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Jewish Report

■ May 20 2016 / 12 Iyar 5776
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A Guinness World Record requires meticulous planning and stringent monitoring and verification. With a desire to do something monumental and memorable, huge numbers from the King David Schools plus parents, family and school staff members came out to the Victory Park campus on May 12 – Yom Ha’atzmaut – to attempt to break the world record in the number of sandwiches made in an hour. The Guinness Record stands at 26 710. The 3 000 King Davidians and others set out at a frantic pace, videoed and audited all the way. The end-result: 35 557 sandwiches - which were then delivered to a school and feeding scheme in Alexandra township. Sponsors such as Pick n Pay and Blue Ribbon did their bit with 4 000 loaves of bread, 1 500kg of peanut butter and 960 tins of jam. This will be submitted to Guinness World Records to see if they did indeed break the record and King David should hear back within four weeks. See page 5

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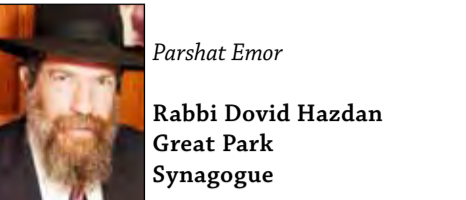

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To educate to educate



High on the agenda of Jewish communities throughout the world is the challenge of “Jewish continuity”. The priority of Jewish education is recognised for its vital role in ensuring the involvement of the next generation and the future of our people.

The opening verse of the reading of this Shabbat gives us added insight into meaningful Jewish education.

Introducing the laws that pertain to the Kohanim - the priests - Hashem said to Moshe Rabeinu: “Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them...”

Many of the commentaries address the seemingly redundant duplication of the words “say” and “tell” in this verse. Rashi quotes the Talmud, explaining that this implies the need to communicate to parents in such a way that they are empowered to, in turn, motivate, instruct and caution their children.

We have only succeeded in imparting values if those who have been enriched will do the same. We are worthy recipients of Torah if our

application and conduct inspires those who look to us for direction. Our students must themselves become teachers.

The Rebbe draws attention to the fact that there are only three occasions in the entire Torah where an instruction is introduced with the words “Emor - Veamarta” - “say and tell”.

It would seem that the vital message regarding education that is derived from this duplication relates to three specific commandments, namely the prohibition against eating insects, the prohibition against consuming blood and the instruction in this week’s reading to preserve the purity of the Kohanim.

These three specific areas of Jewish law are symbolic of particular challenges that one could encounter when trying to impart Torah values. They are areas in which the responsibility to educate and impart values is even more real.

The Talmud (Horiot 11a) describes insect eating as repulsive to mankind. The message to the “insect eater” represents our values being addressed to a degenerate and depraved society that has debased itself through inappropriate behaviour that undermines the dignity of mankind.

The “insect eater” is symbolic of the corrosion of norms to the extent that

uncouth practices and behaviour are sanctioned by mantles of acceptability and misguided respectability. Parents, teachers and communities resign themselves to what appears to be an irreversible decay and decline.

Yet the Torah reminds us: “Emor - veamarta” - “say and tell”! Don’t surrender the ideals and aspirations of Jewish education. If we are willing to sacrifice and commit ourselves to Jewish continuity then there is no person or situation that is too far gone, degraded and immune to the positive effects of true Jewish education. Even the “insect eater” can be rehabilitated through Torah when we extend ourselves with love and care and our commitment to true chinuch/education.

The drinking of blood had become a common practice among the masses. (Sifri and Rashi Dvarim 12:23). It was a failure and human weakness that represented a society trapped in its own addictions and dependencies. It would seem that passionate habituated indulgence can never be reversed. We become despondent and we resign ourselves to the overwhelming unstoppable pressure of the latest trend, fashion and norm.

Again, the Torah calls for resilient and meaningful education - “emor - veamarta” - “say and tell”. Enthusiastic commitment to imparting values can defy the habituated

trends of passion and peer pressure.

Finally, there are the teachings of this week regarding the purity of the Kohen. This is a subject that seems too esoteric, sublime and mystical. The details of purity and impurity seem to have no relevance to a practical world of rational understanding.

It would seem to be an exercise in futility to attempt to impart the laws of purity which are illogical, disconnected and incomprehensible to a secular world.

Yet the Torah emphasises: “Emor - veamarta” - “say and tell”. Don’t imagine that chinuch/ Torah education cannot convey the essential joy and meaning of life.

We can inspire the next generation to stretch beyond the cold rational hold of the mundane and the physical. We can aspire to holiness and to connect to the Divine. “Say it and tell it” - true Jewish education knows no limits and can teach and reach beyond the materialistic status quo. We can and must foster a deeper and better understanding of the holy.

“Emor - veamarta” - “say and tell” - is the call to ensure that real Torah education will ensure Jewish continuity. It can address decadence, passionate dependency and habit and it can transcend the barriers of materialism to embrace holiness and sanctity.

Shabbat shalom.

Community

Enthusiastic Yom Ha’atzmaut crowds show Zionist passion in SA



BENJI SHULMAN

Large enthusiastic crowds made their way to Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations organised by the South African Zionist Federation throughout the country last week Wednesday night.

In Johannesburg a record number of some 5 000 arrived at Huddle Park Golf Course to a magical night festival and kids’ carnival to celebrate Israel’s 68th birthday. The rainbow that appeared in the sky signalled the start of a night of revelry that included a fully staged concert, a food court and after-party.

Olga Meshoe of DEISI was master of ceremonies. She added her special

energy to the evening. The crowd responded by waving Israeli and South African flags while dancing to the vibrant beats; even Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein was spotted dancing the hora!

Nicci Raz, the newly-minted CEO of the SAZF, was happy with the results of her first major Yom Ha’atzmaut event and said she was excited to build on the success of this year’s function.

Yom Ha’atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron are the flagship events of the SAZF and it was wonderful to see such crowds come out in support of Israel on these important dates.

The real winners on the night, however, were the children who were

delighted to have an opportunity to explore the carnival, enjoy delicious food and play at the Maccabi Sports Zone or chill out in the Youth Zone. The party didn’t end there as young adults got together to enjoy top local celebrity DJ Euphonik while having a few “le chaims”.

Cape Town also “went big” this year with a “Somewhere over the Rainbow” themed Yom Ha’atzmaut party at Weizmann School, decorated with multi-coloured balloons and fabrics.

The main act of the night was the three-piece Israeli band Jaman, who thrilled the crowd with their unique Israeli rhythms. Among the group were a number of visiting Israeli children from Chaiyanu, an organisation

that creates holiday experiences for young people undergoing chemotherapy.

The celebrations and education continued the next day with Herzlia Middle School travelling to the Weizmann School for a day organised by the Diller Teen Fellows and the Zionist youth movements.

Around the country the celebrants were not just Jews, they also included a number of Christian Zionist organisations that have become faithful friends of the Jewish community over the years.

In Johannesburg this included DEISI and the IFCM Church while in Cape Town a special performance was put on with Nyanga Performing Arts Studio for, among others, members of Bridges for Peace, and Pastor Aaron Makili’s church from Khayelitsha.

Not to be outdone by the bigger centres, the Jewish community of Durban put on a great display of unity and joy that attracted over 300 participants. Festivities included Israeli music by Igal, a singer and guitarist, with additional contributions by local school choirs and a

children’s flag procession.

Each community organisation also created their own food dish that was entered into a competition. WIZO came out tops with their plate of curry.

Ben Swartz, chairman of the SAZF, thanked all those who attended events as well as those who organised them. He said that the scale of festivities once again showed the strong Zionist ideals of the South African Jewish community and the excitement that Israel generates with individuals and across different groups. He said that support for Israel continues to grow in the country and encouraged all members of the community to be part of the process.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Emor May 20 / 12 Iyar May 21 / 13 Iyar		
Starts	Ends	
17:09	17:59	Johannesburg
17:32	18:25	Cape Town
16:50	17:42	Durban
17:11	18:02	Bloemfontein
17:03	17:56	Port Elizabeth
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Jewish Report

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Musli’s counsel pounces on ‘technical errors’ to stop the Israeli’s extradition



Shai Musli at an earlier appearance in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court.

ANT KATZ

Legal and administrative errors by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in South Africa and/or Israeli authorities could result in a failure by Israel to extradite one of its most wanted men back to Israel.

Suspected Israeli mob boss, Shai Musli, is wanted for complicity in murder and numerous other charges by the Israeli government. He was granted bail of R100 000 on January 19 after his bail application had been remanded three times previously.

He was arrested in Sandton after apparently having been in South Africa since 2012.

When he appeared as ordered in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court last week, prosecutors and Musli’s defence attorneys battled over the admissibility of documents submitted by the Israelis in their application for his extradition.

Shai Musli’s lawyer, Laurance Hodes, argued that the extradition documents were “fatally flawed” because not all of the statements provided by the Israeli authorities had been sworn to.

Hodes also claimed that prosecutors had handed in different sets of documents for different arguments - and that they had done so later than the time South African extradition laws allowed them to.

“The state cannot have multiple arguments,” said Hodes, adding that after Musli had been arrested in Octo-

ber 2015, legally, “the clock started to tick”.

He added: “Israel had to comply with our rules and present the documents [in time]. That didn’t happen.”

Israeli security officials had been hunting around the world for Musli for years. He is alleged to head one of Israel’s most feared crime families, who have waged a reign of terror in Tel Aviv, using their connections to the global criminal underworld, including South Africa’s, to “remove” rivals and expand their empire. Musli took over after his brother was captured, arrested and imprisoned almost a decade ago.

Hodes told the court last week that under South African law, extradition documents had to be handed in to the court no more than 40 days after an arrest.

The state’s documents were first handed to the court in November, and new documents were subsequently submitted in January.

The state argued the three arrest warrants for Musli validated his extradition. “Even if there were statements that were not made under oath, these valid arrest warrants authenticated the extradition papers,” said prosecutor Dean Barnard.

Musli, who was at the Montecasino entertainment complex in Sandton last October, is wanted in connection with multiple murders and for the planning of many other killings.

Musli was remanded on very rigid bail conditions and ordered to appear again at a later date.

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Berland appoints a new lawyer to fight his extradition to Israel



Fugitive Rabbi Eliezer Berland in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court last month. ANT KATZ

The Directorate of Priority Crimes Investigation - known as the Hawks - this week told Jewish Report that media speculation in Israel of Rabbi Eliezer Berland’s pending arrival there under police guard, is incorrect.

In fact, says Major Robert Netshiunda, a Hawks spokesman, the rabbi who is fighting extradition to Israel to face charges of sexual misconduct, “has appointed new lawyers and has filed a notice to appeal”.

Netshiunda did not know the name(s) of Rabbi Berland’s new legal representatives and he said that no date for the extradition appeal to be heard, has been set yet.

Berland, in the meantime, remains at Johannesburg’s notorious “Sun City” prison, which, him having already spent time at a Randburg police cell and a Pretoria prison, was his “place of choice”. He has a private cell and is afforded all the necessary amenities he requires.

According to TheYeshivaWorld.com (TYW) last Sunday, “Rabbi Berland has now refused any additional legal representation to prevent his extradition and it is expected that he will be turned over to Israel police in the near future”.

TYW added: “Police last week met informally with numerous individuals in the Shuvu Banim community (the sect Berland heads in Israel) ahead of the expected return of kehilla leader Rabbi Eliezer Berland.”

Quoting MyNet as their source, TYW said that Israeli police sipped coffee with their guests as they tried to learn what reaction can be expected when the rabbi is extradited and sent home to face criminal charges.

The fact is that, prior to Pesach, Israel police saw considerable protests and are most likely trying to ascertain just what to expect when Johannesburg officially hands Rabbi Berland over to Israeli authorities. Police officials in Israel are trying to prepare to minimise any law-breaking activities that might occur around the rabbi’s extradition.

While this account by Israeli media has been debunked by the Hawks, the fact that the police in Israel are seemingly making contingency plans to keep the peace as much as possible for what they hope to be Berland’s eventual arrival, lends credence to a belief that the “Rabbi-on-the-run” is likely to run out of options soon.

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More startling revelations in the never-ending Bobroff saga

ANT KATZ

A decade or more of legal battles to bring Johannesburg personal injury lawyers, father-and-son duo, Robert and Darren Bobroff to book for “over-reaching” (overcharging their clients) in Road Accident Fund (RAF) cases, and to have the two struck from the roll as attorneys by the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, has resulted in many more charges of fraud, theft and money-laundering, against them.

Multiple investigations into the activities of the pair are underway, including those by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA); the Directorate of Priority Crimes Investigation (the Hawks); the Law Society of the Northern Provinces and their court-appointed curator; the Justice and Correctional Services Department; SARS; and the Road Accident Fund. In terms of legislation determining “contingency” fees that lawyers may take as part of their clients’ settlements, the cap is 25 per cent of the RAF payout. The Bobroffs are said not to have adhered to this and are accused of grossly inflating their bills.

Ronald (pictured) and his son Darren and the latter’s family absconded to Australia last month - shortly before the two were due to face charges in South Africa. The Law Society says the Bobroffs own four properties in Australia worth as much as R70 million.

Blanche’s Devi Sankeree Govender, “the Bobroffs have squirrelled away millions, and the only real question now, is when the NPA will act”.

The Bobroffs’ contraventions, says Govender, include forgery; VAT and income tax evasion; concealing accounts; and failing to pay clients within a reasonable time.

The Law Society’s Millar adds that, “The most damning conclusion is that the trust account lost its identity.” The Bobroffs “were treating other people’s money as though it was their own”. This, he says, is “the ultimate sin” in the legal profession.

The “insider” whistle-blower, the Bobroffs’ former cost consultant Cora van der Merwe said she saw their fraud first-hand and could not stay quiet.

She now runs her own business, determining and costing legal bills. And, low and behold, she had been asked to check a legal bill from the Bobroffs - only to find they were up to their old tricks. Among the many discrepancies she found were:

- A charge of R225 000 to one particular client for perusing e-mails; and
- One specific item - also a charge for perusing e-mails - of R51 000.

The Hawks have asked the NPA and Justice Department to work towards extraditing the errant lawyers from Australia; they are not allowed to practise in South Africa and Ronald’s wife Elaine - who remained in South Africa - has been charged with fraud and money laundering.

She claims she was unaware that her personal bank account had been used in the alleged contraventions.

Van der Merwe told Carte Blanche, during a second exposé of the Bobroffs earlier this month, that the Bobroffs “hacked my phone, accused me of theft of documents, kidnapped and threatened me”.

The ongoing cases against the Bobroffs for over-reaching saw their clients winning money back from as early as 2013. As the number and value of cases against them grew, the Bobroffs’ practice, RBP Inc, began bleeding. But



most of the monies will seemingly never be repaid.

A case of gross overcharging was that of Mark Chetty and his wife Sandy. In 2010 Mark became a quadriplegic as a result of a road accident. Sandy says that Darren Bobroff approached her husband to sign what has since been determined by the High Court, the Court of Appeals and the Constitutional Court to be an illegal fee agreement.

She claimed that Darren Bobroff settled her husband’s case with the RAF without even telling them. They were shown a scrap of paper telling them how much they would get. And then they waited a staggering three years before being paid out.

But that’s not the worst of it. When Chetty finally got the cheque from Bobroffs and deposited it, it bounced!

Ultimately, the Chettys found out that Darren Bobroff had charged them R1,2 million more than the law relating to contingency fees allows. Three days before his death in 2015, Mark Chetty spoke about how unhappy he was about the manner in which Darren Bobroff had treated his family.

Sandy Chetty saw the first Carte Blanche exposé in 2015, and they took the Bobroffs to court and recovered their R1,2 million - after six years.

Jewish Report reached out to Darren Bobroff the week prior to their flight to Australia, offering him an opportunity to put his side of the story - to no avail. The newspaper also reached out to Elaine Bobroff after her arrest and had several off the record discussions with her.

The paper wanted to give her an opportunity to tell people who she was (while not prejudicing her, her husband or her son’s cases.) She agreed at first, but later declined on legal advice.

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Submission made on cyber hate

ANT KATZ

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies has made a submission to a Parliamentary portfolio committee that the success of its undertaking to amend the Film and Publications Act of 1996 (FPA) will require a clear and comprehensive definition of what constitutes “hate speech” as well as clearly defining exactly what the wording “advocating racism” entails.

SAJBD National Chairman Jeff Katz, said, however, that the Board believed that the extremely complex nature of the electronic media could not be effectively regulated simply by broadening the already existing FPA.

“While the Board fully supported the right to freedom of expression,” Katz told the community in a letter, “this right did not extend to propagating hatred and bigotry” and he pointed out the painful and extremely divisive controversy that each case can invoke.

“Over the past year, we have seen an escalation of hate speech being disseminated through social media. The authorities, to a large extent, have struggled to truly address this trend,” he said.

The Board’s submission to the portfolio com-

mittee, therefore, focuses on urging the committee to familiarise itself with how Internet policy has evolved in other jurisdictions, in particular in the United States.

“Even if the proposed amendments were to be enacted, the FBA would still have shortcomings as it has not sufficiently recognised the realities of how hate speech and racism is disseminated today,” Katz said.

The proposed amendments also lacked “any recognition of the extent to which it is driven not by corporate bodies but by private individuals,” he added.

Katz further urged that effective procedures be put in place to facilitate criminal action against those guilty of propagating racism and hate speech via the Internet.

“Such measures are necessary as people are currently able to conduct such behaviour through publishing under pseudonyms or stolen identities.” The Board’s submission also raised the complexities around sharing, forwarding and retweeting of racist material.

The Board appreciates the opportunity provided to it by Parliament to make oral representations, he said, and would be availing itself of this opportunity shortly.

Sandwiches galore – right into the Guinness Book of Records

Photo: Ian Ossendryver



Orran Shapiro, grade 3, from King David Victory Park, is flanked by Ari and Lori Shapiro.

NIRVANA ROGERS

King David Victory Park has many things to be proud of - one being its recent attempt to break into the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest number of sandwiches made in an hour. In celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, on Thursday May 12, the campus played host to approximately 3 000 learners from King David Schools, VIPs and corporate sponsors, to attempt to break the world record.

With the generous help of sponsors like Pick n Pay and their suppliers RCL Foods - who sponsored 1 500kg of peanut butter; Hugo Jam who provided 960 x 900g tins of jam; Blue Ribbon Bread who sponsored 4 000 loaves of bread and the collaborative assistance from Feed SA, the target was met.

The King David Schools' record-breaking effort has now been submitted to the Guinness Book of Records for recognition.

Grant Thornton released an audited count of 35 557 sandwiches made in one hour. The record that had to be broken was 26 710 sandwiches made in one hour - in January 2015 - by Which Wich Superior Sandwiches.

The King David Schools' record-breaking effort has now been submitted to the Guinness Book of Records for recognition, and they should hear back within four weeks.

The sandwiches were taken to Dr Knak Primary School and the Alexandra Community Centre for distribution.

King David Victory Park Campus Marketing Manager Nirvana Rogers said: "This is

an exciting achievement for our school and the experience of bringing such joy to all those we fed, will remain an unforgettable one."

The idea originated from Matthew Auerbach, a former head of the PTA, who had the idea for the campus to do something "monumental and memorable". The idea was not just to break a world record, but to make a difference to others with that act.

Months of planning ensued which included designing a rough outline of the event and then registering the record attempt - which Guinness accepted. The Guinness requirements were quite demanding and there was a high level of monitoring and verification involved.

There were both sandwich quality requirements, as well as requirements to accurately count and inspect the sandwiches. The entire event needed to be photographed and videoed for submission to Guinness, all of which cost much more than was anticipated.

This dream required a team of PTA members implementing the planning of this mammoth event, including the fundraising, décor, marketing, distribution and all the associated logistics. The school was completely overwhelmed with the support received from parents, corporate organisations and community forums.

Following the sandwich-making, the entire school and guests moved across to the Primary School sports field for a concert celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut. The concert showcased talent in all of the King David Schools represented on the day and was a fine tribute to Israel's 68 years of existence as a Jewish state.

Israel's Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk addressed the crowd and made special significance of the links between South Africa and Israel. The concert concluded with a message from Rabbi Craig Kacev, general director of the SABJE, and the singing of the Hatikvah.

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Netanyahu keeps calling for talks with Abbas. Is he serious?

BEN SALES
TEL AVIV

For a leader often accused of not wanting to talk peace with the Palestinians, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sure does a lot of talking about wanting to talk to the Palestinians.

In a series of three statements this month, Netanyahu repeatedly stressed the need for peace with the Palestinians. He called the peace process one of his highest priorities and hinted that a renewal of talks might be underway.

Responding to a question about the peace process on Twitter on May 12, Israel’s Independence Day, Netanyahu said “there’s nothing I want more or am more active on, in many ways you don’t know”. Later that day, speaking to foreign diplomats in Jerusalem, he asked for help arranging a meeting between himself and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

“I have taken steps that no other prime minister in Israel’s history has taken to advance peace,” he said. “Every minute that President Abbas refuses to accept my call for peace robs Palestinians and Israelis of the opportunity to live without fear.”

Netanyahu’s commitment to a Palestinian state, even in theory, has remained a question mark and divided observers of Israeli politics since he took office in 2009. Both his defenders and his critics point to different sets of gestures and statements he’s made that signal support for, or opposition to, a two-state solution. In the lead-up to elections 14 months ago, he dismissed the possibility of a Palestinian state on his watch.

But in a talk to North American Jewish federations last November, he said he “remain[s] committed to a vision of two states for two peoples where a demilitarised Palestinian state recognises the Jewish state, and Israel will continue to work for peace in the hope that what is not achievable today might be achievable tomorrow”.

At the same time, Abbas repeatedly has declined another round of negotiations, saying he would only talk following Israeli good-faith measures. Before the last series of talks, in 2013, Israel released 82 Palestinian prisoners before the two sides met. Netanyahu’s defenders say Abbas’ reticence shows that the Palestinian leader remains the main obstacle to a deal.

“This process has two sides, and I think the central problem isn’t Israel but Abu Mazen,” said former Israeli Deputy National Security Adviser Shaul Shay, using Abbas’ nom de guerre. “Abu Mazen isn’t prepared to reach an agreement, so things are stuck not necessarily because of Israel.”

Abbas instead has turned to international forums, including the United Nations, to recognise a Palestinian state and hold Israel accountable for what he calls violations of international law.

Most recently, Abbas endorsed a French-led



Photo: Haim Zach/GPO/Flash90

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in this file photo.

initiative to convene an Israeli-Palestinian peace conference for the summer, an initiative Israel opposes.

The France initiative is just one of three factors leading Netanyahu to emphasise peace talks again, analysts say. The others include the possibility of the centre-left Labour Party joining his coalition and a desire to project optimism on Israel’s Independence Day.

The French initiative calls for a regional peace conference to be held in the summer. Should negotiations fail, France has vowed to recognise a State of Palestine. Israel thus far has refused to participate, saying the statehood recognition threat gives the Palestinians no incentive to negotiate in good faith.

“The only way to advance a true peace between us and the Palestinians is by means of direct negotiations between us and them, without preconditions,” Netanyahu told his Cabinet last Sunday. “Any other attempt only makes peace more remote and gives the Palestinians an escape hatch.”

Netanyahu is also enmeshed in negotiations with the Knesset’s largest opposition party, Labour, which advocates a settlement building freeze and renewed peace talks. Rumours have swirled in recent days that party chairman Isaac Herzog is ready to sign on in exchange, in part, for being named Israel’s foreign minister.

Herzog acknowledged the negotiations in a May 12 Facebook post, but said he was not yet ready to join the government.

“If I receive a mandate to stop the next campaign of funerals and to block the danger of an international boycott, to bring back the United States and Europe as allies, to open negotiations with regional states and to separate from the Palestinians into two states so as to stop the continual campaign of terror, then I’ll know my

hands are on the steering wheel,” the post read.

Netanyahu’s peace talk may also have been prompted, analysts say, by a need to give a sort of “State of the Union” on Independence Day. While prospects for peace may be dim, Shay said, relations with the Palestinians were still of paramount importance.

“On Independence Day, the prime minister talks to the people and surveys what the situation is and what the future will hold,” Shay said. “You can’t ignore this central subject.”

Renewed negotiations have seemed remote recently. A brutal war in Gaza followed the collapse of talks in 2014. Last year saw the formation of a right-wing Israeli government, succeeded by a wave of terror that is only now fading.

“He sees a theoretical possibility but not a practical one,” said Dror Zeevi, a Middle Eastern studies professor at Hebrew University, referring to Netanyahu. “If things come together, it’s possible he would be ready for a deal, but I don’t think it’s practical in the current government.”

Those who insist Netanyahu is sincere about renewing talks point to his 2009 speech at Bar-Ilan University, where he committed to supporting a demilitarised Palestinian state alongside Israel. They note that he froze West Bank settlement growth in 2010 and freed Palestinian prisoners to jump-start negotiations in 2013 and 2014. Since taking office seven years ago, Netanyahu repeatedly has called for direct negotiations with Abbas.

“He’s ready to make concessions,” said Ephraim Inbar, director of Bar-Ilan’s Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies. “Everyone knows he’ll make concessions. He was ready to freeze settlements. There are concessions

he won’t make for security reasons, for historical reasons, and the nation agrees with him.”

Others point to Netanyahu’s decades-long opposition to Palestinian statehood prior to 2009. Since the building freeze, they note, Netanyahu has expanded settlements throughout the West Bank. And in March 2015, two days before Israeli elections, Netanyahu told the Israeli news website NRG that a Palestinian state would not rise while he is prime minister.

Gershon Baskin, who has acted as a conduit between the Netanyahu government and Palestinian leaders, told JTA that Abbas had thrice offered to begin secret direct talks with Netanyahu. Each time, Baskin said, Netanyahu has refused.

“The point isn’t negotiating anymore - it’s making decisions,” Baskin said. “[Netanyahu] doesn’t do anything in terms of policy to show that a two-state solution is what he wants. Nothing on the ground indicates that.”

But others insist it is Abbas offering the “Mixed Messages”, as the Washington Institute for Near East Policy titled a recent report on the Palestinian leader and Israel.

“It is not just that Abbas and the PA turned their backs on any peace talks with Israel - a position they have hewed to ever since” turning to the international community for unilateral actions, wrote David Pollock, the Kaufman fellow and director of Project Fikra at The Washington Institute.

“It is also that they had decided thenceforth to seek independent statehood for themselves without paying any price at all to Israel - neither the end of claims and conflict, nor a compromise on refugees, nor formal agreement on any other issue. In other words, their objective was land without peace.” (JTA)

World News in Brief

Israeli divers find huge underwater ancient artefact trove

JERUSALEM - Israeli divers off the Mediterranean coast have made the country’s largest underwater discovery of Roman-era artefacts in 30 years.

A dive in the harbour in Caesarea uncovered statues, thousands of coins and more cargo from a merchant ship that sank 1 600 years ago, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced in a news release on Monday.

Divers Ran Feinstein and Ofer Raanan of Raanana made the initial discovery shortly before Passover and then alerted the antiquities authority.

According to the authority, many of the artefacts are bronze and “in an extraordinary state of preservation”, among them a bronze lamp depicting the sun god Sol, a figurine of the moon goddess Luna, a lamp in the image of the head of an African slave and a bronze faucet



in the form of a wild boar with a swan on its head. Archaeologists also discovered fragments of large jars and thousands of coins.

In a statement, Jacob Sharvit, director of the Marine Archaeology Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority, and Dror Planer, deputy director of the unit, said: “These are extremely exciting finds, which apart from their extraordinary beauty, are of historical significance.”

The two noted that it has been 30 years since “a marine assemblage” of this type has been discovered in Israel and that it is rare to find metal statues because most were “melted down and recycled” in the past.

The statues are also in unusually good condition because the sand underwater protected them, according to the archaeologists.

Sharvit said the amount of discoveries are being made in the Caesarea harbour has increased lately due to a lack of sand on the seabed and an increase in the number of divers there. (JTA)

Arrogant officials can’t legislate patriotism, they must earn it



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi’s proposal that school uniforms carry a South African flag by next year is a frantic attempt by a government that knows it has failed the country’s children, to force patriotism on them when what they feel is alienation and hopelessness.

He said wearing it on their uniforms “will ensure the children of the country appreciate” the national symbol. Is the flag the most urgent thing he can do for education? Would it uplift the standard, or improve schools without desks, infrastructure, teachers or facilities, or the performance of learners who come to school without having had breakfast because their parents can’t afford it?

Patriotism comes from feeling like a winning country. When South Africa hosted the 2010 Fifa World Cup, it was selected over Egypt and Morocco as the first African nation to do this. Although the local team did not win, pride radiated from every nook and cranny of this place.

Cars’ side mirrors were clothed in socks depicting the flag; flags were draped over buildings; people pinned them to their lapels and special face makeup was made in the flag’s colours so citizens could adorn their faces with it. Citizens celebrated a country on the rise.

Remember the 1995 Rugby World Cup final hosted at Johannesburg’s Ellis Park Stadium between South Africa and New Zealand? At the match’s end President Nelson Mandela, sporting a number 6 Springbok jersey, enthusiastically presented the Cup to South African captain François Pienaar, to wild applause from the crowd.

The government can ask learners to carry a flag on their uniforms when it has fixed the system so each one gets an education to be proud of. Then, it won’t be necessary to instruct them to display the flag - they will want to do so.

Brand South Africa has suffered seriously this past decade. Remember the phrase “Proudly South African” we once embraced, when we were an example to the world - the miracle nation? South African travellers would proudly pull out their passports at international borders. Today, South Africans are a little ashamed.

Our blundering, corrupt president recently complained in Parliament that he was embarrassed when travelling internationally when diplomats of other countries asked him what on earth was going on as our Parliament has degenerated into a circus.

EFF parliamentarians are physically thrown out by the Speaker’s heavy-handed security personnel and other parties walk out in disgust rather than listen to speeches by a president who has violated the Constitution and stashed away taxpayers’ money for his own benefit.

Rather, it is the citizens of this beautiful country who are ashamed at it plummeting from the rainbow nation dream during Mandela’s era, to the confused, increasingly violent and racist country it has become under Jacob Zuma and the ANC.

During apartheid, South Africans were hesitant to show their passports overseas because of the racist system at home. The country was the world’s pariah. Today, as we head towards becoming a failed state that cannot even educate its children, Lesufi’s gesture that they should wear the

flag on their uniforms, makes the country a laughing stock. Fascist countries enforce patriotism on citizens.

True South African patriotism today means the nation - including Jewish South Africans, who are scarce in formal politics, but wield significant power in business, the professions and the arts - must mobilise and demand the government do its job, so we can be naturally patriotic.

It will probably take throwing them out and replacing them with a government serious about building a better society. When we have earned it, we will happily and proudly show our flag.

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

EFF parliamentarians are physically thrown out by heavy-handed security personnel and other parties walk out in disgust rather than listen to speeches by a president who has violated the Constitution...

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Community Voices

Doubts over feasibility of proposed 21-year drinking age limit

SUZANNE BELLING

South Africa’s Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, has advocated that the legal age for drinking alcohol be increased from 18 to 21, in light of “irresponsible and excessive” drinking.

Addressing a recent World Health Organisation meeting in Boksburg, the minister revealed that he would like to see a complete ban on drinking before driving, also the banning of alcohol advertising and a review of alcohol pricing.

The SA Jewish Report posed the question of excessive drinking - especially among youth - to several people in the Jewish community.



Pinchas Shiel, a fulltime clinical psychologist, who is co-director of the Chabad Addiction Recovery Centre,

feels Motsoaledi’s proposed measure in upping the legal age of alcohol consumers to 21 “will not make a difference”.

Although he no longer works with teenage drinkers, only adults, he said he had in the past come across adolescents drinking in excess, “but they were not necessarily addicts. However, exposure to alcohol can make them unsafe and vulnerable to car crashes because when they start experimenting and have one or two drinks, they eventually become inured to alcohol and that’s when they are really in trouble”.

Shiel says that youth should be educated about the dangers of drinking and had to have this background to make choices. “When you talk to your kids and have a good relationship with them, we can trust adolescents to make good choices.”

Rabbi Yossy Goldman, senior rabbi of the Sydenham-Highlands North Hebrew Congregation, said: “I’m not sure if changing the legal age will alter anything in terms of our societal trends. Will they also change the voting age



from 18 to 21? Those who find ways around the law will, no doubt, continue to do so.”

He added that “at the end of the day it is up to parents - and to a lesser degree, educators - to guide, teach, and control their children and students. Kiddush and the four cups of wine have been staples of Jewish home life for millennia and have not resulted in any striking excess or tendency towards alcoholism.”

Needing bouncers at barmitzvahs to control our youngsters is a new and sad phenomenon, he said.

“At our shul we have had many special events where alcohol was served and we have taken the strictest precautions to ensure that no one under age has access. Thank G-d, the exception has been an absolute rarity.”

It is not up to the minister

to try and control drinking among youth, says Rabbi Goldman. He will not make it happen but “mothers, fathers, and teachers will”.



Gina Isaacman (19) said it was good that the minister was trying to solve the problem, which she had witnessed firsthand.

“Young people will still make fake IDs and continue to “drink to the extent that they don’t recognise anyone anymore. I think is disgusting.”

Although over the present legal age, Gina does not touch alcohol.

She specifically referred to underage children who went overboard at barmitzvahs. “Some of them are between 12 and 13. In fact one 15-year-old boasted how much he had been drinking. I have known these under-age children to land up in hospital because of drinking too much.

“I blame it on the parents. They know there is going to be alcohol [at a function] and I don’t think it should be allowed as it destroys the youngsters.”

She did not think alcohol for under-age teenagers should be legal - “but they can choose not to drink”.



Accountant and father of two young children, **Ronnie Itzikovitz**, feels that making 21 the legal drinking age is not going to make a difference.

“Eighteen is fine - you can get your driving licence or get married at that age.

“The problem is binge drinking - and this is universal. The only way to ensure this does not happen, is for parents, people holding functions and those running bars and clubs is to take control of the situation.”



Mother of two adult children, **Linda Kantor**, said she was fortunate her two children did not drink in their teens.

But she did not agree to increasing the legal age for alcohol consumption to 21.

“They can keep fake IDs, anyway. And although they are legally able to drive and vote, I still don’t think they are really responsible enough to control their alcohol intake.

“Drinks should not be served to kids - functions and bars should be supervised and for the youngsters, there should only be cooldrinks on the table.”

Kantor said she thought her children did not drink because she and her husband were not drinkers. He might have the odd whisky at a simcha but we don’t even keep alcohol in the house. For Kiddush, we do grape juice,” she said.



Asheigh Elad, who has two children of 21 and 18, feels there will always be under-age drinking because some parents do not obey the law relating to the minimum age to consume

alcohol. “No matter what age, if it’s 17 or 18, 21 or 25, there will often be a parent alongside somebody breaking the law. If the law says you are not allowed to drink under the age of 18, you are not allowed to break the law, even under your own roof and with the authority of a parent. Giving a child of 17 a drink is breaking the law.”

She said she did not believe in under-age drinking.

Elad told SA Jewish Report that a few years ago her son, who was under the legal age for drinking at the time, went to a barmitzvah with her and her husband. “

“The father of the barmitzvah boy offered him a drink and wanted to make him drunk. I said, ‘No.’”

She does not believe it will make any difference to raise the permitted age to drink alcohol to 21.



Doron Joffe, an 18-year-old matric pupil, agrees with increasing the age limit for alcohol to 21 “as there should be better regulations”. Also people of 21 are more mature.

As opposed to legally driving or getting married at 18, Joffe says alcohol is “unique as people often are not able to control themselves and get carried away”.

He says he has seen this at weddings, barmitzvahs and on Purim and Simchat Torah “when it is almost a tradition to get drunk”.

He feels, whether in a bar or during a simcha, it is the responsibility of the bartender or those handing out drinks to have control and stop the drinking of young people after two drinks.

“Teenagers also need to take responsibility,” he said.



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World News in Brief

Twitter campaign for Independence Day elicits harsh response

JERUSALEM - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's live chat on Twitter for Yom Ha'atzmaut, elicited a barrage of criticism of the Israeli leader.

Most accusations hurled at the prime minister under the #AskNetanyahu hashtag called Israel an “apartheid” or “terrorist” state, with questions such as “When will Israel stop murdering children?” and “When are you going to end illegal settlement on West Bank & end the occupation of Palestinian land?”

Other questions and comments focused on the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and the Iranian nuclear threat.

On a lighter but still critical note, one Twitter user asked Netanyahu: “Who do you identify with the most: Voldemort, Darth Vader or Hannibal Lecter?” Another user featured Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in his criticism of Netanyahu, tweeting: “Is it public executions of children that makes Israel a beacon of democracy? #AskNetanyahu #AskClinton.” (JNS.org)



Deputies President Arkush, disappointed with Corbyn

LONDON - British Board of Deputies president Jonathan Arkush, has said he is disappointed at the “less than whole-hearted” support of the Labour leader when it came to combating anti-Semitism.

Arkush said at the Board plenary on Sunday: “It is time Jeremy Corbyn made clear his genuine support, instead of giving the impression he is being forced to do so by the media.”

He said he welcomed the launch of an enquiry into anti-Semitism but was “disappointed” overall with Corbyn’s approach.

The inquiry is led by Shami Chakrabarti, former head of campaign group Liberty, which will look into claims of anti-Semitism among Labour Party members.

Labour’s inquiry was launched after several members of the party were disciplined for anti-Semitic comments, culminating in the suspension of Ken Livingstone, a member of the party’s National Executive Committee, for claiming that Hitler had been a supporter of Zionism.

Arkush urged the Labour leader to reassure the community that meetings he had held with Holocaust deniers and anti-Semites were “inappropriate” and “would not be holding them again”. - Jewish Chronicle, London

Brother furious as sister inherits double what he got

LONDON - An accountant has lost a battle with his sister over a secret £3 million fund set up by their Jewish father in case there was another Holocaust.

Alan Hamilton told the High Court he was furious when his sister Carolyn inherited twice as much money as he was from the fund.

But a judge has rejected his claims, ruling the fund was set up legitimately before Hamilton’s death in 2007, and did not constitute part of his estate to be divided equally.

Their father David, who arrived in Britain as a refugee from the Nazis, established the fund out of fear of there being another Holocaust.

In a bid to inherit more of the fortune made by their father, Alan claimed it had been hidden offshore to evade tax.

His sister Carolyn, who is a children’s rights lawyer and Unicef adviser who lives in north London, told the court: “To rip apart a family for this sake is incredibly sad.

“[My father] did not believe Jews could ever be really safe and, with money in a neutral country he could access, he would be able to save his family, if necessary.”

Mr Justice Henderson ruled Alan, who lives in the United States, would keep his share of £1 million of the fund while his sister will retain about £2,2 million. - Jewish Chronicle, London

University vice-chancellor takes a stand on anti-Semitism

SYDNEY - Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney Dr Michael Spence has asserted that anti-Semitic behaviour is not acceptable on campus, and insisted the university wants to take a strong stand against it.

Speaking to The Australian Jewish News, following a series of incidents in recent years that have left Jewish students feeling uneasy, Spence said university should be a place where “everybody is safe and free to discuss ideas”, and where students have confidence people will “engage in debate about their ideas, but not in

behaviour that’s denigrating of them personally.

“We have repeatedly expressed the fact that anti-Semitic behaviour is not acceptable on campus,” he said.

“One is always going to have people who engage in hateful behaviour of one kind or another. What I want to do is empower the great body of students and staff to know how to deal with and fight against that.”

The university is investing significantly in the creation of a national centre for cultural competence and increasing the cultural competence of its staff and students. Cultural competence programmes for staff have already started, and Spence said the feedback from that was “extremely positive”.

On the topic of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel, Spence reiterated that “BDS is not university policy”. - Australian Jewish News

First all-women mission to Israel led by Australia’s first lady

SYDNEY - The first all-women Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce (AICC) mission to Israel is being led this week by Lucy Turnbull, Australia’s first lady and a respected company director in her own right.

Among the 36 participants are leading businesswomen Lisa Sonnabend, chief operating officer of Macquarie Capital; Belinda Hutchinson, chancellor of the University of Sydney; and Dr Annabelle Bennet, former justice of the Federal Court of Australia.

Alongside Turnbull, the trip is being led by AICC Chairman Jillian Segal. – Australian Jewish News

Recyclable cardboard leads to unusual transportation

JERUSALEM - Izhar Gafni is crazy about bikes - he makes them, fixes them and rides them. But three engineer friends thought the chain had really slipped from the gears when Gafni suggested crafting a cheap and environmentally friendly bicycle out of cardboard.

He had been inspired while working in California on a pomegranate project, and one day saw a car outside a bicycle shop sporting a wood-frame boat with a cardboard cover.

Gafni started testing and building, refusing to accept the engineers’ opinion that the project would never work. Israelis, he reminded them, “did impossible things with agriculture, with military, with hi-tech and science. I thought, if they can do it, I can do it.”

Gafni has built six prototypes of 100 per cent recyclable materials, 95 per cent of it from strong cardboard. He sees it as a possible urban environmental project or perhaps as a mode of transportation for schoolchildren in Africa. He is hoping the worldwide publicity for his project will win his cardboard bikes corporate or governmental sponsors. - Israel 21c

International Indian community has Jewish roots, study shows

TEL AVIV - A scientific study has found genetic evidence of claims that the Bene Israel, a community in western India, has Jewish roots.

One scientific journal, analysed the genomes of 18 Bene Israel community members and found that the Bene Israel had significant Jewish and Indian ancestry.

According to Bene Israel tradition, the community descended from a handful of Jewish shipwreck survivors on the Indian coast up to 2 000 years ago.

The Bene Israel live in Konkan, a region on India’s west coast. Only a few thousand remain in India today from a community that once numbered as many as 20 000. Many community members have immigrated to Israel since its establishment in 1948.

“Beyond vague oral history and speculations, there has been no independent support for Bene Israel claims of Jewish ancestry, claims that have remained shrouded in legend,” said Yedael Waldman, the study’s first author, according to a news release.

“We found that while Bene Israel individu-

als genetically resemble local Indian populations, they constitute a clearly separated and unique population in India.”

The study was based on data from the Jewish HapMap project at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, which studies the genetic history of Jewish Diaspora communities. It was done in conjunction with Cornell University and Albert Einstein College. - Canadian Jewish News

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Jewish communal campus nestles snugly next to Parliament



BARBARIC YAWP

David Saks

During the 2014 Gaza conflict (when social media was awash with unbridled anti-Semitic invective and incidents of verbal harassment and intimidation against community members was at its highest level in decades), I received a rather creepy phone call from someone claiming to be a Member of Parliament from one of the opposition parties.

Ostensibly acting as a friend of South African Jewry, the caller warned that in view of Israel's actions in Gaza, there was mounting feeling among his colleagues that having a Jewish community centre in such close proximity to Parliament was not appropriate.

Pressure was in fact growing, he said, for something to be done to remedy the situation. His question was: what could people like him do to counter these opinions if and when the question was formally raised.

Today's bustling Jewish communal campus on Hatfield Street is indeed located close to the Houses of Parliament - only a couple of hundred metres away, and on the same road. Part of Parliament itself includes the area once occupied by the first synagogue in the city - in southern Africa, in fact.

The community relocated to a larger building in 1863 - it today houses the SA Jewish Museum. Alongside it is the magnificent Great Synagogue (the "Gardens Shul") that replaced it in 1905.

Since then, further Jewish installations have been added to the area, including the Jacob Gitlin Judaica Library, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and a popular kosher restaurant, Café Riteve (named after the home shtetl of the family of Mendel Kaplan, whose vision and generosity was decisive in bringing this remarkably successful Jewish communal centre into being).

The land, located alongside the Parliamentary Gardens, has been in the possession of the Jewish community for over 150 years. Just over the road, meanwhile, is the Cape Town Jewish Centre - the equivalent of Beyachad in Johannesburg - which houses the regional branches of the SAJBD, SAZE, IUA-UCF and various other organisations. Presumably, their proximity to Parliament was likewise regarded as a problem.

The very idea of regarding Jews as being so contaminated by the "crimes" of their brethren abroad as to make it desirable for their

institutions to be removed from the vicinity of Parliament's hallowed portals, was shocking enough. What got to me even more, though, was my caller's scoffing response to my pointing out that the land in question belonged to Cape Town Jewry. The inference was that Jews (and, presumably, all other whites) had no ownership rights, certainly not when it came to land, and that "the people" could take it away from them anytime they chose.

Unusually for me (I'm a big sweetie-pie deep down), I ended up putting the phone down on the supposed "concerned MP", whoever he really was. It occurred to me as I sat and seethed over the exchange that so far as the Western Cape was concerned, the "whites stole our land" canard is actually nonsense.

The indigenous Khoisan people can't be said to exist any longer as a distinctive entity, and blacks, that is, those belonging to the broader Nguni group who migrated southwards from Central Africa, are in reality relative newcomers in the region.

Whites, by contrast, are approaching their fourth century of continuous settlement in the province. This lends an additional dimension of irony to the triumphant burning of "racist white art" at UCT by "transformation activists" (the safest term I can think of).

Yet before anyone feels inclined to indulge in feelings of white victimhood, maybe check out the comments on the Twitter account of Gillian Schutte, the lady who exposed the racist musing of (soon to be ex-) Justice Mabel Jansen. The bile and bitterness that comes through from whites as unreconciled as ever to black majority rule, is something to behold. There are even attempts to portray Schutte as a rabid anti-Semite by attributing to her what appear to be rather obviously forged comments. There is, of course, no actual threat to Cape Town Jewry's Hatfield Street campus. Last week, I spent a pleasant couple of days there working on the 175th anniversary celebrations of the SA Jewish community. I even came to like Capetonians a little more!

I do have what appears to be a perennial problem when visiting the Mother City, though, namely which way is north when it comes to davening. In Johannesburg, it's easy - locate the Hillbrow tower and turn around.

Durban is also no problem - face the ocean and turn left. In Cape Town, however, the twists and turns of the coastline and multiple directions faced by that great all-embracing mountain, leave one's head spinning. Halevai, that should be the only problem we have to deal with in these times.

A well-deserved honorary doctorate for Esmé Berman



Photo: Olive Hassall

Honorary doctorate... Esmé Berman.

SUZANNE BELLING

Art historian of note, teacher and author Esmé Berman (86) (pictured) was honoured recently for a lifetime of work on South African art and artists, when she was awarded an honorary doctorate of literature at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Professor Adam Habib, vice-chancellor and principal of the university, said the doctorate was in recognition of her "remarkable achievements and invaluable contribution to the discipline of the arts".

Born in South Africa, Berman (formerly Cohen) holds strong philosophical views on the value of the arts. She told Jewish Report: "I consider the liberal arts fundamental to a healthy society. They make us human and give us the ability to appreciate things on a higher level."

Berman, who has never practised as an artist, but has lectured, researched and written extensively on the subject, is one the foremost art authorities in the country.

Educated at the Johannesburg Girls' High School in Barnato Park, she went on to study for a BA fine arts at Wits.

"As I didn't want to be an artist, I took an honours degree in psychology, as education and art made a fine combination."

In 1970, she wrote "Art and Artists of South Africa", which has become the standard work in the field and was published in three editions over the past 40 years.

She has also authored almost a dozen other books on art, including "The Story of South African Painting" (1975) and "Painting in South Africa" (1993).

She also collaborated with Professor Karel Nel on the two-volume "Alexis Preller - A Visual Biography", published in 2009.

Her most recent works include four books on individual artists: Walter Battiss, Irma Stern, Maggie Laubser and JH Pierneef, between 2012 and 2015.

She has also written on other subjects, as diverse as "Breakfast with the Bicycle Club", a children's book, "Chester Chim" and a

textbook for teachers, "Come in, Creative Teacher".

She married Hi Berman in 1952 and had three children David (who lives in Dallas), Russell, who was tragically killed in a motor accident at the age of 18 in 1973, and Kathy, who lives near her mother. Berman has two grandchildren.

The Bermans were mayor and mayoress of Sandton in 1977-1978, but were uncomfortable with apartheid South Africa,

They moved to Los Angeles 10 years later, where they lived for 16 years.

"We were just not comfortable about being in South Africa at the time," she said.

They returned in time to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary back in South Africa, just two weeks before Hi, a successful businessman, died.

During their time in LA, she continued to teach and lectured at UCLA and elsewhere.

She has never been a fulltime lecturer, although she has taught at tertiary institutions since the age of 21, including at Wits, and the Hebrew Seminary, where she lectured in creative education. She also opened the first art centre in Johannesburg.

She has broadcast on radio and TV, including a personal television series in 1984 and a radio series in 1978, in addition to regular weekly radio broadcasts in the '60s on arts review programmes.

Berman has written film scripts, as well as narrating and directing audiovisual and film productions.

She is a long-standing member of the Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art and has acted as art adviser and consultant to several organisations.

As if her career was not enough, Berman held several voluntary positions, including a two-year presidency of Sorooptimist International of Johannesburg and the chairmanship of the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Living among her rich art collection in her Morningside townhouse, Berman continues with her writing and active lifestyle, undaunted by the affliction of Parkinson's Disease.

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Jacob sheep may soon safely graze in the Golan Heights



Jenna and Gil Lewinsky with some of their Jacob sheep. The couple will soon send some of the animals to Israel, where the breed originated.

ANT KATZ

A South African-born Israeli woman, Jenna Lewinsky, now living with her husband in Canada, is behind a move to repatriate Jacob sheep, the world’s oldest and oddest breed, from Canada to Israel.

The dappled, goat-like sheep are biblically significant as Genesis (30:32) states that Jacob received speckled and spotted sheep as wages from his father-in-law Laban.

The Lewinsky couple have been working for years to re-establish the breed of sheep herded by biblical patriarch Jacob in Israel and today have the largest flock in Canada – of about 100. According to a Reuters report, it was the wool from Jacob’s sheep that was used to make Joseph’s famous multi-coloured coat, but the breed became extinct in Israel almost 200

years ago.

However, their biggest frustration, says Jenna, has been the reluctance of the Israeli government to allow cattle from Canada into the Holy Land. The couple live near Vancouver, on the Pacific coast of Canada. The project was initially opposed by Israel’s agriculture ministry, say the Lewinskys, because Canada is not on a list approved for sheep imports.

“It should be the national animal of the Jewish people,” Jenna says. “It would be a very important and historic moment when the sheep return after basically 2 000 years.”

Only about 5 000 Jacob sheep still exist in the world. The breed has a distinctive look due to its four horns - two large and curved ones on the top of the head and another two smaller ones on the sides of the face. It enjoys “pure-bred” status and has had no interbreeding

with other sheep for thousands of years.

The effort to send 130 Jacob sheep to the Golan Heights has been stymied by red tape between the two countries for a long time.

But in 2015, Israel’s embassy in Canada facilitated dialogue

between the couple and the ministry. When the ambassador visited Israel and promoted the idea, says embassy spokesman Eitan Weiss, he met with the ministry which issued a letter of recommendation.

Late in 2015 Israel’s agriculture ministry advised the embassy in Canada of its changed stance, and the export/import arrangements are now underway, says Jenna.

As the project gained steam, more Israeli officials took interest. Jenna says that Israel’s Ambassador to Canada Rafael Barak, visited their British Columbia farm and even got to witness a lamb being born.

The Lewinskys hope that the sheep, destined for a farm in the Golan Heights, would provide educational opportunities and draw interest to the biblical heritage and will be grazing the grass of their ancestors sometime this year.

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World News in Brief

Israeli military introduces more advanced UAV for brigade commanders

JERUSALEM - The Israel Defence Forces is currently in the process of incorporating the Skylark 20 miniature tactical unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), and intends to make it available to commanders on the brigade level.

The Skylark 20, manufactured by Elbit Systems, is the next generation of the Skylark 10, which has been available to battalion commanders.

The upgraded model, earmarked for use by brigade commanders, is capable of staying in the air longer with a longer range and can operate in difficult weather conditions.

Unlike the previous model of the Skylark, which was capable of staying in the air for just two hours at a range of 19 kilometres, the Skylark 20, designed for brigade commanders, has twice the range and can fly for six hours. The IDF has acquired three Skylark 20 systems, which will likely become operational toward the end 2016 and the beginning of 2017. (JNS.org)

Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Board’s stance ‘reasonable, practical’

Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

For the last few years, the Board has always had at least one - and usually several - cases of anti-Semitic hate speech at the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). This is not so much due to an upsurge in anti-Semitism as to the fact that the process of finalising a complaint, is inevitably a lengthy one.

In the interim, it is inevitable that further incidents will have occurred, necessitating the laying of additional complaints. In light of the mounting concern in our society over the prevalence of hate speech and the need to find more effective ways to deal with it, it is imperative that institutions like the SAHRC are given additional powers and resources to assist them in fulfilling their mandates.

In terms of how the SAHRC operates, provision is made for parties to a dispute to come together, with the Commission acting in a facilitating capacity, with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

Only in the event of such a process either not being practically possible or failing to achieve an agreement, will the SAHRC consider the merits of the complaint and make a ruling.

Last week the Board took part in a conciliation process concerning a complaint we laid just over a year ago, which resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

The individual concerned acknowledged that the comments he had made were racist and offensive and expressed his sincere regret for this. A formal letter of apology was

subsequently received, which we have accepted. The SAHRC will issue a statement on the facts of the case and its outcome.

In cases where the offending party clearly shows no remorse, nor a willingness to admit or acknowledge any wrongdoing, it becomes necessary for the Board to ensure the SAHRC adjudicates and issues a ruling.

Our preference, however, is always for our disputes to be resolved through conciliation. This has the benefit of allowing us the opportunity to confront the accused face to face and hopefully convince and educate him or her of the wrongfulness of his or her actions; handing matters over to a judicial tribunal is for us always a last resort.

What is true in terms of dealing with anti-Semitic incidents is perhaps even more so when it comes to resolving our own intra-communal disputes. We are currently wrestling with a particularly divisive issue, the question of whether or not women solo singers should be part of future Yom Hashoah ceremonies.

This is a question on which there are strongly-held opinions on all sides, which ought to be resolved through discussion and engagement. Unfortunately, we are seeing instead a tendency, both within and without the community, to rush to judgement without knowing the facts.

The Board believes that the stance it has taken is both reasonable and practical and that, if need be, will be defensible in court. However, it would be a sad day if this matter were to end up in such a forum, rather than being dealt with by our own community.

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

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

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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.

WHICH VERSION OF ‘REALITY’ DO YOU ADHERE TO?

Depression and anxiety are common among the Jewish population. This is hardly surprising given our difficult history. Yet it has been a spectacular ride - a tiny nation which has outlasted almost all others and contributed so much!

By focusing only on the worst, we tend to panic and overreact. When the traffic lights are not working we say that the whole country is falling apart!

When Moody’s was reviewing our credit rating, many economists said that a downgrading was inevitable and the value of the rand plummeted. Yet there was no downgrade!

When the lights went out, many were unable to see light at the end of the tunnel and the emigration figures peaked, even if Eskom is now seemingly on top of things.

Pessimists often warn us to be realistic. Yet their version of reality is not always real; it is often bleakly unrealistic.

THROUGH THE AGES WOMEN SANG IN JOY AND IN SORROW AT MIXED AUDIENCES

In the last 15 years, changes were introduced that steered us away from the golden route of tolerance. It is questionable if it is contributing to the unification of the community. To many it creates deep pain and anger and it surely plays into the hands of our adversaries.

Reminding people of our ongoing, perhaps forgotten tradition, may help to find the way.

In extreme events like death, and marriage and in times of joy, women always halachically took part.

The “Mekonenot”, the professional weepers at funerals, had a place in the funeral and preparation of it throughout the generations. At least one woman and sometimes more than one, would mourn the passing of the deceased for his/her honour.

It is mentioned in the bible in Jeremiah 9, 16: “Thus said the G-d of hosts: Consider, and call for the ‘Mekonenot’ mourning women, that they may come; and send for the wise women, that they may come.”

In the Talmud Ketubot 7, 4 it is said: “Even a poor [dead] from Israel will not have less than two flutes and one woman weeper.”

In the Yerusalmi Talmud Brachot 22, chapter 3, halacha A, gemorrah 3, it is said: “...and the dead matters, to bring him a coffin and shroud flutes and women weepers.”

I would suggest to study this ancient ruling that is still in force, to find a halachic way to solve the Yom Hashoah exclusions. Women always took

CHELM IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN JOHANNESBURG

About 16 years ago I was as usual seated at my son’s table on a Friday evening. Also present was my daughter-in-law, my grandchildren and another guest, a young man.

My son explained to the guest that we shouldn’t have tea on Shabbat because taking out the tea bag from the glass of hot water could be one of the 39 prohibited works on Shabbat. They discussed the issue in all seriousness while I listened with astonishment.

I thought to myself: this is Chelm in Johannesburg in the year 2000! Chelm, synonymous with fools, is the famous town in Jewish folklore. It is a small shtetl in Eastern Europe, near the border with Ukraine, made famous by a Yiddish writer

Unfortunately pessimism is contagious and also makes other people miserable.

When we cannot see light at the end of the tunnel we are unlikely to bother trying to get out of the tunnel - or we might make a half-hearted attempt without doing what it takes to resolve the darkness.

As Churchill said: “A pessimist will find a problem with every solution, while an optimist will find a solution in every problem.”

It is also said that necessity is the mother of invention. When we are in trouble or in the most need, we often dig deep to find the best and most creative solutions. Never let a good crisis go to waste! After all, it is our Divine mission to be a light unto the nations.

Martin Zagnoev
Sunningdale Ridge, Johannesburg

part in funeral processions as the ones who sang sad tunes for the honour of the dead. With over six million dead, there is nothing immodest in this communal funeral; you may perhaps find that even our sages agreed.

Let’s work together to find the tolerant communal voice.

Another forgotten custom angle is the Yemenite Henna ceremony. In Israel a few years ago I was invited to such a ceremony before the wedding in a Yemenite village in Israel. The ceremony was an illuminating experience and a discovery for me. The bride-to-be was dressed with the customary golden dress and had two different golden headgears like a queen. The groom also wore a golden outfit.

There was one woman singer who was invited especially for that kind of religious ceremony. She sang ancient songs and her role seems to have passed from mother to daughter. And yes, there were men in the audience. This custom dates from time immemorial and it felt respectable and is undoubtedly a very old tradition.

It is a ceremony to celebrate happiness and at a happy event we all recite: “Kol sason vekol simcha, kol hatan vekol kala” (Jeremia 33, 11). “The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride.”

Naomi Dinur
Johannesburg

who collected all the foibles and fables in a book.

It is also said of this shtetl that when Hashem sent an angel with a sack of foolish souls to be distributed all over the world, he tripped and spilled them all in one place!

Now, in the year 2016, I am reminded that Chelm is alive and well in Johannesburg; we are having a big public debate about whether a woman should be allowed to sing in front of a mixed audience [not men only]. It looks like we don’t have more important issues to discuss. I first laughed - and then became sad.

Yossi Bogacz
Highlands North, Johannesburg

YOM HASHOAH: RABBI MARGOLIS WRITES OPEN LETTER TO CHIEF RABBI GOLDSTEIN

Dear Chief Rabbi,

We have over the years met and spoken on several occasions, I have also had the opportunity of hearing you speak at various community events. It is clear to me that you are a deep thinker, an inspirational orator and an incredibly committed human being.

I have on most occasions certainly found myself nodding in agreement with what you’ve been saying. I read carefully your “open communication” on this year’s Yom Hashoah and after deep thought felt strongly to write this. I do so (knowing that we have a very serious disagreement on this point) and I do so with respect to you and your office.

It is evident from your communication, that this matter (Kol Isha) concerns you greatly. In this (while we find ourselves on opposite ends) we share a commonality of great concern. We (SACRED), I give you every assurance, are not using the day to “score political points”. We are, though, specifically drawing attention to this day, precisely because it aligns with such precision, and such importance - to the “principal and grave dangers of discrimination” - in any of its forms.

As you so correctly pointed out: “Hitler did not care if a Jew was a man or woman, Reform or Orthodox.” In his mind, a Jew was a Jew, and that alone licensed him to discriminate. If one allows, condones or encourages “discrimination” in any form, (even if subtle at first) it most often leads straight down a slippery slope.

I often wonder why we as Jews were, and to this day are, continually discriminated against, with the sheer force that we are?

Sometimes in a quiet moment I am reminded of an ancient Jewish sect that separated themselves from those of their time.

They lived on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, and lived ostensibly by seven laws, the first of which is very well known: “Like attracts like” - or behave to someone the way in which you’d expect them to behave towards you.

As their laws continue, they become more subtle, but nonetheless powerful. I shall only draw your attention to the next, or second of their laws which says: “You will attract to you that which you judge” - that to say if you are an honest person, but hold a deep-seated judgement (discrimination) against dishonest people - you will attract dishonest people to you.

It appears on the surface as a contradiction to the first law, but some deeper thought will show that it is actually not.

If we as a nation judge (discriminate) against one another (to the extent that we do, Ashkenazi/Sephardi/Reform/Orthodox/man/woman etc) then as a nation, we will attract this to ourselves - which we do.

Above all, this (discrimination) is man-made, that is to say (while you are respected as my senior in years/experience and stature etc). Still, as one rabbi to another, you are well aware that nowhere in our Torah does G-d (or any other sage) say that a woman cannot sing in front of a man. Nowhere - what comes after is “interpretation” and rest assured such “interpretation” was done by man or more - so a group of men.

You say that “Kola isha” is to protect me - and there may have been an element of truth to that many years ago - but today it is to portray us as “potential victims” which I am not.

Today, instead of moving forward, we have taken a giant step backwards; even your predecessor Rabbi Cyril Harris had no issue listening to a woman sing, and so too his predecessors?

Lastly, two of the speeches really moved most anyone seated there; Veronica Philipps and as well German Ambassador Walter Lindner. I shudder to imagine being in his shoes, having to stand up there straight after Veronica’s tremendously moving speech, but he did. He came and he spoke to us - he was there.

I look at the Germany of today (whom the ambassador represents) and marvel at such a phenomenal success story.

I remember too, even though I was a young daughter of the Soviet Union, hearing President Ronald Reagan saying to my President (Gorbachev): “Mr President, the wall must come down, it must come down.”

Germany then healed from within - East and West became one Germany - became such an incredible success story. Chief Rabbi Goldstein, the discrimination must come to an end - it must end!

With greatest respect,

Rabbi Julia Margolis
Chairman, SACRED

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

YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION NO EVENT FOR SEXUAL AROUSAL

I’m writing about the brouhaha regarding women singing at Jewish religious events.

Why do Jews pray? Is it to make a political statement? Is it to commemorate their families and friends who are no more?

Every year I have heard Jews worship on Yom Hashoah. Survivors, including myself, have been main speakers. It is an intensely emotional experience, whether one is frum or not. Even the yearly candle-lighting makes one pause.

It provokes feelings and memories whether at West Park Cemetery or in one’s home - especially for a survivor who has lost his or her nearest and dearest, who after 76 years still is, or ought to be, under treatment for the after-effects.

It is very meaningful and emotional for us to hear and see Jews of any gender singing and commemorating after the “Final Solution”. Considering the unfathomable tragedy of the Shoah, the idea that men can find time for sexual arousal through hearing women’s voices in song and prayer on such an occasion, is not a religious consideration but is blasphemy!

Such men do not deserve our consideration; they can abstain or take tranquilisers. Surely women merit prior empathy then, when after all those who have perished are often still part of living memory?

Don Krausz
Chairman, Association of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg

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For invigorated UJW it’s full steam ahead in 2016



Lynette Saltzman of the Dis-Chem Foundation, with Diane Levine, outgoing chairman of UJW.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

At the Union of Jewish Women Johannesburg’s 84th Annual General Meeting on May 10, outgoing Chairman Diane Levine gave a comprehensive overview of the myriad successful UJW projects, such as Kosher Mobile Meals, the House and Garden Circle, the Adult Education Programme, the Sewing School, the Granny-Headed Households Feeding Scheme, Alexandra Aftercare, as well as other feedings schemes.

Levine thanked the volunteers and donors who enabled the UJW to make these projects and functions such a success. Levine, who has served as chairman of the UJW for the last three and a half years, announced her resignation from the chair. Levine’s successor hasn’t been elected yet.

The executive committee consists of Elaine Katz (Treasurer); Diane Levine (outreach projects, fundraising); Bev Cohen (Jewish Community Fund, fundraising and Bobba Zaida Trip); Estelle Cline (JCF, Kosher Mobile Meals); Phyllis Radford (Adult Education Division); Phyllis Seligman (Helen Suzman branch - crisis projects); Sivea Stein (Pretoria branch); Leora Berger (fundraising, outreach projects); Shirley Ancer (Kosher Mobile Meals, Lena Segal Linksfield branch); Helen Slavin (House and Garden Circle); Lisette Datnow (Do Good and Have Fun branch, new member); and Jade Weiner (Do Good and Have Fun branch, fundraising, new member).

Executive committee members will continue to work on their respective portfolios and the Johannesburg branch has appointed Cindy Kree as its first executive director. She is charged with responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation.

The UJW’s upcoming events and projects hold the promise of an exceptional and

exciting year ahead, with a soon-to-be launched new service to the Jewish community.

As life expectancy increases, the number of people suffering from memory loss also increases. A new memory stimulation group will commence at the beginning of June. This year Mandela Day will be bigger than ever. A national campaign - “Catch the Cavity” - will focus on improving dental care by distributing toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Levine in her report reflected on how times have changed and that so too has the UJW. The organisation has grown and is operating with full- and part-time staff members who ensure its successful running.

Bringing greetings from the SAZF, Nicci Raz saluted the UJW for the extensive work it does and thanked the organisation for the support it has given to the SA Zionist Federation.

Wendy Kahn brought greetings on behalf of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and mentioned how appropriate it was that the Dis-Chem Foundation’s Lynette Saltzman had been invited to speak on this occasion.

WIZO’s Andrea Wainer spoke on behalf of all the other Jewish women’s organisations and congratulated the UJW on its achievements.

Saltzman gave them an insight into the work of the Dis-Chem Foundation - how it started and the impact it is making on so many South African lives today. She mentioned that the Foundation is also one of the main sponsors of the UJW’s projects.

Yom Hazikaron: Jews all over the world vow never to forget the fallen

DAVID SAKS

The Sol Liebgott Hall on the Yeshiva College campus in Johannesburg was again packed to capacity at last week’s Yom Hazikaron ceremony in memory of Israel’s fallen soldiers. Those present were called upon to remember not only those who had lost their lives in defence of the Jewish state, but also their families and loved ones, people for whom, as Israel Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk put it, every day was memorial day.

On a day such as this, the stand-out emotion for those who had not been called upon to pay such a heavy price, could only be a sense of inadequacy, said Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein. All that those in the Diaspora could do was stand in awe and admiration of what the brave soldiers of the IDF had achieved and sacrificed and in complete solidarity with the people of Israel.

For those who had to bear the continual burden of grief and loss, the message was that the Jewish people everywhere were with them in their pain.

“We are not a people of war. We fight, without shame or apology, only when war is forced upon us,” said Lenk. Despite having had to continually fight for its very existence, he continued, Israel’s “boundless creativity” showed how its people were determined not just to survive, but to thrive.

The ongoing miracle of Israel’s success did not just happen, however. On this day in particular, it was incumbent on everyone to remember those who had risked, and often given their lives to make it possible.

For SAZF Chairman Ben Swartz, the penny regarding the realities of anti-Semitism only began to drop once he began living in Israel. It was there that he was brought face-to-face with the implacable hatred of its enemies, the devastation of Palestinian terrorism and the dishonesty and double-standards of the international community that looked the other way while taking every opportunity to condemn Israel.

This deep-seated hatred, he said, had been unmasked by the technological innovations of the web, and particularly social media. He had now come to realise that the reason why BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) and those with similar agendas crossed the line so easily into anti-Semitism, was because in actuality, there was no line.

Jews were no longer powerless, Swartz observed, but along with power came a great responsibility and a great cost.

“We must honour each and every soldier who has fallen fighting for us - each and every one of us, in this hall - to protect our right to life, to freedom and to be who we are,” he said.

Raphael Herbst, a member of the National Disaster Response Team of Magen David Adom, recounted the courage and self-sacrifice of his late uncle Shlomo, who inter alia served as a paramedic in the Yom Kippur War and ultimately died while defending his community in Ittamar against a terrorist attack in 2005.

Shlomo’s legacy to his family, he said, was how his example encapsulated the importance of sacrificing oneself to save lives. He had shown that how one lived one’s life, rather than merely trying to stay alive, was the ultimate purpose of existence.

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KD learners commemorate Yom Hazikaron, celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut

JOCELYN ANGEL

Over the course of last week, the learners of King David Linksfield were given the opportunity to truly experience their spiritual connection to the State of Israel.

Last week Wednesday the school commemorated Yom Hazikaron in a moving and memorable way. Under the guidance of Mazal Sacks, everybody as-sembled in the hall and the learners paid homage to the more than 23 000 Israeli soldiers who have given their lives in order to ensure the safety of the Jewish homeland.

The tributes given to these fallen soldiers included names, photographs and tributes from their par-ents and siblings. Those were extremely personal tributes, which made their deaths more real for the learners and touched the hearts of everyone.

The next day the school celebrated Yom

Ha’atzmaut in the most memorable way possible. More than 900 learners and staff members made their way to Victory Park at 07:30 where they took part in a record-breaking sandwich making attempt, during which over 35 000 sandwiches were made for underprivileged schools. The sandwiches were delivered to Alexandra township that afternoon by student leaders of the two King David high schools.

The sandwich-making marathon was followed by a magnificent Yom Ha’atzmaut ceremony on the King David Victory Park field, where the audience was treated to dances, songs and speeches. It was a wonderful morning of the King David schools coming together to celebrate Israel’s 68th year of independ-ence with all the passion and energy it deserves.

The week proved to be a triumph for the various student committees, who worked together to ensure the smooth running of both Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha’atzmaut.



Head girl Jessa Marx and head boy Daniel Gewer, speaking at the moving Yom Hazikaron ceremony.



KD Schools celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut with song and dance

HANNA BEN MOSHE

Last week Thursday King David Victory Park celebrated Israel’s 68th birthday with a concert in which learners from King David Linksfield, Sandton and Victory Park campuses joined in song and dance to celebrate this special day.

It was a very memorable occasion with hundreds of King Davidians and guests present on the Victory Park campus.

Yeshiva College’s Gidon Fox does well in bible quiz

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Yeshiva College is very proud of Gidon Fox for coming fourth in the inter-national finals of the International Bible Quiz (or Chidon Hatanch) which takes place annually in Israel and features contestants from all over the world, including Israelis.

Gidon’s fourth place is an unprecedented achievement for Yeshiva Col-lege. The competition is watched by millions of Israelis for whom it is a highlight on Yom Ha’atzmaut as well as and by other Jews abroad.

Forty-five countries participated and many VIPs were present, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; the minister of education; and the Chief Rabbi of Tzahal.

Yeshiva College also commends learners Ben Marks who participated in the quiz and Aaron Greenstein who came fourth in the Diaspora round of the quiz.



Gidon Fox with his certificate

Sydenham Pre-Primary goes to town with Yom Ha’atzmaut



Enjoying the festivities are Dovi Levy; Ricky Cohen; Chad Diamond; Samuel Licht; and Jaron Riesnik.

JENNY MILLER

Yom Ha’atzmaut is one of the high-lights at Sydenham Pre-Primary School as the little ones celebrate, commemo-rate and appreciate their beautiful Jewish heritage.

The school was a sea of blue and white as everyone dressed in the ap-propriate colours to honour the Israeli flag. The flag flew proudly and was a prominent symbol in the celebrations.

The learners marched into the garden to the beat of popular Israeli music and danced and sang Hebrew songs. This was followed by a picnic in the garden where they enjoyed eating pita bread with hummus and tachina. The celebration ended with the singing of Hatikvah.

Jelly syringes enforce the theme of healing

CHANI ZWICK

Rosh Chodesh Iyar was marked by the entire Torah Academy Primary School at a special assembly.

The letters of Iyar form the acronym for the words “Ani Hashem rofecha”, I am Hashem your healer.

The children recited the words of Torah and tefillah and gave tzedakah for refuah shleimah - a speedy recovery for all who are ill.

The children, with their teachers, completed all the tehillim which they recited.

Each learner was treated to jelly syringes to reinforce the theme of healing for the month of Iyar.

Pictured are the grade 3 children with their syringes.



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Israel comes alive in Minnie Bersohn celebrations

MICHELE VINOKUR

Yom Ha’atzmaut was celebrated at Minnie Bersohn Nursery School last week with lots of spirit. Each unit planned varied activities relating to different places in Israel.

In December, with the help of the SA Board of Jew-ish Education and the King David Schools’ Founda-tion, all the teachers from Minnie Bersohn, went on a learning trip to Israel.

The teachers used their Israel experience to teach the children in a fun and creative way about Israel and to make the beautiful homeland come alive on Yom Ha’atzmaut.



Jewish icons take a long stroll down Memory Lane

Show: Three’s A Show
Cast: Annabel Linder, Michael de Pinna, Keith Smith and Sam Sklair
Director: All the performers, plus Cary Cunningham, collaborated
Venue: Auto & General Theatre on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square, until May 28

REVIEWED BY PETER FELDMAN

Four shining lights on the South African entertainment scene combine their skills to deliver a show that’s pure nostalgia and a joy to behold. It’s simply staged and beautifully executed.

Annabel Linder, Michael de Pinna and musician Sam Sklair are three local Jewish musical icons. Together with Keith Smith, they demonstrate a style and versatility that would put younger performers to shame.

“Three’s a Show” is a treasure trove of memory-makers from the American songbook. The opening number, “There’s No Business Like Show Business”, sets the tone and each performer handles in superb fashion songs that suit their voices.

The stylish, diminutive Annabel not only brings a slice of comedy to the proceedings, but performs such gems as “Second Hand Rose”, “Is That All There Is” and “Play It Again Sam”, with clarinet flourishes from husband, Sam Sklair.

The imposing Michael de Pinna raises the roof with the Elvis gem “If I Can Dream”, the evergreen Johnny



Green jazz standard “Body and Soul” and then, linking with Keith, Van Morrison’s “Moon Dance”.

With snazzy dance steps and a polished style, Keith shows his vocal mettle with the “Razzle Dazzle”, “Luck Be A Lady Tonight” and “Some Day You’ll Want Me To Want You”.

By blending the emotive songs “I Believe”, and “You’ll Never Walk Alone”, Keith and the company bring the show to an emotional high and then Annabel and Sam add their special magic to “I’ve Got Rhythm”.

Annabel, an astute comedienne with a sharp tongue and a quick wit, told me that the idea was to bring

three solo performers together to “pay tribute to the great composers whose works are still being recorded and sung to this day”. They chose songs that they all loved, as well songs with a particular theme which, she described, as “great fun”>

Over the years, Annabel, the initial darling of cabaret, broke into serious theatre where she also left her mark. “I’ve done many cabarets for Our Parents Home and Sandringham Gardens. I have also donated to the Chevrah Kadisha and worked for nine months for ChaiFM.”

Annabel has played many Jewish

roles on stage, such as Mrs Beckoff in Torch Song Trilogy, the title character in Rose and an old Jewish woman in Tale of the Allergist’s Wife.

She received no fewer than 13 nominations for excellence in her craft, and was a winner in five. On TV she played a Jewish immigrant in “Heroes”.

“I thank G-d for Jewish women because they’ve given me award-winning work. They’re wondrous creatures!”

Husband Sam had just recorded a CD with Dan Selsick called Jewish Music - including klezmer - which is being sold worldwide.

Michael de Pinna comes from a theatrical background. His grandfather, Michael Dore, was a famous Russian violinist and one of the few Jews to be given the Freedom of Moscow because he played in the Russian Conservatoire. His mother Nadia, was one of Britain’s top big band vocalists.

What makes their show different, he said, is “that we are three performers who have all known each other for decades; there is a lot of love that we all hold for each other and we have a working history.

“Also, we are all products of producers Brickhill-Burke and were taught by Joan and Louis who really were at the top of the South African theatrical scene for so many years and who engineered many successful careers.”

Their song selection was governed by individual loves, likes, and choices. “Each of us is different, having our own vocal abilities and I, therefore, chose songs that I really love, which have meaning to me, and hopefully to the audience too.”

Michael has entertained the Jewish community over many years and has held shows at his home to raise funds for charity. His career has included numerous Jewish roles such as Fagin in Oliver, Abe in Beau Jeste, Nate in This Old Man Came Rolling Home, and Walter in Twilight of the Golds, for which he was nominated for a Naledi Theatre Award.

Community Column

A column of WIZO South Africa

Go-getter Adi Altschuler coming to South Africa next month

May has been a month of deep reflection, sobering commemoration and joyous celebration for the Jewish community of Israel and the Diaspora.

The stories of the Holocaust keep on coming and fill us with awe and humility. Yom Hazikaron is a chilling reminder of the heavy price Israelis continue to pay to keep the Jewish homeland secure and Yom Ha’atzmaut, which follows hard on the heels of Yom Hazikaron, fills us with hope and pride as we celebrate 68 years of statehood.

WIZO women have cried through the personal accounts and films of the Shoah, stood silently to contemplate the heroism of Israeli soldiers and victims of terror, and danced and sang in blue and white on Yom Ha’atzmaut. After all we are proud Zionists!

Unfortunately Israel is a country often in the news for its conflicts with its neighbours and for internal tensions, even between Israeli Jews themselves. But there’s a less immediately visible Israel that thrives even while the conflicts continue to flare - an Israel of hi-tech start-ups, a thriving cultural scene and a burgeoning social entrepreneurship movement.

Adi Altschuler, named by Time Magazine as “Leader of Tomorrow”, is part of that Israel and WIZO South Africa is proudly

This column paid for by WIZO SA



bringing her out to address audiences in all the major centres of the country in June this year.

She is an inspiring role model for young and old alike and is a Forbes Israel “30 under 30” honouree.

As an educational entrepreneur (managing Google for Education Israel) and leading social projects, she continues to empower teachers through technology and innovation to make learning meaningful and relevant.

And... she does more! At the age of 16, she founded the first and only youth movement called Krembo Wings for youngsters with special needs. Today the movement has 5 000 children members who all enjoy a better quality of life through

her vision.

We invite you to meet her and listen to how she has turned her vision into action. She is beautiful, dynamic and innovative and she is only 29!

Dates as follows:
Sunday, June 19 (Cape Town)
Wednesday, June 22 (Johannesburg)
Thursday, June 23 (Durban) and
Sunday, June 26 (Port Elizabeth).

• Call WIZO South Africa office for bookings at (021) 464-6753.



The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, SACRED and Bet David

invite you to a discussion between

Arthur Lenk & Walter Lindner
H.E. Ambassador of Israel in SA H.E. Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in SA



Dealing with a complicated past, creating a common future

Moderator, Tali Nates, Director, Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre

Date: Sunday, 29 May 2016
Time: 3 pm
Venue: Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre
1 Duncombe Rd (cnr Jan Smuts Avenue), Forest Town, Johannesburg

Booking essential as seating is limited.
Please contact shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or call (011) 6403100

Irma Stern’s ‘Basuto Hat’ painting on auction in SA

SUZANNE BELLING

It was a close and beautiful bonding between famous South African artist Irma Stern and her Johannesburg friend Freda Feldman, who had a penchant for hats and was painted by Stern wearing a mokorotlo in a world-renowned painting “Portrait of Freda Feldman in Basuto Hat”.

This painting has travelled from a collection in Australia, but has returned to South Africa for an auction by Strauss and Company at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg on May 23. The painting is expected to fetch between R5 000 000 and R7 000 000.

Although both these famous women (Feldman was the founder of ORT-Oze - now ORT - in South Africa in 1936) are no longer alive, their legacies and enduring friendship lives on in Stern’s painting and in Feldman’s daughter, Mona Berman, who lives in Israel, and her granddaughter, Kim Berman, associate professor of art at the University of Johannesburg.

Kim and her sisters Hayley Berman, Cindy Berman and Lori Lurie, who lives in Jerusalem, have inherited their mother’s and grandmother’s love of art. “My grandmother basically encouraged me to be an artist,” Kim, who founded an art therapy centre in Newtown in Johannesburg, called Artist Proof Studio 25 years ago, providing training and artists’ collaborations in print-making, told Jewish Report.

“Freda had a very strong character. I remember sitting in her home and, with my sketch pad, copied many of the paintings hanging there.”

Hayley founded an NGO called Lefika La Phodiso Art Therapy Centre at the TMI Centre in Hillbrow.

Irma Stern and Freda Feldman met when the latter married well-known businessman

and intellectual Richard Feldman, who, with photographer and art dealer Leon Levson, helped Stern during her early career, which initially took some time to take off as she was not popular at the beginning.

The Feldmans were noted arts patrons, supporting many struggling artists, but their friendship with Stern went way beyond this. They bought works from Stern whenever possible and had an ongoing financial arrangement with her, to pay off paintings in instalments. But, as soon as their payments



Photo: Burning Mime Studios

“Portrait of Freda Feldman in Basuto Hat”.

were complete, they went right ahead and purchased another painting.

The two friends enjoyed elegant dinner parties and loved fashionable hats. Stern called it “the paraphernalia of culture”, describing these cultivated tastes in a letter.

Mona has written a book about the friend-

ship of Stern and Feldman, “Remembering Irma Stern: A Memoir with Letters”.

The two friends shared a love of flowers, colour, and, of course, the famous dinner parties. They both believed that food should look as good as it tasted. Feldman took delight in Stern’s sense of style and admired her judgement and knowledge in collecting art works and antiques from across the world.

Feldman became a prime subject for Stern and the artist featured her in numerous portraits, in charcoal, oil and gouache (an opaque water colour).

Mona comments on the large number of portraits Stern produced: “During the war years [Stern] couldn’t travel abroad and needed the company and stimulation of people who amused her, especially when she couldn’t feast her eyes or soul on the art of Florence and Paris. Perhaps she compensated by painting portraits.”

The painting of Feldman in the Basuto hat depicts a shared passion of artist and sitter. Feldman had remarked to an art historian: “That’s the one my family and friends liked the most. I think the general appeal of the picture is that it’s about the hat, not the model. I was so enchanted by that hat, its workmanship and style.

“It’s a fine example of Lesotho’s craft industry. I bought the hat from a master weaver and then got a milliner to devise an inner crown so I could tilt to one side.”

It is said that Stern never produced self-portraits as she felt herself overweight. But she found a “surrogate self” in Feldman.

Stern (1894-1966) is one of South Africa’s top artists. She was born in Schweizer-Reneke in the North West Province and studied art in Germany where she came under the influence of German Expressionism, which was initially challenging for South Africans, who tended to be conservative. She did portraits on her extensive travels to Pondoland (in the Eastern Cape), the Congo and Zanzibar.

Shortstraw talent goes solo with Adventure Man

TALI FEINBERG
CAPE TOWN



Photo: Burning Mime Studios

Shortstraw band members Russel Grant, Jake Rubinstein, Gad de Combes, Tom Revington and Alastair Thomas.

of the Arts.”

Gad would take every opportunity to sing at school - whether in a play or in assembly. “Once I started playing the piano I began to understand what I was singing. I also joined the Linksfield Senderwood Congregation choir and that gave me a great understanding of harmony.

“After school, I studied for a BA degree in sound design at AFDA (2004-2007). All of that led to me being the musician I am today.” He plays piano,

keyboard, drums, ukulele, melodica and guitar.

His main focus right now is being his alter ego Adventure Man. “At the moment I am busy working on what I call my ‘Dog EP’,” he quips. “On the first album we had a song about Sammy, my border collie.

“Shaniqua, my adorable little pug, is the latest addition. The single Sorry Shaniqua is a quirky ode to her. It has a pop/indie sound accompanied by Adventure Man’s characteristic fun

and catchy lyrics. I think it is cute and catchy and it will make you laugh!”

Gad says: “It’s tough, I think, to make it as a rock musician in South Africa. The country is so rich in culture and music that’s indigenous, in a way, to South Africa. So, for a group to get together and write music, that’s quite an American or British thing to do and it is a tough thing. But, there’s definitely a market, and if you are good, people have something to come back to every time.”

Interestingly, Shortstraw has become

“big in Japan”. Gad explains how this came to be. Through his connection with the band Desmond and the Tutus, Shortstraw was promoted in Japan “and they really liked it and printed the first CD. When we did Good Morning Sunshine, Shortstraw’s second album, they pressed it in Japan.

“When we toured Australia in 2014, Japan came into the pipeline because it is so close. So we did two weeks in Australia and then went to Japan for a week. It was very successful. We went back for a second time last year and we are planning to go back for a third time this year.

“Last year Adventure Man opened for Shortstraw at the Tokyo gig in Japan. Following that, copies of Out of Order have been pressed by Flake Records in Japan for distribution there. We also expect to receive a shipment from the record label in the next few months which we will distribute in South Africa.”

At the moment, Gad is “busy working on the Dog EP, and Adventure Man’s second album which is going to be coming out soon. “We are in the process of getting all the songs from the first album onto iTunes.

“Shortstraw is off to Europe for the Euro Safari Tour, we’re leaving tonight (Thursday May 12) and are playing in a number of places, with The Great Escape festival held at Prince Albert, being the highlight.”

France’s Jewish student union joins hate-speech suit

PARIS - France’s Union of Jewish Students has joined two other French groups in suing Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for failing to remove anti-Semitic, racist and homophobic content.

SOS Racisme, France’s largest anti-racism group, and SOS Homophobie, a gay rights movement, announced last Sunday in a statement that they were taking legal action against the three social media platforms, according to reports.

In a social media survey from March 31 to May 10, the groups said they found on those sites “586 examples of content that is racist, anti-Semitic or homophobic, denies the Holocaust or seeks to justify terrorism or crimes against humanity”.

Denying the Holocaust, justifying terrorism, and propagating racist, anti-Semitic or homophobic messages are illegal in France.

The survey found Twitter removed eight of the 205 “hate messages” flagged to administrators and YouTube took down 16 of 225 items, while Facebook removed 53 of 156 messages identified to the site by the groups, according to The Telegraph.

“In light of YouTube, Twitter and Facebook’s profits and how little taxes they pay, their refusal to invest in the fight against hate is unacceptable,” UEJF President Sacha Reingewirtz wrote in a blog post. (JTA)

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- **The Creative Counsel** Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award
- **Europcar** Jewish Woman in Leadership Award

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The closing date for nominations is 24 June 2016.

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- A short motivation for the nomination

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Chocolate, halva and tahini swirl buns

CHAYA RAPPOPORT
NEW YORK

I had my first proper halva experience at The Halva Kingdom in the Machane Yehuda shuk in Jerusalem. I'd never really liked halva before that - the one or two times I had tasted it, the texture was weird and crumbly and there was a slightly bitter aftertaste. But in the shuk, surrounded by dozens of varieties of blocks of halva, I couldn't resist trying the sample offered by the charming vendor.

And it was so, so good! I was pleasantly shocked at how much I liked it. It had this unbelievably creamy, melt-in-your-mouth consistency and a satisfying richness. I bought two varieties - pistachio and coffee - to take home, and couldn't resist nibbling on the candy the whole tram ride back.

Since then, I'm a total halva convert. I just love its unique texture - dense, creamy and fluffy all at once - and distinct sesame flavour. I also adore tahini and have been using it in myriad ways: mixed with honey and swirled with Greek yoghurt, in an ice cream that tastes like the frozen version of halva, even spread on toast with melted dark chocolate.

I decided it was high time to turn my favourite flavour trio into a baked good and came up with these buns.

Here, a cinnamon spiced dough is topped by a butter, chocolate and cocoa filling, which is then swirled together with a sweetened tahini paste (ground sesame seeds mixed with olive oil). The whole thing is topped with crumbles of halva and sliced into big, thick rounds that bake up soft and fluffy.



Drizzled with a tahini icing as soon as they come out of the oven, the buns are fudgy, rich and bursting with flavour. They're decadent but not too overpowering that you won't want more than one.

This is the sort of treat that works for both dessert and coffee time.

These buns have a lot going on, but it works. Even non-halva lovers will get in on the action, finding the combination of sesame and chocolate deliciously alluring. Then again, who can resist the siren call of a bun?

Yield: Approximately 24 big buns (two 9-by-13-inch pans)

- Ingredients**
- For the dough:**
- 1 stick unsalted butter (8 tablespoons)
 - 1 ½ cups whole milk
 - 2 large eggs, room temperature
 - 2 ¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
 - 6 tablespoons sugar
 - 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
 - 5 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- For the chocolate filling:**
- 1 ½ sticks unsalted butter (12 tablespoons)
 - 6 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
 - 7 tablespoons good quality cocoa powder
 - ½ cup confectioner's sugar
 - ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- For the tahini and halva filling:**
- ½ cup tahini
 - 6 tablespoons sugar
 - Pinch of salt
 - ½ teaspoon cinnamon
 - ½ cup torn and shredded halva pieces

- For the tahini icing:**
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
 - 3 tablespoons warm milk or water
 - 1 tablespoon tahini
- Preparation**
- Make the dough: Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the milk and heat until warmed through.
- In a small bowl combine the yeast with a couple of tablespoons of the warm milk mixture and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Let sit until foamy, 5-10 minutes.
- In the bowl of a standing mixer combine the flour, remaining sugar, cinnamon and salt. Add the yeast mixture, the remaining milk and the eggs. Stir until a dough forms.
- Knead the dough until smooth and elastic, around 5 minutes. The dough will be soft and sticky. Transfer the dough to a clean, lightly oiled bowl and let rise until doubled in size, about 1 ½ hours.
- As the dough rises, make the chocolate filling: In a saucepan over low to medium heat, melt the butter and chocolate together until smooth.

- Stir in the powdered sugar, cocoa and salt. The mixture will form a spreadable paste; set it aside until needed.
- Now, make the tahini filling: Combine the tahini, sugar, salt and cinnamon and stir well until thoroughly combined. Set the filling and the halva pieces aside until needed.
- Once the dough has risen, divide it in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll out one half of the dough to a rectangle roughly 10-by-17 inches, with the long edge facing you.
- Spread half of the chocolate filling over half of the dough, making sure to spread it all the way to the edges. Top with half of the tahini mixture and, using a toothpick (or your fingers), swirl the chocolate and tahini together.
- Sprinkle ¼ cup of the halva pieces evenly over the chocolate- and tahini-covered dough. Now roll up the dough. Roll it up the short way, perpendicular to you.
- Slice into 12 buns. Transfer the buns to a baking paper lined 9-by-13-inch pan.
- Repeat the above process with the second piece of dough and the remaining chocolate paste, tahini filling and halva pieces. Transfer the buns to another lined 9-by-13 inch pan.
- Cover the buns with a clean kitchen towel and let them rise for 30-40 minutes, or until big and puffy. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F (177 degrees C).
- After the buns have risen, bake them for 30-35 minutes, rotating the pans from top to bottom and front to back halfway through baking.
- While the buns bake, mix together the confectioner's sugar, liquid and tahini until completely smooth. As soon as the buns come out of the oven, drizzle the glaze all over them. (It may have hardened a bit, so whisk it a few times to break it up again.)
- Serve warm or cool the rolls completely, then store them in an airtight container in the freezer. (The Noshers via JTA)
- Chaya Rappoport is the blogger, baker and picture taker behind retrolillies.wordpress.com. Currently a senior in high school, she's been blogging since 2012 and her work has been featured on *The Feed Feed*, *Delish.com*, *Food and Wine*, and *Conde Nast Traveller*.

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Jewish Report

World News in Brief

Top Hezbollah commander killed in Syria

JERUSALEM - Top Hezbollah commander Mustafa Badreddine was killed in what was described by the terror group as a “major explosion” at Damascus International Airport last week Friday. Badreddine, 55, was the commander of Hezbollah's contingent that had been fighting in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government against opposition forces and Sunni terror groups such as Islamic State and the Nusra Front. In the announcement on his death, Hezbollah said: “He said months ago that he would not return from Syria except as a martyr or carrying the flag of victory. He is the great jihadi leader Mustafa Badreddine, and he has returned today a martyr.” Badreddine has been linked to nearly every high-profile Hezbollah terror attack over the last 30 years, including many against Israel and the 2012 attack on Israeli tourists in Bulgaria. (JNS.org)

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What's On

Friday (May 20)

• UZLC hosts Shirley Zar on “The Life and Death of the Yiddish Folk School”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (May 22)

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to go sandboarding at PureRush Industries. Cost: R200 per person. Contact: 082-929-9765 or e-mail whatson@jjac.co.za to book.

• RCHCC screens the documentary “Iris”, directed by Albert Maysles. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (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 or www.greatpark.co.za

Monday (May 23)

• WIZO AVIV hosts “A Tribute to Mothers Breakfast”. Venue: Sandton Shul hall. Time: 09:00 for 09.30. Cost: R280. Booking essential. Call: Bev 083-305-1123; Shereen 082-683-155; or Batya (011) 645-2517 or wizojhbaccounts@beyachad.co.za

• The Johannesburg Light Music Society is holding its monthly meeting at the Roosevelt Park Recreational Centre. There will be two audio presentations by members, after which refreshments will be served at R20 per head (optional). A musical film will follow. Information: David 076-574-1446.

• UJW Adult Education Division hosts Harriet Gavshon, MD of Quizzical Pictures, on: “The Use of Stories for Social Transformation”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW offices: (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (May 25)

• UJW Adult Education Division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer dept of English at Wits, on her third lecture on Hamlet. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW offices: (011) 648-1053.

Friday (May 27)

• Shalom Masorti Seniors Club hosts Pearl Siegel who will speak about her book. “7 Tried and Tested Triangles”. Contact: Esther (011) 485-5619 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday mornings

• Second Innings is arranging an outing to Kees Beyers Chocolate Factory. Bus will depart from Golden Acres at 09:00. Cost: R140 includes the bus and the tour. Book with Betty Jankelowitz (011) 440-4751 or Pearl Kahn (011) 346-2975.

Community

Betar Southern Africa celebrated Yom Ha’atzmaut in style

Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Independence Day, was a cause for serious celebrations worldwide, and Betar Southern Africa was not missing out!

Betar attended the SAZF Yom Ha’atzmaut night carnival festivities at Huddle Park in Johannesburg, where Betar maddrichim gave out balloons to the young who attended and sold IDF T-shirts in the shuk.

Betar also hosted an exciting raffle, where the winner received a complimentary plane ticket to Israel. The raffle was hosted in order to raise much needed funds for the newly-opened Betar bayit in Glenhazel. A Betar winter camp, Machaneh Ha’Atid Shelanu, which will take place in July, was launched on the night.

Last week Thursday, the celebrations continued when Betar visited King David Sandton Primary School, and performed fun activities with the learners. The youth movement also joined in on the King David Schools’ #SpreadTheLove campaign at King David Victory Park, where they attempted to break the Guinness World Record for the most sandwiches made in an hour.

A whopping 35 557 sandwiches were made and given to the needy, a perfect way to end off the celebrations of Israel’s Independence Day.

Betar Southern Africa looks forward to many more exciting events in the future.

• For further information on upcoming events, contact Betar at info@betarsa.co.za.



Somewhere over the rainbow reflects SAUPJ’s Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations



National Chairman, Alvin Kushner at the SAUPJ stall.

The SA Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) helped celebrate Yom H’atzmaut this year at Weizmann School in Cape Town last week Wednesday, May 11.

The sun was shining and the Cape Town Jewish community came out in full force to participate in the fun and festivities in celebration of Israel’s 68th year of independence.

The SAUPJ said it set up a stall at the school, branding itself with pamphlets, blue and white flags, and it sold toasted cheeses as a great snack for exhausted and hungry party revellers!

The theme for this year’s extravaganza was Somewhere over the Rainbow, which few people realise is a song deeply embedded in

Jewish experience. The song emerged out of the mass exodus from Europe and the lyrics were written by Yip Harburg in 1939 and the music was by Harold Arlen, a cantor’s son.

The two men reached deep into their immigrant Jewish consciousness framed by the pogroms of the past and the Holocaust about to happen and wrote an unforgettable melody set to near prophetic words.

As Israel nears its eighth decade, the SAUPJ continues to strive and work towards an inclusive, democratic and Jewish society “which welcomes all of its members to be part of the nation-building project envisioned by our prophets and by the founders of Israel”.

Furious reaction makes boxing champ eat his words

JACK MILNER

The subject of racist speech has been in the limelight over the past few months with the most recent issue being the unsavoury comments of Justice Mabel Jansen on Facebook regarding black men and rape.

Many people have been asking the question: “But what about free speech?”. But as a great believer in free speech, how does one’s views change when one is at the receiving end of racist remarks?

A few days ago British world heavyweight WBO and WBA champion Tyson Fury lived up to his name when, in an interview with video

outlet SportsView London, he said of Jews: “Everyone just do what you can. Listen to the government. Follow everybody like sheep. Be brainwashed by all the Zionist Jewish people who own all the banks, all the papers, all the TV stations. Be brainwashed by them all.”

He went on to exacerbate the issue by saying of transgender people: “It’s like you’re a freak of nature if you’re normal. You’re the odd one out - nobody else. What’s normal? I’ll just get myself changed into a woman. That’s normal, isn’t it?”

“Today call myself Tysina or something like that, put a wig on. I don’t think it’s normal. I think they’re freaks of nature.

“I think it’ll be perfectly normal in the next 10



World heavyweight WBO and WBA champion Tyson Fury makes a public apology for his anti-Semitic and homophobic remarks on Tuesday.

years to have sexual relationships with your animals at home - you know, your pets, your cats and dogs and all that - so that will be legal.”

The next day British watchdog group Campaign Against Anti-Semitism (CAA) complained to the British Boxing Board of Control about Fury’s video. Fury quickly ate humble pie and apologised.

The CAA is, however, pushing for Fury to be banned from boxing in light of his comments. “There should be no place for anti-Semitism in sport,” said CAA spokesman Jonathan Sacerdoti. “He should be barred from boxing and referred to the British Boxing Board of Control.

“This is not his first offence; he specialises in outrageous offensive and racist slurs. Behaviour like this should prompt his sponsors to withdraw their backing.”

Fury’s previous comments on homosexuality, paedophilia and women, resulted in more than 100 000 people signing an online petition in an attempt to get him removed from the BBC’s 2015 Sports Personality of the Year shortlist.

But Fury remained on the list and apologised at the award ceremony in December. Another apology was tendered on Tuesday for his latest foot-in-mouth rant.

“I apologise to anyone who may have taken offence at any of my comments. I said some things which may have hurt some people, which as a Christian man is not something I would ever want to do. Though it is not an excuse, sometimes the heightened media scrutiny has caused me to act out in public.

“I mean no harm or disrespect to anyone, and I know more is expected of me as an ambassador of British boxing, and I promise in future to hold myself up to the highest possible standard. Anyone who knows me personally knows that I am in no way a racist or bigot, and I hope the public accept this apology.”

The statement added that “Mr Fury has

suffered bigotry and racial abuse throughout his life, and as such would never wish anyone to suffer the same. He has many friends of a wide range of backgrounds and races and wishes no ill to anyone of any race, religion or sexual orientation.”

But can one just say anything one likes and then shrugs it off as a “momentary aberration”? It is almost like listening to an alcoholic blaming the drink.

How does one traverse the narrow divide between free speech and hate speech? When a court has to decide on libel, two of the fundamental questions a judge will ask are firstly whether the allegations are true and whether if they are, they are in the public interest.

So, if Jews do “own all the banks, all the papers, all the TV stations” then it is a statement of fact and we need to live with it, no matter how hurtful it might seem. But we know the statement is clearly false, so Fury can apologise all he likes, fact is he said it, meant it and should face the music.

What is scary is that on one blog which invites comments on the issue, there were over 1 200 responses with some 80 per cent agreeing with Fury!

In November, 27-year-old Fury, who has a record of 25 wins from 25 fights - 18 by way of knockouts - pulled off a major upset when he outpointed long-reigning world champion Vladimir Klitschko to win the heavyweight title in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Fury and Klitschko are scheduled to meet in a rematch on July 9 in Manchester, England.

He will earn millions from that fight but will probably go on making racist remarks and then apologise to a “forgiving” public.

The answer would be to strip him of his titles and punish him where it hurts most - in his pocket. In all likelihood it will make him a bigger anti-Semite but the difference is he’ll probably only tell his friends - in private.

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