates can win bursaries, business, incubation opportunities and mentorship. The prizes will be awarded towards the end of the year. The bursaries will enable the top three teams to develop their ideas further, with advice and expertise from programme sponsors, partners and young entrepreneurs.

Schools across South Africa - mostly from the townships and other previously disadvantaged areas - have been invited to participate in the programme, which has been endorsed by the Department of Basic Education.

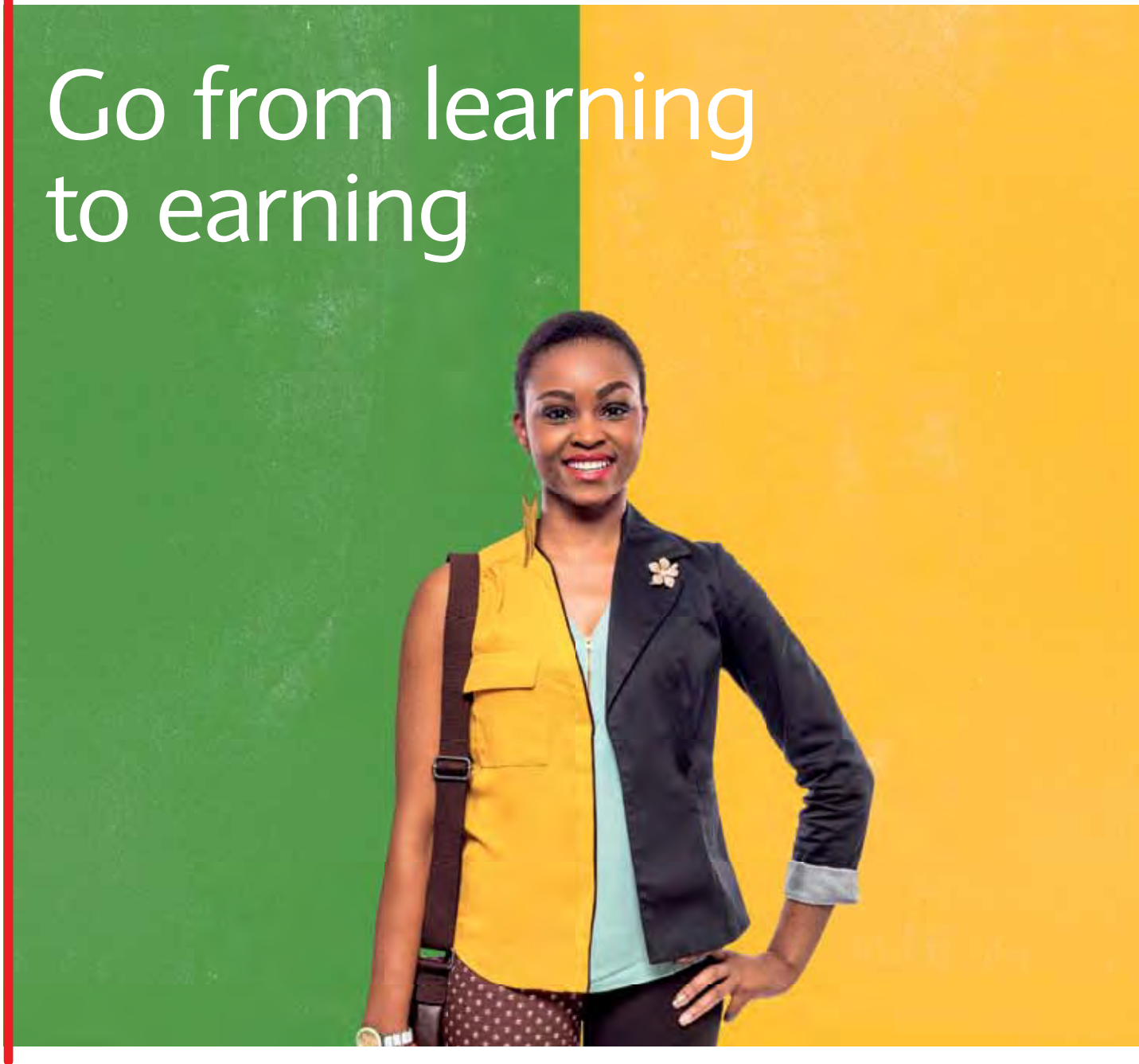
Ster Kinekor cinemas are being used as educational theatres of learning, showing a film called Vukuzenzele (“Get up and do it for yourself”), produced specially for Step Up 2 A Start Up.

The film deals with a looming environmental disaster in a local river. The cast discovers the polluter and finds a solution to clean the water, starting a social entrepreneurial business that reached into the community.



Speakers at the launch of the latest Step Up 2 A Start Up project, Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Small Business Development; Martin Sweet, managing director of Primestars Marketing; and Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Water Affairs and Sanitation.

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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.
The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

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.

SIFRIN'S DISRESPECT FOR AUTHENTIC JUDAISM STICKS IN THE CRAW

I would like to endorse every word of Rabbi Ben Isaacson’s criticism of Geoff Sifrin in last week’s edition of Jewish Report, reacting to Sifrin’s column the previous week. (For those who missed the letter, it can be viewed in the letters section of the on-line edition).

Last week Sifrin once again showed his disrespect for authentic Judaism. He writes in his weekly column (with praise): “When 54-year-old, controversial artist Steven Cohen astonished a sober gathering of art lovers last week at the Wits Art Museum by bursting into the centre of them, anybody who happened to be thinking about something else was instantly riveted.

“He (Cohen) was dressed - actually only partially dressed, since much of his body was naked - in an outrageous get-up consisting of lily white skin, high heeled pointed shoes, naked backside behind half a black dress... he wore a silver Magen David above his eyes and another mounted on top of his head.

“Every generation needs a Steven Cohen to shake things up. And also the courage (courage?) he has shown, for example on the day he walked onto Loftus Versfeld rugby field (in Pretoria) dressed as an ‘ugly girl’.”

By their words and actions, both Sifrin and Cohen have shown how far removed they are from (Torah) Judaism. Any Jew with a pure heart can literally feel sick to the stomach at their behaviour and sentiments.

Once again I am reminded of the profound words of Ant Katz, the on-line editor: “I was brought up to believe that nobody should question our Torah.”

I would add to those words that any opinion written in a Jewish magazine that is not based on reliable Torah sources is worthless and a distortion of truth. What a pity that the only Jewish weekly in South Africa regularly prints columns by people like Sifrin, whose opinions and analyses are not only devoid of any Torah truth, but a distortion of the truth.

As Rabbi Isaacson rightly points out, 85 per cent of South African Jewry lean towards the traditional/ Orthodox. I would submit that Sifrin and his followers keep this in mind when expressing their opinions. As Ant Katz says: “Nobody should question our Torah.”

Choni Davidowitz
Golden Acres, Johannesburg

INDEPENDENT GROUP NEWSPAPERS NOTORIOUSLY ANTI-ISRAEL

The Star last week Wednesday featured a full-page “exposé” of what it called a dirty tricks campaign of disinformation against Independent Media.

The “exposé” lists a host of journalists as well as the number of “negative” and “falsified” articles by them that have appeared over a number of years, targeting not only the various newspapers in the group, but Dr Iqbal Survé, chairman of the group, personally.

Rich indeed that this newspaper takes umbrage at hostile media coverage against itself and the group, as this very same group has conducted an ongoing hostile campaign against Israel and in more instances than not publishes articles that have not been properly researched and contain inaccuracies.

Journalists in the Independent Group, such as Shannon Ebrahim and Janet Smith, in particular, are constantly taking aim and publishing anti-Israel propaganda and are ably supported by members of the Media Review Network, a well-known anti-Israel group who are afforded as much space in their papers’ opinion columns as they want.

Yet the same consideration is never offered to any opposing viewpoint.

Yes, some papers do throw a few “crumbs” in the letters pages from time to time but does the letters pages have the same impact or readership as the opinion pages?

Dr Survé issued a statement in the SA Jewish Report some months back denying any such bias from his group.

Really! Wonder what newspapers he had been reading when making such an outrageous statement?

Allan Wolman
Rosebank, Johannesburg

TO SAVE ISRAEL, MOSAIC JUDAISM MUST BE RESTORED

I am black, a Zionist and a Jew. On a recent trip to Israel I was humbled by the privilege of being in the Promised Land. As a first-time traveller I found Israel hardly the country which I envisioned as a child.

Like most people I was overwhelmed by religious fervour and naivety. I honestly believed that the country was united, religious and on sound footing. How wrong I was! Israel is beautiful. To see Jews of such great diversity in one place was an emotional and exhilarating experience.

And as for the accusation of apartheid levelled against her, I neither experienced nor saw anything remotely akin to that wretched episode.

I don’t claim that none exist; Israelis themselves admit that it does.

Discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, colour and economic status is a universal malaise for which Israel alone should not be fingered. From what I saw and heard there is no way for Arab Israelis to compare their situation with what we as black people experienced under apartheid.

I lived through it. My disappointment or sadness stems from the fact that most Israelis are secular, seldom attend shul and find the religious authorities arrogant, hypocritical and selfish.

They blame this sect for their economic woes. Thus except for the minority Orthodox Jews, Israelis are generally non-plus about their religion. Yes, Jews recognise themselves as such, but being called an Israeli seemed to be more important. This is a dangerous trend.

Throughout history the Jews were always known for their steadfast faith. The disillusionment with Israel’s religious authority and indeed government, clearly indicates a movement away from faith.

I was at the Jerusalem Film Festival where this topic was vociferously debated among documentary film-makers. It was not just about security matters but fundamentally about sectarian conflict and the extent of the religious deterioration.

The nation has a legitimate complaint. This was the message. Israel in my opinion must reform. It must change. No not for the sake of Palestinian demands. Historically and biblically they have no legitimacy to claim Israel as their land.

Israel belongs to the Jews. But a situation in which Jews are losing their faith as a result of an obstinate and antiquated authority out of touch with its people, is unacceptable. It is for this reason that the Orthodox elite must change. The Mosaic Laws, not Rabbinical Judaism, must be reintroduced as the first and fundamental bedrock of the Jewish state.

It is a G-d-given system meant precisely to keep Israel faithful and on track. Orthodoxy and its government lackeys are pulling the country in the opposite direction.

This complicit group have shamelessly neglected their heritage for the privileges and glorification of an elitist sect. This warped situation is untenable. Mosaic Judaism must be restored as a sign of dignity and justification to save the country. There is no other alternative.

KASRILS AND GOLDBERG CREATE THEIR OWN CONVENIENT CONTEXT ON ISRAEL

Geoff Sifrin in his column in last week’s Jewish Report, “Which Jews to be proud of after 175 years?” bothers me. Both Ronnie Kasrils and Denis Goldberg ignore justice and even-handedness when it comes to Israel.

While we can be proud of some of their actions and sacrifices in helping to bring South Africa to where it now is, it is quite another issue to be proud of them in totality.

Goldberg criticised Israel for its treatment of Palestinians and for its support of apartheid South Africa. He then went to England which, to a large extent, (no less than Israel), supported the South African government (under Margaret Thatcher), as did the US and Europe etc.

Kasrils and Goldberg have followed the standard ANC line on Israel since inception. They have ignored Israel’s history, editing out what was and is inconvenient. They have ignored the fact that many of the Arabs living in Israel, long before the State was declared, murdered and raped Jews whenever they had the opportunity.

Peace? No recognition of a Jewish state, no Jews to be permitted in their areas and no sharing of Jerusalem. Many clauses of the Oslo Accords have not yet been implemented. Is Israel supposed to allow them freedom of movement and no checkpoints?

When Sifrin says: “As Jewish South Africans, someone’s views on Israel is not enough reason to shun them”, as a Jew and a member of the human race, I have to disagree. If those views are biased, hateful and deliberately obfuscate the reality of Israel, it hurts all Jews and all people everywhere and they need to be shunned.

Let me hear them, just once, talk of the remarkable help that Israel has given to many countries in times of tragedy, crises and need. Let me hear the acknowledgement, just once, that the Palestinians need to change their attitude drastically.

Let me hear that these are indeed men of truth, when it comes to morality and objectivity. Let me hear them criticise repressive regimes throughout the world. I need to hear them talk of the great good in Israel and then they might have the right to criticise what they regard as wrong.

Until then, for all the good they have done, it doesn’t even begin to approach the benefits that Israel has brought to mankind under the most difficult of circumstances. Until then, I have no problem in shunning them.

Michael Rootshtain
Highlands North, Johannesburg

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Dill pickle flavour is latest flavour of the month

SHANNON SARNA, NEW YORK

Have you noticed that dill pickle-flavoured dishes are everywhere lately? There’s dill pickle-brined chicken fingers and dill pickle bread. And recently there was an entire roundup of ways to use leftover dill pickle brine. That was enough inspiration for me to create a dill pickle challah. The dill “pickleness” of this recipe is subtle, and while it does use pickle juice in the dough, it’s the topping of garlic, red pepper flakes, fresh dill and sea salt that really shines. This savoury challah is the perfect vehicle for some sliced deli meats like corned beef, pastrami, turkey or even tongue.

Dill pickle challah

INGREDIENTS:

For the dough:

- ¾ cup lukewarm water
- ¾ cup leftover pickle juice, warmed to lukewarm temperature
- 1 ½ tablespoons yeast
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 5 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tablespoon salt
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ tablespoon chopped garlic (fresh is fine too)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 2 eggs

For the top:

- 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk plus 1 teaspoon water
- 1 tablespoon dried, minced garlic pieces
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon thick sea salt

Directions:

- In a small bowl place yeast, 1 teaspoon sugar, lukewarm water and lukewarm

pickle juice. Allow to stand for 5-10 minutes, until foamy on top.

- In a large bowl or stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, mix together 1 ½ cups flour and salt. After the water-yeast mixture has become foamy, add to flour mixture along with oil, garlic and dill. Mix thoroughly.
- Add another 1 ½ cups of flour and 2 eggs until smooth. Switch to the dough hook attachment if you are using a stand mixer.
- Add another 1 cup of flour and then remove from bowl and place on a floured surface. Knead remaining 1 cup of flour into dough until it is firm and elastic. It should bounce back slightly when you poke it.
- Place dough in a greased bowl and cover with damp towel. Allow to rise 3 to 4 hours.
- Remove dough from bowl and divide into two. Braid each section into desired shape challah. (Makes 2 medium-large challah loaves.)
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Bake for 25 minutes or until just golden on top and challah feels light and hollow.(The Noshers via JTA)

Shannon Sarna is editor of The Noshers.



Around the Jewish World

Breakthrough Israeli study may lead to melanoma cure

TEL AVIVA - Israeli researchers believe their findings can lead to better diagnosis and prevention for the deadly melanoma skin cancer.

Israeli and European researchers say their collaborative research has unravelled the metastatic mechanism of melanoma, the most aggressive of all skin cancers. According to a paper published in the journal Nature Cell Biology, the scientists discovered that before spreading to other organs, a melanoma tumour sends out tiny vesicles containing molecules of micro RNA. These cause morphological (structural) changes in the skin’s dermis layer in preparation for receiving and transporting the cancer cells.

The researchers also found chemical substances that can stop the process and are therefore promising drug candidates.

“The threat of melanoma is not in the initial tumour that appears on the skin, but rather in its metastasis - in the tumour cells sent off to colonise in vital organs like the brain, lungs, liver and bones,” said research leader Dr Carmit Levy, of the department of human molecular genetics and biochemistry at Tel Aviv University’s Sackler School of Medicine.

“We have discovered how the cancer spreads to distant organs and found ways to stop the process before the metastatic stage.”

Melanoma, the most aggressive and lethal type of skin cancer, kills one person every 52 minutes according to data from the Skin Cancer Foundation, and the number of diagnosed cases has been on the rise for the past three decades. Despite a range of therapies developed over the years, there is still no full cure for this life-threatening disease. The new study proposes novel and effective methods for diagnosis and prevention.

- Israel 21c

Native-born Israelis at higher risk for Hodgkin’s lymphoma

JERUSALEM - Sabras (native-born Israelis) are at higher risk for contracting the blood cancer, Hodgkin’s lymphoma (HL) than are immigrants to the country, apparently due to differences in the lifestyle and environment here from a young age.

This was discovered by Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine expert Dr Hagai Levine, who published his findings in the journal Leukaemia and Lymphoma.

The Israeli incidence of HL is among the highest in the world. According to 2012 estimates of the Global Cancer Observatory, Israeli women have the highest age-standardised incidence rate of HL in the world, while their male counterparts have the second highest. From 1960 through 2005, Israel had a sharp rise in the incidence of HL among Israeli-born Jews of both sexes, with similar rates in the Jewish and non-Jewish populations.

HL is a common malignancy in early adulthood, accounting for approximately 30 per cent of all lymphomas (cancers of the lymph system). In a cohort of 2,3 million Jewish adolescent males and females followed for up to 45 years, being born in Israel was associated with a much elevated risk for nodular sclerosis HL.

Higher risks were found among Israeli-born subjects compared to European, Asian and North African immigrants; higher risks were also found for women, those born more recently, those with higher body-mass index and taller stature.

The findings suggest that exposure to as yet unidentified elements of the Israeli environment increase the risk of nodular sclerosis HL and should aid in directing research efforts, Levine found.

- Jerusalem Post



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Jazz to jive - and anything else in between - at Herzlia



Sienna Simon; Laila Dave; and Zacari Turest-Swartz on the djembe drums.

GEOFF COHEN

Last week Tuesday, over 500 parents filled the Herzlia High School hall to watch 180 pupils from all five campuses celebrate music at Herzlia in a wonderful production called “Feel the Beat”. The programme showcased a multitude of styles, from mass choirs to marimbas, jazz to jive, and everything else in between.

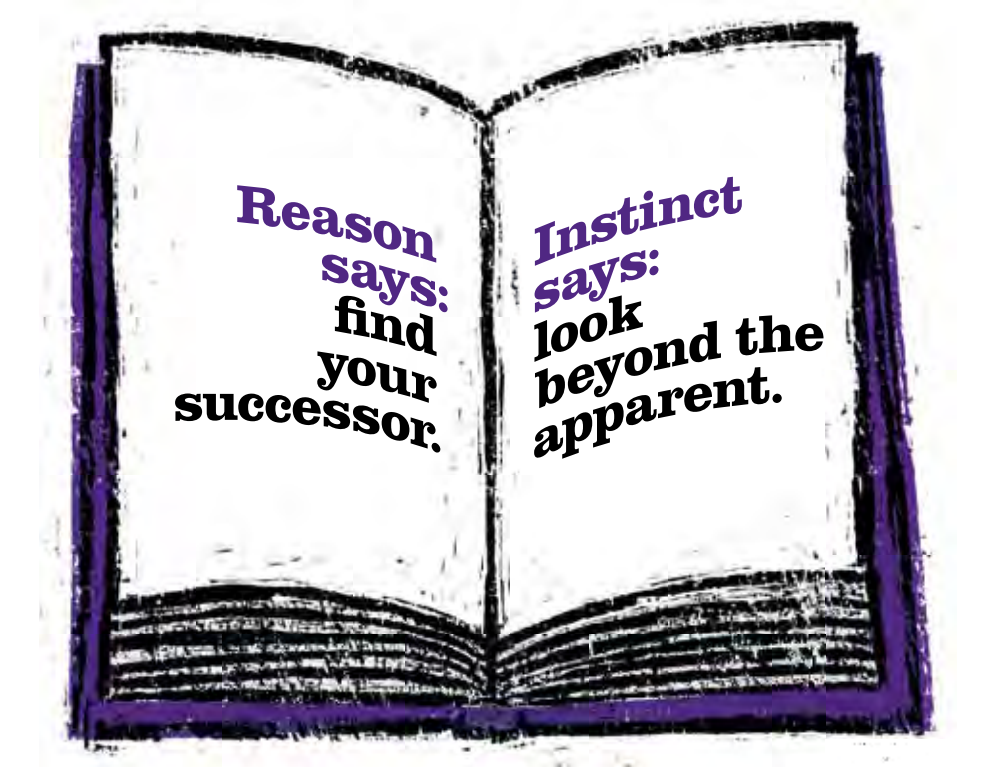
The finale was a first for Herzlia when the choirs from the five schools combined into a mass choir to belt out Toto’s Africa and a Hebrew medley. This brought the house down.

The hall was decorated with balloons, streamers and, to top it all, a huge confetti bomb exploded at the end. Feel the Beat has taken performing music at Herzlia to the next level as all the schools came together to show the variety of styles, instruments and ensembles that make Herzlia Music what it is today.

Danielle Asherson, head of Herzlia Music, told the audience: “We wanted to give the pupils an opportunity to experience performing in front of a large audience, to work together as a team which enhanced unity allowing Herzlia Music to grow and develop.

“Working with pupils from other campuses has enabled our children to get to know each other in a constructive, creative environment. I know as a child of parents who encouraged me to do music, that parents will never quite fully understand the depth of the gift that you give children by allowing them these opportunities.”

Said a parent who attended the show: “It was wonderful to see the campuses all coming together, not in competition, but in collaboration. The combined choir gave me goose bumps.”



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Sydenham kids have their own Olympics in the garden

SUE BENJAMIN

A wave of anticipation and excitement filled the air as the children of Sydenham Pre-Primary School last week marched into the garden dressed in the colours of the Olympic flag.

After the warm-up session, the first event of the day, in the spirit of the Rio Olympic Games, began. The activities were multi-skill-based incorporating a variety of apparatuses but the main focus was on fun and participation.

All ages took part and war cries could be heard all over Sydenham. The children had worked up quite an appetite and oranges, sandwiches, juice and water were a very welcome part of the morning. Prize-giving was held at the end of the day and each child received a medal. A sense of good sportsmanship and camaraderie prevailed as the staff and children looked out for each other. The aim of the school is for the kids to learn and put into practice the values of good sportsmanship that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.



Cheering the green team on are Jaden Gordon and Dovy Levy.

A ‘real author’ inspires Orange Grove Primary young

ANDY MARKS

Orange Grove Primary School was rocking last week with the most wonderful visit by author and musician Alan Glass. Orange Grove library volunteers in conjunction with Pan Macmillan publishers, organised this inspirational morning.

The 600 grade R to grade 3 learners loved singing “Harry Hadedu” and “Lucas the Lion” and they went on an adventure of self-discovery with Oliver in Alan’s book “Oliver’s Outline”.

The children were very excited to meet “a real author”.

“Do you need to have talent to write a book or can anyone?” asked Boikanyo; and “Where do you get your ideas from or what inspires you to write a book?”

asked Nokuphila, both grade 3s. The overall message from Alan is to reach your own potential and “follow your dreams”.



Pictured are grade 1 teacher, Phyllis Soll and volunteers from the Orange Grove Library, Andy Marks and Marion Bloch, with author/ musician Alan Glass.

Doek Friday at King David High School Victory Park



Margaret le Roux; Camille Norman; Ntombi Mota; Mary van Zyl; Kirsten Bray; Goetsimang Ramotsho; and Jozelle Grobbelaar.

NTOMBI MOTA

A doek is worn for different reasons and has different connotations in different contexts and cultures. KDVP High School female staff wore their doeks on Monday to celebrate Women’s Month and to embrace the modern culture of wearing a doek.

They wore it to remind themselves of the important role played by women in our society. It is also worn to remind people of the challenges still to be fought by women in modern society.

King David Sandton kids explore intricacies of sofrut

EAN KORB

Grade 3 learners at King David Sandton recently learnt all about sofrut - the art of writing holy items such as mezuzot.

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein entertained and educated the learners with his fascinating stories and broad knowledge of sofrut. The children learnt first-hand about how meaningful each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is, the ink a sofer uses as well as the toughness of the parchment.

The grade 3s attained knowledge and understanding about the scrolls that adorn the doorposts.



Sarah Kahanovitz and Ethan Greenstein with a mezuzah.

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Sunday (September 4)

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49
to a tour of Johannesburg on the "Hop
on Hop Bus". E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za
for details.

• CANSA's "Bark for Life" relay walk
for Woodrock takes place at The Mall
of Africa/Waterfall Park. Come walk
around the track with your dog(s). This
relay event is a celebration of cancer
survivors celebrating fighting back and
remembering. Time: 09:00 till 13:00
(registration at 09:00 for the first
relay and 11:00 for the second relay).
Entrance fee: R100 per human and R20
per dog. There will be food stalls and
other stalls. Dogs must be on a leash at
all times.

• Second Innings hosts Prof Amanda Krause
on "Should I be Worried About My Jewish
Genes?" 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.

• UJW hosts "A Celebration of the Wit &
Wisdom of Sholem Aleichem in Word
and Song" in "Welcome to the World
of Fiddler on the Roof", starring Shane
Baker, special guest artist from New
York and Caely-Jo Levy, with the Yid Dish
Players. Venue: Theatre on the Square,
Sandton. Time: 17:00 and 19:30.
Booking: tel (011) 645-2591 or Bev
082-574-4770 or Lynne 083-378-1114.
Tickets: R180. Proceeds of the show in
aid of Union of Jewish Women.

Monday (September 5)

• UJW adult education division hosts
Phillip de Wet, associate editor of the
Mail and Guardian on "The Municipal
Elections - Repercussions of and
Reflections on". Venue: 1 Oak Street,
Houghton. Time 09:30. Donation: R40.
Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (September 6)

• WIZO Forum conducts a tour to the
Henri Matisse Exhibition "Rhythm and
Meaning" at the Standard Bank Gallery.
Bus leaves from Beyachad at 09:30
sharp. Cost: R120 (incl transport and
gallery guide). Numbers are limited
so early booking is essential. Contact:
(011) 645-2515 wizojhb@beyachad.
co.za

Wednesday (September 7)

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

Thursday (September 8)

• Cape Town Holocaust Centre hosts "The
Hellenic Community of Cape Town".
Venue: Cape Town Holocaust Centre,
Gardens. Time: 18:00. Seating limited.
RSVP essential: admin@holocaust.
org.za

• Second Innings hosts a "Movie Morning"
in the auditorium of the SA Military
Museum in Saxonwold with Marvin
Hamlich's "What He Did For Love".
Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R90 (incl
movie, snacks and tea/coffee). Booking:
Laura Sher (011) 786-5109 or Helen
Wolfson 082-877-9470.

Sunday (September 11)

• JH&GC in partnership with the SAJBD
hosts an evening in memory of Elie
Wiesel. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest
Town. Seating limited. Booking: shirley@
jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-
3100/2148. Time: 19:00. No charge
for admission but donations welcome.

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 -
49 to the Joburg Art Fair at Sandton
Convention Centre on Sunday 11
September. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za
for details.

• RCHCC hosts Cat Simoni in two shows in
"A Time For Us". Venue: Clive M Beck
Auditorium. Times: 15:00 and 19:30.
Donation: R120 (incl refreshments).
Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-
8088/8378; a/h (011) 728-8378;
e-mail rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@
telkomsa.net

• Second Innings hosts The Jewish Guild
Orchestra, conducted by Prof Brian Buch.
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.

News

Malala's crystal ball sees Nkosazana as next ANC leader

MARGOT COHEN

It's a rollercoaster living in South Africa; we have
to put one foot in front of the other, said guest
speaker, journalist and political analyst Justice
Malala (pictured) at a fundraiser breakfast on
Monday at Investec in Johannesburg.

The event was held for the Jewish Women's
Benevolent Society "Barefoot no More"
campaign which tries to ensure that no one in
the community goes without shoes.

Attacks on Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan
by the Hawks investigative unit are dangerous
and tragic, Malala said. What does give hope
however, is the groundswell of support from
civil society to protect the country's institutions.

After August 3's peaceful municipal elections,
there was an atmosphere of euphoria, followed
by a wave of self-doubt which has seen the rand
falling and junk ratings seem likely by year-end,
caused by the summoning of Gordhan and
others by the Hawks.

Malala agreed with Gordhan's views that
"there are good people doing tough jobs in
difficult times. Their work is being subjugated
by ANC problems." Many ANC leaders need
to make their voices heard and be seen to be
upholding the institutions of the country's
democracy including the Constitutional Court.

Malala says there has been a shift of power
from the President to society as was evidenced
in such campaigns as Fees Must Fall and the
appointment of Gordhan after the short-lived
appointment of Des van Rooyen as finance



minister last December.

He urged South Africans not to be distracted
by "the noise of politics".

The country's institutions have still to work
in 10 years' time, he said. The loss of support for
the ANC is significant, Malala said. Around three
million former ANC supporters did not vote in
the municipal elections.

He also asked whether the ANC has the ability
to self-correct. After 22 years in power, the party
is in pain and divided. Nine million people do
not have jobs.

Gordhan, he predicted, will not be fired but
will be kept under more intense pressure, with
dire consequences for the economy.

Malala's predictions for 2019 are that the
ANC will still be in power, albeit with a reduced
majority. Zuma will stay in place until the ANC
December 2017 elective conference.

SAA will not be privatised. Relations
with Russia and China will be enhanced. Dr
Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma will be elected the
next leader of the ANC.

Business will come under increasing pressure
from government.

The EEF could join the ANC in two years'
time. A lot depends on the DA's performance
in Gauteng. He stressed that the EEF had not
signed any formal agreements with the DA,
although it helped the DA taking over Tshwane
and Johannesburg.

But in spite of a host of negatives, Malala
insisted that he still felt "goodish" about South
Africa.

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Spirit again sets to triumph at cash-strapped Paralympics

JACK MILNER

There is something special about the Paralympics, which always follow the Olympics. The Olympic Games is about competing at the highest level with the best in the world in a good spirit. The Paralympics is about the triumph of the spirit.

At the Olympics there is the odd story about athletes who have dealt with adversity to get to where they are but at the Paralympics every participant has his or her own story.

That is why it was so sad to read that the Paralympics in Rio, which began on Wednesday, almost had to be called off through lack of funds. In the end it was announced by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) that the Paralympics will take place, but with major budget cuts.

When the Olympics came to an end Rio’s organising committee admitted they had not raised enough money to fund the Paralympics. This was due to Brazil’s struggling economy and the fact that only 12 per cent of available tickets had at that stage been sold.

It meant organisers were three weeks late in paying R129,3 million in travel grants to help athletes get to Rio. Delayed travel grants will now be paid to athletes, but 10 countries may struggle to get teams to Rio.

“Never before in the 56-year history of the Paralympic Games have we faced circumstances like this,” said IPC president, Sir Philip Craven.

The cuts will be made to venues, the workforce and transport. But Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes has secured an additional R683,41 million of funding and R455,6 million in sponsorship from state-run companies after an injunction was lifted that had blocked further state aid for the Games.

Said Craven: “These cuts are on top of the ones we, together with the International Olympic Committee, have already made in the last 12 months and are likely to impact nearly every stakeholder attending the Games.”

Organisers were meant to pay travel grants to all 165 participating countries by the end of July. The grants, paid to national Paralympic bodies, cover travel costs for athletes and officials. The first instalments will now be paid but the IPC is concerned the delay could threaten some countries’ participation.

“We are working desperately hard to protect athlete services, especially within the field of play,” said Craven. “They have dedicated their lives to reaching these Games and we will do our utmost to try to maintain the service levels and scope that they expect at a Paralympic Games.”

The Paralympics were the brainchild of Dr Ludwig Guttman, a Jew who had fled Nazi Germany and settled in England. His plan was to use sport to get injured soldiers back on their feet and in 1948 the first Paralympics was staged in London. He had massive support from a very young Queen Elizabeth who visited his hospital shortly after her coronation (in 1952).

The South African Paralympic team will have Jewish support as Leon Fleiser is the chef de mission for Sascoc.

Fleiser, who was paralysed from the waist down following a shooting incident, completed his Executive Masters in Sports Organisation Management programme in Switzerland in 2014.

Fleiser, who has been involved in wheelchair basketball among other things, has dedicated his life to supporting athletes with disabilities. Able-bodied athletes get on a plane with their equipment, get off on the other end, climb into a bus and go off to their village.

With SAA sponsorship, all the athletes will go on one plane.

“Normally you are only allowed four disabled people on a plane, but now we’re going to have 40 on the plane! Ten of our team management have been trained on how to evacuate passengers in case anything should happen.

“We’ve got to get all the bags and equipment there. Once we’re on the ground the Rio logistics take over and they help out.”

Fleiser says South Africa has lost a few key athletes since the London Paralympics and he realises the medal haul without the likes of Natalie du Toit and Oscar Pistorius will not be as large.

But he’s still upbeat: “I do believe the quality of the athletes is really good so I’m looking at an increase in the quality of the medals, hopefully more golds, so I would like to see between 10 and 12 gold medals and if we achieve that, I believe we should crack the top 10 again.”

Added Fleiser: “The one thing I’ve always tried to do as an administrator is think: ‘If I’m an athlete, what would I want?’”

The SA team includes multi-talented Ernst van Dyk who will be participating in his seventh Paralympics. He has competed in three disciplines: athletics, cycling and swimming.

Of the six swimmers, four won medals in London – Shireen Sapiro (who is Jewish), Achmat Hassiem, Hendri Herbst and Kevin Paul.



Leon Fleiser is the chef de mission for the South African Paralympic team.

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