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# south african Jewish Report

■ February 3 2017 / 7 Shevat 5777  
■ Volume 21 – Number 3

[www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## Candles cast their light on horrors of the Shoah



Photo courtesy of The Cape Town Holocaust Centre

Survivor Ella Blumenthal, 95, lights a memorial candle for the six million who perished in the Holocaust, assisted by Richard Freedman, director of the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation and of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, during a ceremony to mark the United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day. (This day falls on January 27 every year.) The ceremony took place last Sunday at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre. See pages 4 and 6.

NB: CORRECTED DATE



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# The Money or the Box?



Parshat Bo  
Rabbi Yossy Goldman  
Sydenham Shul

What? Is the rabbi turning TV quiz show host? Has he become a gambling man?

Believe it or not, this rabbi is talking about what all good traditional rabbis talk about - the parsha. Have no fear; the Bible isn't going to Vegas. The Money or the Box really does relate to the 10th Plague G-d visited upon Egypt prior to the Exodus.

The final, devastating Plague of the First-Born saw the Israelite first-born spared. Therefore, they are eternally indebted to G-d for their very lives. So ever since then, the first-born of Israel "belong to G-d". And that's why this parsha gives us the mitzvah of Pidyon HaBen, the Redemption of the First-born.

In a tradition that is practised to this day, when the first-born is a male, the father together with a Kohen - who as minister in the Temple would serve as the Almighty's agent - perform a redemption ceremony after the child has passed his first month of life. This is known as Pidyon HaBen.

In this quaint and curious ceremony, a fascinating dialogue takes place between father and Kohen. The child is brought in and the father makes the following declaration to the

Kohen.

"My Israelite wife has borne me this first-born son." Whereupon the Kohen asks the million-dollar question: "Which would you rather have - your first-born son or the five silver shekels you are obligated to give me for his redemption?"

The gathered crowd waits in suspense to hear the father's response. What will he choose? To keep the five silver shekels and give the hassles of newborns, midnight nappy changes and future school fees to the Kohen, or will he keep his child and hand over the shekels?

Thankfully, Jewish fathers have always made the correct choice, albeit sometimes with a little gentle prodding from their wives.

Now I ask you, is this not ridiculous? "The money or the kid? This is a serious question? Which normal father is going to willingly give away his child to save a few bucks? What is the point of this discussion? Why engage in ancient, obsolete ceremonies that seemingly have no relevance?

The answer is that it is very relevant. The Money or the Child means much more than just here and now at the ceremony on Day 31 of this boy's life.

The Kohen is asking the father a very serious question. "Throughout your child's life, what will be most important to you? Will it be money, materialism and acquiring more status symbols than your friends, or will it be your

children and your family life?

"Where will your priorities lie? Will you slave away building up your business and become an absentee dad? And you, Mom, will you while away the days drinking cappuccino and doing your nails or will you be personally involved in raising your children, teaching and nurturing them?"

That is the Kohen's question. And based on experience, every father should think very carefully before he will answer that question, hopefully in the affirmative.

So, the next time you're invited to attend a Pidyon HaBen ceremony and you hear that seemingly preposterous question being asked: 'Do you prefer the money or the child?' don't laugh, don't snicker, don't grimace, and don't even giggle.

Be dead serious. Because a Jewish father is about to decide the future for his family and indeed for our people. Let's hope he makes the right choice.

Shabbat Times		
February 3/7 Shevat		
February 4/8 Shevat		
Parshat Bo		
Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:31	Johannesburg
18:25	20:26	Cape Town
18:15	19:27	Durban
18:15	19:45	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:57	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:46	East London

## Community

# Sad, but inevitable end to Durban's magnificent Great Synagogue

**MARGOT COHEN**

Tinged with nostalgia and sadness, last Sunday members of the Great Synagogue in Silverton Road in Durban, attended a special valedictory service on the shul's closing.

Addressing the gathering, spiritual leader Rabbi Pinchas Zekry, spoke of the mixed feelings accompanying the closing down of this magnificent shul.

The Great Synagogue was consecrated as the main place of worship of the Durban Jewish community on December 10, 1961. This (then) new venue was successor to the St Andrew's Street Synagogue established in 1903.

But, alas, demographic shifts prompted the momentous decision to sell the synagogue.

The Durban Jewish community of about 6 000 in its heyday, has shrunk to some



**The congregants of the Great Synagogue at the valedictory service.**

invited Dr Jonathan Beare to open the Ark and he paid tribute to Beare's "magnanimous contribution and vision" which has given new life to the future of the congregation of Durban.

The service continued with Hakafor. Sifrei Torah were carried by the guests of honour, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, followed by officials, benefactors, life members and office-bearers of the shul council.

Tribute was also paid to the chairman Maurice Sacher for his outstanding devotion to the shul over many years. Memorial haz-

karot were recited for the departed members of the first officials and council of the Great Synagogue as well as departed benefactors and honorary life members.

The service was lent lustre by Cantor Yaron Kalmonowitz and the choir under the baton of choir master Mike Gitelson and the musical accompaniment of Cecile Levin.

The children's choir of Akiva College sang for the congregants.

Worshippers now look forward to the opening of a new shul on the Berea which will shortly take place in close proximity to the existing one.

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# Plaque at Torah Academy Primary in memory of Rabbi Bernhard

SUZANNE BELLING

They came from near and far to pay tribute to the memory of Rabbi Nachman Meir Bernhard - Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, head of the Lubavitch Foundation, many rabbonim, and Rabbi Bernhard’s wife Joan, his children from South Africa, Israel and the US, to witness the unveiling of a plaque in the rabbi’s memory at Torah Academy Primary School.

Likening Rabbi Bernhard to the forefathers in the Shabbos parsha Vaeira, Rabbi Lipskar referred to Rabbi Bernhard’s relationship with the Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson and how it impacted on his founding of one of the first Torah schools, which eventually became Torah Academy. “It began with one school and one man,” he said.

The passing of Rabbi Bernhard would have been “the biggest loss if we didn’t remember” and a “great consolation” in his zchus and of his neshama that his memory would be renewed every time one walked past the plaque.

Paying tribute to Rabbi Bernhard, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, where Rabbi Bernhard served on the Chinuch Hanhala (education management committee), Rabbi Hazdan said, according to his teacher and mentor: “There are



The Bernhard family gathered in front of the plaque in Rabbi Nachman Meir Bernhard's memory - Rabbi Isadore and Tova Rubenstein from Israel; Dr Moshe and Deeni Singer; Nami Friedman from the United States; Rebbetzen Joan Bernhard; Lisa Milner; Leah and Rabbi Azreil Uzvolk, with their children, Nachman Meir (named after his grandfather) and Rivka; and Kivi and Jordana Bernhard, from the US.

some who make it happen, those who watch it happen and others that say ‘what happened?’”

Rabbi Bernhard had undoubtedly been in the first category.

He was an inspiration and made a difference to the history of the Jewish

community.

Chief Rabbi Goldstein recalled Rabbi Bernhard’s “friendship, kindness and wisdom. He was a pioneer” who impacted on so many people.

The school he founded reflected both quantity and quality. “He was an optimist - about Torah, klal Yisrael and had emunah (faith) in Hashem.”

Rabbi Goldstein referred to Rabbi Bernhard’s outspoken criticism of the apartheid government and alluded to the Rebbe’s obvious influence on Rabbi Bernhard’s thinking.

Daughter Tova Rubenstein, from Israel, paid tribute to her father’s love of classical music and Torah education and Judaism. “He integrated it and internalised what he learnt and lived by it,” she said.

Rebbetzen Joan Bernhard, who had been at her husband’s side, supporting his every endeavour for many years, unveiled the plaque, with her son Kivi, who came from the US for the occasion.

## ‘Every Jewish home should have such a Chumash’


OWN CORRESPONDENT

In keeping with the Rebbe’s, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson’s tradition of encouraging Jewish books in one’s home, Chabad House, through Miracle Drive, participates every year in a different campaign in this regard.

This year’s campaign was a Chumash in memory of the late Rabbi Nachman Meir Bernhard, who brought Torah into so many lives. The campaign is urging every Jewish household to have one.

In the photograph at the launch of the Chumash are Rabbi David Masinter, director of Chabad House in Johannesburg, Rebbetzen Joan Bernhard and Adrian Gore, CEO of Discovery.





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**Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644**



# Be vigilant against renewed spectre of racism, Bethlehem warns



Marlene Bethlehem speaking in Hannover, Germany, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Stuart Izon from the Shabbaton Choir in London is at the piano.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The shadow of the Second World War and the Holocaust in particular had not lifted entirely, according to stalwart South African communal leader and currently president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in New York, Marlene Bethlehem, speaking in Hannover, Germany, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The commemoration was organised by the Jewish community of Lower Saxony and attended by some 1 200 people, mainly gentiles, who gave Bethlehem a standing ovation.

Bethlehem told her audience: “There are ominous signs that the spectre of racism may again be raising its ugly head in Europe and

other parts of the world. Signs are that fascist ideas may again be taking hold, signs that ordinary people will again be misled into hatred.”

Identifying with principles of freedom and inclusivity, she said, reminded us of the consequences of racism, of name calling, of forgetting that all human beings are equal and all equally deserving of a decent life.

“I say this in solidarity with the people of Aleppo (in Syria), and many other cities whose citizens have been forced to flee.

“In particular, I say this to honour and commend Germany for accepting so many refugees into your midst.

“I say this also to remember those murdered at the Christmas market in Berlin last month. No one de-

serves such terror, much less a community that has done so much for those fleeing war and persecution. But I also I make this declaration for other, more personal reasons. I am a Jew. I also say, I am a South African. I have inherited the legacy of Nelson Mandela.”

Hitler and his allies were defeated. Later, the Soviet regime fell. The Berlin Wall collapsed, apartheid was defeated in South Africa.

“The world has made real progress,” Bethlehem said. “But recently, the world has begun to change again. Once more we feel the cold, ominous wind of racism and ultra-nationalism. Once again we hear talk of walls being built between countries.

“Once again it is fashionable to

believe that some human beings are superior to others, to believe that it is acceptable to humiliate, insult and isolate people on the basis of their religion, or their origins.

“This is what makes International Holocaust Remembrance Day so important. On this day we remember the slaughter of the Jews of Europe and those associated with them. As we remember them, we try to draw lessons for our world today.”

It was a day to remember the survivors, those who resisted, who stood up against evil, and to talk about the perpetrators and those who supported them.

“It is a day to ask ourselves as individuals, what each of us can do to help someone who is vulnerable. To ask ourselves as countries what

kind of world we are trying to build. What stories will be told of us by our children.”

Bethlehem said the Holocaust could only be understood one person at a time. Six million were killed.

“Each of these victims was a person and not a number. Each one an entire world.”

She told the story of one family - a mother, Judit, her husband, Reinhold, and child. The parents were murdered in Auschwitz. The child escaped the death train and survived, thanks to a French family who took him in. He now lives in Israel.

The mother was Bethlehem’s aunt Judit. Her son, Josse, is Bethlehem’s cousin - and Josse’s son Oren was in the hall to hear Bethlehem speak.

# Present generations must keep remembrance of the Shoah

## MARGOT COHEN

International Holocaust Remembrance Day was commemorated in South Africa in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

In Johannesburg the commemoration took place at the Holocaust and Genocide Centre last week Thursday, with the lighting of memorial candles by survivors and clips of songs and choral music composed in the death camps. (The day is internationally designated as January 27.)

Tali Nates, director of the JHGC, welcomed ambassadors from Israel, Bulgaria, Russia and Rwanda, as well as other members of the diplomatic corps from Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic and representatives of the United Nations Information Centre and the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation.

The theme, for 2017, said Nates, was “Holocaust Remembrance: Educating for a Better Future”.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet army liberated Auschwitz - the complex of camps including Birkenau with its four gas chambers - one of over 40 000 camps in Europe. Auschwitz has become the symbol of the Holocaust.

Anita Ohi-Meyer, head of cultural affairs and sports, climate and protocol at the German embassy, paid tribute to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. “We take responsibility for our history,” she said.

Dr Shirli Gilbert, co-director of the Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at the University of Southampton, who is a world authority on music in Europe between the periods 1933 and 1945, was the keynote speaker.

Gilbert’s said each camp and ghetto had its own internal scenarios, with hope, sense of despair or anger. “Cultural life in the ghettos offered insight into the prisoners’ diverse

experiences and perspectives,” she said.

Gilbert played songs recorded by David Boder, a Latvian psychologist who travelled to displaced persons’ centres in 1946 and recorded the voices of many young Holocaust survivors. The collection is now in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

A piano trio by the Russian-Jewish composer Mikhail Gnesin in memory of children who perished and “No Raisins, No Almonds”, a song composed in the Lodz Ghetto, were some of the works performed. The Peat Bog Soldiers Song, premiered in 1933 at a variety show, was an early example of German political prisoners’ protesting against their Nazi oppressors.

The music, Gilbert said, also gave a glimpse into the experiences of those who did not survive. Gnesin’s “To the Memory of Our Dead Children” (1943) was premiered in January 2017 at Wigmore Hall, London, at a concert she organised there. Gideon Klein’s recently-discovered work, “The Poplar Tree” was also featured at the concert.

Gilbert’s book, Music in the Holocaust, focuses on four Nazi internment camps.

Cape Town marked the Remembrance Day at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre last Sunday.

Guest speaker was Hannah Lessing, general secretary of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and the Fund for the Restoration of Jewish Cemeteries in Austria. She spoke on Austria dealing with past restitution and the future of remembrance.

Lessing’s grandmother, Margit Lessing, was deported, first to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz, where she was gassed on arrival.

In 2001, as a member of the Austrian delegation, Lessing participated in the negotiations on compensation issues which led to a joint statement in Washington in 2001. Following this agreement, the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism was established to achieve a comprehensive resolution for victims of National Socialism.

Lessing is also Austria’s representative on the International Committee of the Auschwitz Foundation. She has lectured extensively on Austrian and international Holocaust remembrance work.

The Durban Holocaust Centre held its commemoration on Tuesday at the Centre.

Professor Stuart Taberner of the University of Leeds, spoke on teaching the Holocaust from a distance. The title was: “Germany’s confrontation with the Holocaust in a global context in the UK, US and South Africa”.



Dr Shirli Gilbert. She spoke in Johannesburg.

Photo supplied



# Many plusses to be taken from annual Davos forum – Koseff

MICHAEL BELLING

The World Economic Forum, held in Davos in Switzerland every January, has had a significant impact on South Africa, according to Stephen Koseff, CEO of Investec, who was one of two Jewish South Africans there last month. The other local member of the community to attend was University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price.

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa and Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan led the South African government team. A host of other South African government officials, business-people and NGO representatives, also attended the forum.

“From a South African perspective it went very well,” Koseff told the SA Jewish Report. “I think that Ramaphosa and Gordhan did particularly well representing the country.”

He gave an example of the effect of the WEF on this country, referring to former President Nelson Mandela’s visit in the 1990s.

“Mandela told people he was going to nationalise the banks. People came to him and said - even the Asians – ‘if that’s what you are going to do, no-one is going to support you. You have to rethink your model.’

“And that is why we have the kind of economy, the kind of system that we have (today), because he recognised that they were on the wrong path.”

South Africa had a strong developed infrastructure. “Our auditing profession, banks, stock exchange and legal profession, are very highly ranked in the world; things that other developing markets do not have, we have.

“We have a strong Reserve Bank and national Treasury that govern that side of the economy exceptionally well.

“But where we are failing is in our education of people, our quality of maths and science education and these are big challenges for our system,” he pointed out.

Globalisation was often regarded negatively in developing countries, a view not shared by Koseff.

“It’s very strange to have the Chinese president talking about why globalisation is a good thing.

“If you go back 20, 30 years, what globalisation has done is reduced poverty from 40 per cent of the world to 10 per cent of the world.

“Globalisation has led to massive upliftment of people from poverty, because it created demand in the developing world for goods and services, particularly in Asia. I don’t think it’s worked yet well for Africa.”

But the country had to differentiate between inequality and reducing poverty. “To me as a free market individual, I think the important thing is to uplift people from poverty. You will always have inequality, because you are always going to get the Bill Gateses and Mark Zuckerbergs of this world.

“At the same time, what you have is the displacement of people, certainly in the developed world, and a potential hollowing out of the middle class, as manufacturing jobs are lost.”

Koseff said he had been to Davos many times over the past 20 years, “not representing anyone. I am there to learn. Obviously, we are regarded as part of the South African team. We get asked questions. We get exposure. We are members of a group of South African executives that are there, alongside many government individuals.

“My primary aim is just to get an update on where the world is, what’s going on in the world and how that can impact our country and our business.”

He said the WEF brought together business executives, social entrepreneurs, NGOs, youth leadership and government.

“People can get together and have dialogues around key issues around the world that are affecting economies. It is a forum that obviously believes in liberal democracies and tries to give that kind of message to its members.

“I think any kind of dialogue makes a contribution,” he said.

“You pull people together from different walks of life. I’m a person who believes in the free market and I come into contact with people who still believe in communism. You end up having a dialogue and people start discussing these key issues, what works and what doesn’t work.

“It may help you narrow difference. I think that’s the key thing. It gives you an impression of what’s going on in the world, the pressing issues.”

Among these issues were “a very different sort of fellow elected to lead America, Donald Trump, Brexit in the UK and a big shift to the right in the developed world and some kind of shift to the left in the developing world. This is probably not so good for the world.”

Each year a Shabbat dinner is held for Jewish participants and others. Before the dinner this year there was a memorial service for Shimon Peres, who was a regular feature at Davos and he sometimes spoke at the Shabbat dinner.




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**Stephen Koseff, Investec CEO, who recently returned to South Africa from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.**



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# Jewish Report

## Global impact of the Holocaust

No event since biblical times has impacted on the Jews of the world like the monstrous German extermination policy of Adolf Hitler - the Holocaust.

The enormity of the vile deeds of the SS killing machine profoundly affected the world - six million Jews, apart from Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Freemasons, the Roma and disabled people - in an effort to bring about the evil dictator's vision of a pure Aryan race.

In 2005, 60 years after Auschwitz was liberated, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed International Holocaust Remembrance Day to be held on January 27 annually.

South Africa is one of many countries across the globe observing the day each year.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day involves participants of all faiths, far outweighing the Holocaust deniers, a minority few, who rear their heads every so often in speeches, print - and especially social media.

But Jews around the world have their own commemorative day each year, Yom Hashoah, on the anniversary of the April 19,1943 (27 Nissan, 5703) Warsaw Ghetto uprising. This is to pay homage to the victims of the Holocaust and to honour the now-dwindling number of survivors whose recall of their horrors in the camps and elsewhere debunks every lie of the anti-Semitic deniers.

One has to commend the sterling efforts of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC), under directorship of Richard Freedman, who is also director of the SA Holocaust and Genocide Foundation; the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, under Tali Nates; and the Durban Holocaust Centre, under Mary Kluk, in promoting Holocaust education and bringing many doubtful non-Jews, among them schoolchildren, some brainwashed with revisionist history, to the truth.

In fact, Holocaust education is a compulsory subject for grade 9 as part of the social history programme at all schools and, for those wishing to pursue the subject for matric, grade 11s are taught about Nazi eugenics, social Darwinism and racism - a real feather in the cap for the Holocaust centres which advocated and realised this. The centres support the national programme, as well as offering teacher training.

Freedman says the programme is offered in all nine provinces of South Africa.

There has been talk in some circles of holding International Holocaust Remembrance Day and Yom Hashoah on the same day. Some of the ultra-observant Jews would like it held on the 9th of Av. But that would detract from the other historical disasters befalling the Jews, especially the fall of the First and Second Temples.

Yom Hashoah, too, should not be linked with the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, for this is an intensely Jewish day of mourning. It was declared as such by the State of Israel in 1953.

Every year, Israel comes to a standstill on Yom Hashoah, when people stop their vehicles, their work and their studies at school and university to hear the siren, commemorating the Holocaust, as it is sounded throughout the land. Cape Town has adopted this custom, when the siren sounds on the day from the CTHC.

However, International Holocaust Remembrance Day is yet another occasion to reinforce the credo, "Never Again".

But, disappointingly, America's 45th President Donald Trump made no reference to the Jews in his first statement about the Holocaust, saying only the victims, survivors and heroes should be remembered and pledging to do everything in his power throughout his presidency to "ensure that the forces of evil never again defeat the powers of good".

His omission to mention the Jews is a repeat of the error made last year by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who came under fire from Jewish groups.

This is Trump's first major mistake as far as world Jewry is concerned.

- Suzanne Belling, acting editor

# KDLHS launches 'Advocates for Israel' initiative

ANT KATZ

Today King David Linksfield High School will be launching an innovative initiative they have dubbed "Advocates for Israel". The goal of the initiative is to empower students at the school to be able to defend Israel, says Amber Sandler, the school's head girl.

This, says Amber, is particularly important "when they leave school and face the inevitable anti-Semitism on university campuses".

Ben Swartz, national chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, will be the guest speaker at the school's special assembly.

"I originally had the idea when a teacher at the school asked me what it is I want to leave with the students when I leave the school having completed my year as head girl," Amber told Jewish Report.

Turning an idea into reality is another thing. To make it happen, Amber was joined by head boy Shane Bassin. The pair enlisted the help of the school's Judaica Committee, which was tasked with sourcing and compiling the material.

Because Zionism is a major pillar on which King David Schools stand, she says, the programme quickly gained support and momentum among pupils. "So many people wanted to be a part of it."

Everyone is excited and looking forward to the launch. "We are confident that all the work and time that has been devoted to this project will be appreciated by the students," says Amber.

More important than simply advocating, says Amber, their aim is "to be able to tell Israel's story and spread her truth - ensuring strength and protection for Jews outside of our school, our community, and our country".

This, they intend to achieve by standing up to anti-Semitism



using the most powerful weapon available to them - education and knowledge.

"We will equip the school with information about political, religious, cultural, biblical and modern Israel."

The hope of the organisers, she says, is to get the initiative successfully launched at King David Linksfield, and that "other Jewish day schools will want to link on and do the same for their schools".

## SAJBD puts in sterling work on Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill

CHARISSE ZEIFERT

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has sent its submission on the "Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill" to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development for consideration.

The much-awaited Bill aims to give effect to South Africa's obligations, in terms of both the country's Constitutional and international human rights instruments, concerning racism and discrimination; to provide for the offence of hate crimes and hate speech; as well as the prosecution and prevention of these crimes.

The SAJBD, as the umbrella representative body and human rights voice of the South African Jewish community, has been involved in hate crimes awareness, education and legislation advocacy for nearly a decade.

Through its role as a founding and current steering committee member of the Hate Crimes Working Group, as well as participating in other important civil society initiatives, the SAJBD continues to be deeply committed to ensuring that issues relating to hate crimes and hate speech are adequately addressed in the country.

The SAJBD's submission on the Bill focused on a significant concern of the local Jewish community, namely that of anti-Semitism, and outlined the need for hate crimes legislation in the country as well as effective monitoring and data collection of cases of hate.

On the issue of hate speech, it was felt that the relevant sections of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (No 4, 2000, hereafter "Equality Act") were sufficiently far-reaching for purposes of address-

ing cases of hate speech.

Rather than having two very similar laws on the statute books, it was therefore strongly recommended that the anti-hate speech sections of the Hate Crimes Bill be removed and that instead the relevant sections of the Equality Act be revisited with a view to their possible amendment.

This might entail making the propagation of hate speech on the basis of race, ethnicity and other prohibited grounds an offence not only when it is directed against an individual, but against the particular group which is being thus maligned.

The SAJBD's submission stresses that the Act must be so framed as to make its practical implementation possible, and to this end recommends bolstering and expanding the reach and effectiveness of current legislation and mechanisms dealing with incidents of hate, such as the SA Human Rights Commission and Equality Courts.

The issue of restorative justice, to both educate against and prevent hate speech and hate crimes, as well as a method of dealing with perpetrators after an incident has taken place, was also emphasised.

"History has shown us where hate leads," says the SAJBD's representative on the Hate Crimes Working Group, Alana Baranov. "Genocide and crimes against humanity do not begin with action but with words and incidences of discrimination. South Africans need to work together to ensure that our country is one in which human rights, freedom and equality are afforded to all who live in it."

The SAJBD looks forward to working with the Department of Justice on the draft Bill going forward, as well as any on other initiatives aimed at preventing and combating hate in South African society.



#LIFEWORTHLYIVING

NISSIM BLACK

**Nissim Baruch Black** (born Damian Jamohl Black) is an acclaimed American rapper and producer from Seattle, Washington. Originally performing under the stage name D Black, he released two albums and was featured on producer Jake One's debut album, *White Van Music* (2008). He's also spent most of his life searching for a place to fit in. From stints in Christianity to Islam, Black tried desperately to find a way of life that resonated with him spiritually. And he found it next door. Having grown up alongside a Jewish community, Black started researching Judaism on the Internet. Today, he and his wife Adina live in Jerusalem, with their children and other members of their extended family.

📖 LIFE STORY

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# Chief Rabbi delivers prestigious lecture at Humboldt in Berlin



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, with the Israeli flag projected on the gate.

ANT KATZ

A singular honour befell South African Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, when in January he was called upon to deliver the prestigious annual Hildesheimer Lecture at the Law School of Humboldt University in Berlin. Rabbi Goldstein based his address on his doctoral thesis which looks at human rights in relation to the Jewish law perspective. Speaking in English, Rabbi Goldstein kept his audience captivated for over an hour. (His original Wits thesis has been published as a book entitled “Defending the Human Spirit”).

On his return to South Africa, Rabbi

‘We live in confusing times, dangerous times, and times filled with tremendous opportunity and it is times like these that we need to turn for insight to Jewish law.’

Goldstein told Jewish Report a number of interesting anecdotes about his Berlin visit that had inspired him, including post-Nazi plaques, seeing the Brandenburg Gate lit up by an Israeli flag, and more.

After being introduced by the university’s dean of the law faculty and another professor, Rabbi Goldstein was called on to speak. “My lecture focused on how Torah law protects the most vulnerable.”

In his lecture the Chief Rabbi said: “We live in confusing times, dangerous times, and times filled with tremendous opportunity and it is times like these that we need to turn for insight to Jewish law.”

Quoting from a question posed by the late Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Ha-levi Herzog, Rabbi Goldstein said: “When

the Book of Deuteronomy says: ‘I place before you’, and that someone will say that these laws are righteous laws, ‘how do we define righteousness?’

“I think this school of Jewish law here is doing such important and outstanding work in continuing this tradition of teaching about Jewish law because it has so much to offer,” said the chief rabbi.

Quoting from the introduction to Herzog’s two-volume English tome, he, Rabbi Goldstein, had written, he said: “It has been my ardent striving throughout to afford the general student of jurisprudence at least an elementary conception of the elaborate mass of towering structure of the Jewish law.”

Some interesting anecdotes...

- Rabbi Goldstein said he found it “moving to deliver a lecture at Humboldt” as they have, at their entrance, a plaque such as those affixed to all houses in the city from where the Nazis had expelled Jews;
- The full name of the prestigious lecture is the: Hildesheimer Lecture - a joint event of the Rabbiner Seminar zu Berlin and the Berliner Studien zum Jüdischen Recht of Humboldt University;

Rabbi Goldstein delivered his lecture the day after a terror attack killed four servicemen in Israel. “After the lecture,” he says, “somebody mentioned that the Israeli flag was projected on the Brandenburg Gate” - which he then visited on his way to a dinner.

The Chief Rabbi also met leaders of the 120 000-strong German Jewish community.

He attended a post-lecture dinner hosted by Rabbi Joshua Spinner, CEO of the Ronald S Lauder Foundation, and German special ambassador to Jewry, Felix Klein, where he spoke at length about issues in South Africa.

• More on this story, the lecture and pictures on Jewish Report’s website, [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

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# Small, isolated Jewish communities, strong in a united stand

SUZANNE BELLING

They came together from all over sub-Saharan Africa - South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Mauritius and Kenya - to discuss the theme “Independence and Isolation - Combining Two Forces”, gathering in Cape Town for a mini conference of the African Jewish Congress, last week Sunday.

There was a special Friday night service in the Marais Road Synagogue, where delegates were addressed by Rabbi Dovid Wineberg, spiritual leader of the congregation.

The AJC is under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress and all the countries represented are members of the African Union.

Keynote speaker Rabbi Gidon Fox, president of the SA Rabbinical Association and spiritual leader of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, highlighted the challenges of preserving Jewish identity.

“Even small communities have an impact, influence and responsibility on maintaining their Jewish identity and improving ties between Israel and the African countries.” Our long and often painful history and dispersion all over the world showed that the will to survive as Jews was paramount.

“The Jewish people can never extricate themselves from their intimate relationship with Torah,” he said, adding that “maintaining a strong Jewish people and support of Israel” would ensure continuity.

On the eve of leading a party of 22 church leaders to Israel, Chris Eden , chairman of Bridges for Peace, explained the aims and work of this Christian Zionist organisation in South Africa. They connected well with the delegates from the other states.

A comprehensive illustrated presentation on the history and current political position was given by Ronnie Gotkin of the Herzlia United Schools and the Florence Melton Institute of the Hebrew University.

Messages were sent by Israeli ambassadors to South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mauritius, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia.

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, CEO of the AJC, led workshops covering the current cultural and charitable work undertaken in each country

Mary Kluk, a vice-president of the WJC, chaired a discussion on the future of African Jewish life, focusing on the challenges, hopes and plans of all these small isolated communities.

President of the AJC, Ann Harris, said: “The conference proved to us that even small communities living isolated from mainstream Jewish life are not prepared to abandon their Jewish identity. This opportunity to spend time with colleagues from all over Africa inspired them to renew and strengthen their efforts.”

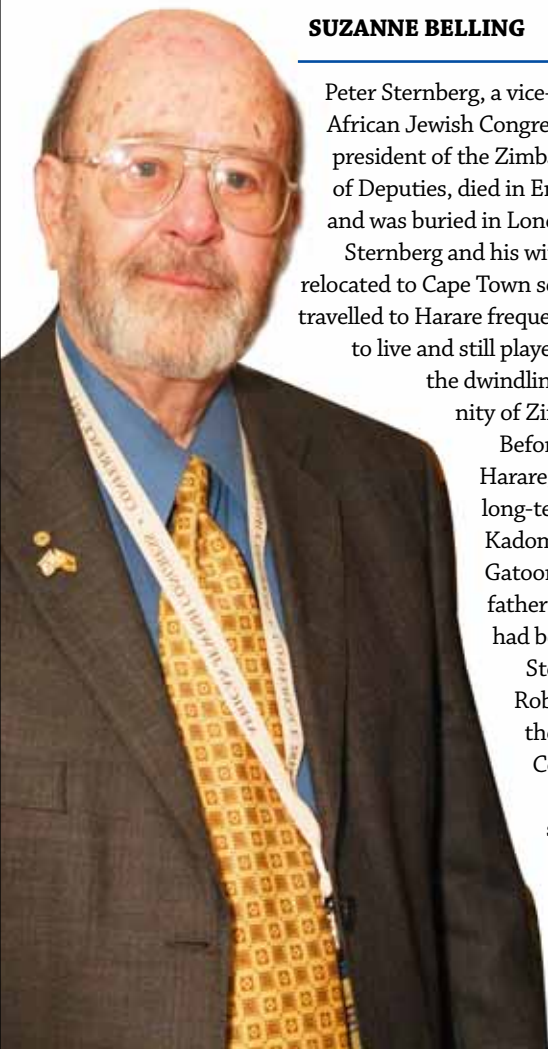
Ann Harris, president of the African Jewish Congress, presents keynote speaker Rabbi Gidon Fox with a book on the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris as a thank-you gesture.



Photo supplied

# Peter Sternberg, Zimbabwean Jewish leader, passes on in London

SUZANNE BELLING



Peter Sternberg, a vice-president of the African Jewish Congress and former president of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies, died in England last week and was buried in London.

Sternberg and his wife Hermoine relocated to Cape Town several years ago but travelled to Harare frequently, where he used to live and still played an active part in the dwindling Jewish community of Zimbabwe.

Before moving to Harare, he was a former long-term resident of Kadoma (previously Gatooma), where his father Robert Sternberg had been mayor.

Sternberg succeeded Robert as president of the Kadoma Hebrew Congregation.

He personally spearheaded the fundraising effort to restore the Jewish cemetery in Kadoma and arranged for that cemetery

and the one in Kwe Kwe to be tended and cleaned on a regular basis. Friends of Sternberg, both gentiles, one a Muslim, took over the function of overseeing the cemeteries as Jews no longer lived in those areas.

Ann Harris, president of the AJC, paid tribute to Sternberg, saying he “really loved the Jews and, whatever community he was part of, took a great interest in their well-being”.

In 2002 at the biennial conference of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies, Sternberg referred to the lack of higher educational facilities and business prospects for the younger people of Zimbabwe and that many of them had left. Those who stayed were not inclined to hold office in the remaining Jewish organisations of an ageing community.

His well-known quote was: “The old soldiers simply have to soldier on.”

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, CEO and spiritual leader of the AJC, referred to Sternberg’s hard work and efforts on behalf of Zimbabwean Jewry.

An accountant by profession, “he was a man of great integrity”, Rabbi Silberhaft said.

Peter Sternberg is survived by his wife, Hermoine, and children, Jonathan, Tamara and Ron, and four grandchildren, Robert, Gabriella, Eli and Levi.

## Around the Jewish World



## Former Montreal mayor Michael Appelbaum found guilty of corruption

MONTREAL-Michael Applebaum, Montreal’s first Jewish mayor, is facing a maximum five-year prison term after he was found guilty of corruption-related charges on January 26, almost four years after his arrest.

Quebec Court Judge Louise Provost ruled that Applebaum, who served as interim mayor from November 2012 to June 2013, was guilty of eight of 14 counts, including fraud against the government, breach of trust, conspiracy and corruption.

Sentencing arguments are scheduled for February 15.

He has not indicated whether he will appeal. Two other charges were acquitted and four were stayed.

The ruling was delayed for some minutes after Applebaum, 53, became faint about 1½ hours into the reading of the judgment.

Applebaum was accused of extorting about \$30 000 to \$35 000 from businessmen Robert Stein and Anthony Keeler, and \$25 000 from the engineering firm SOGEP while he was mayor of the borough of Côte des Neiges-Notre Dame de Grâce between 2007 and 2012.

The bribes were demanded in exchange for favourable decisions on real estate development projects.

A key prosecution witness during Applebaum’s trial over 10 days in November was his former chief of staff, Hugo Tremblay, who co-operated with the police investigation, including wearing a wire. Tremblay told of acting as the intermediary for the collection of the

cash kickbacks.

Applebaum chose not to testify and the defence called no witnesses.

Applebaum, who was first elected to Montreal city council in 1994, became interim mayor in November 2012, after Gérald Tremblay resigned following damning testimony concerning his administration during the Charbonneau commission of inquiry into corruption in the Quebec construction industry. Applebaum was also the first Anglophone mayor in a century. - Canadian Jewish News

## Israel moves to decriminalise personal marijuana use

TEL AVIV - Israel’s cannabis industry innovators have welcomed an announcement by Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan that Israel plans to decriminalise personal marijuana use.

Israel is a powerhouse and leader in medical marijuana research. iCAN: Israel-Cannabis co-founder Saul Kaye said this new government policy will augment entrepreneurship.

“This change will significantly increase entrepreneurship and investment into cannabis in Israel as the old stigma of criminal cannabis disappears.

“We congratulate and thank MK Sharren Haskel and the many others who helped support this great effort that will no longer label over one million Israeli citizens criminals,” said Kaye, CEO of iCAN and CannaTech.

CannaTech 2017 is now being planned for March and is set to bring hundreds of investors and entrepreneurs to see Israeli cannapreneurship at its best.

Hebrew University Professor Raphael Mechoulam put Israel on the medical marijuana map for his early groundbreaking research in isolating the active compound from cannabis, THC, and inspired generations of researchers in several countries.

The new Israeli policy, which still requires Cabinet approval, calls for those caught smoking marijuana to be fined rather than arrested and prosecuted.

“Police will be able to redirect resources... away from normative personal users and focus instead on dangerous drugs,” Erdan told a news conference in Tel Aviv on January 26.

According to a Reuters report, nine per cent of Israelis use cannabis.- ISRAEL21c



# Investigations into affairs of Bobroff father and son, continuing steadily

**ANT KATZ**

Fugitive father-and-son personal injury lawyers, Ronald and Darren Bobroff, may have found refuge in Australia, but on the home front their temporary suspension from the roll of attorneys was made a final order in January. They are still wanted in South Africa to face multiple charges relating to Road Accident Fund cases they handled - and accusations of excessive fees charged for their services.

They skipped the country shortly before they were to face criminal charges in court; they were to be questioned by the police’s Hawks investigating unit on charges of fraud and money-laundering.

The pair’s estates were also finally sequestered in December and the Sheriff of the Court has been trying to track down and attach their assets. The Sheriff managed to attach just R30 000 worth of goods in December.

Some two weeks ago, at the home of Ronald Bobroff



Ronald and Darren Bobroff.

in Pentrich Road, Victory Park Estate, the Sheriff had more success and did manage to attach goods worth some R120 000. This attachment was not without drama as, says Anthony Millar, President of the Law Society of the Northern Provinces (LSNP), it was watched live by Darren Bobroff on facetime.

The Bobroff father and son have protested their innocence, but Millar says they should return to South Africa to prove their innocence in a South African court.

The Sheriff didn’t find what he was looking for in the recent search for assets to be attached, but later said: “We had received information that since that visit, caravans and vehicles have been brought back (to the property).”

Millar later told News24, later on, on that afternoon, his office received a threatening phone call from someone warning him to “watch out, someone would be waiting when your wife comes home”.

Millar has since confirmed to JR Online that the threat had been made “to my receptionist and a message left for me”. He says he believes that it had been made by Ronald or Darren Bobroff. “To have that sort of threat made... has changed things. I intend to lay criminal charges,” he told News24.

Speaking to JR Online later, Millar confirmed that he was “in the process” of laying the criminal complaint. He is “presently awaiting the details of the caller from Telkom”, whom he had asked to trace it.

In an interview last November Millar told JR

Online that the Bobroffs had “brought shame on their profession, their families and their community”. Millar said that 99 per cent of the questionable dealings (at that stage) uncovered by the LSNP, had been “signed off by Darren Bobroff”.

At that stage, the LSNP audit had identified some R3,5 million in overcharges that the Bobroffs’ specialised personal injury practice, the now-defunct Ronald Bobroff and Partners Incorporated (RBP), had charged clients. Since then, Millar said, that figure had increased almost five-fold to over R17 million... and investigation of their records continues. Total losses are believed to exceed R1 billion - and rising.

Millar himself is currently representing 13 claimants (against the Bobroffs) while other attorneys are also representing claimants.

Apart from facing serious criminal charges, the father-and-son pair face a massive number of civil claims which are being investigated and quantified by numerous investigations being conducted by the Road Accident Fund, SA Revenue Services, the police special crimes unit, the Hawks, the National Prosecuting Authority and others.

One of the members of the authorities conducting these investigations told Jewish Report that the combined total of these claims had exceeded the R1 billion mark last October.

In terms of the mix of the allegedly injured parties, says Millar, “there have been Jewish victims also - they were indiscriminate in choosing who they overcharged”.

One of the first and most-read stories on Jewish Report early last year April - “Sheila’s Story” - how tragedy played out, explains the plight of some of the affected Jews.

Millar’s present clients include “a 78-year-old woman and another who requires the money for urgent medical treatment”.

The Bobroff pair, who Jewish Report was advised by an Australian associate on condition of anonymity last year, were hoping to register to practise law in Australia, may also find that goose cooked for them.

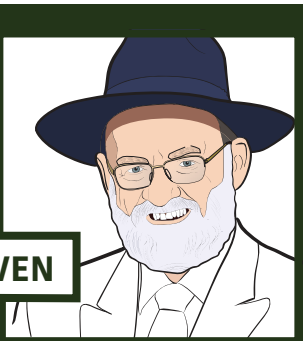
Millar told Jewish Report recently that “the authorities in Australia were notified as soon as (Ronald and Darren Bobroff) were struck off here, and they have acknowledged receipt of that notification. If you are not fit to practise in one country, it obviously is of interest to other jurisdictions. They handle that from their side.”

Claimants allege that the Bobroffs charged a contingency fee of as much as 40 per cent of Road Accident Fund pay-outs, exceeding the legal cap of 25 per cent or double their normal fees, whichever is the lesser.

They are accused of later using every means at their disposal to silence dissenters.

Financial powerhouse Discovery also has a long-running legal battle against the pair for, according to Discovery, claiming medical fees from the Road Accident Fund and advising clients not to reimburse Discovery with pay-outs due to them.

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# Jared Kushner – ‘a snow-shovelling student mega-donor’

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Jared Kushner was already a regular at the Harvard Chabad when he walked in one day, took a crumpled piece of paper out of his jacket pocket, put it down on the table and walked away. It was a personal cheque for \$18 000.

“I have some deals that really went well, so I want to give something back to Chabad,” Harvard Chabad Rabbi Hirschy Zarchi recalls Kushner, then a sophomore or junior, saying. Zarchi calls it “one of the largest cheques we ever received, not just from a student, but even from a parent.”

Kushner, now son-in-law and senior adviser to President Donald Trump, established a constant, outsize presence at the Harvard Chabad during his time as a student there, Zarchi and other students recall.

Beyond the surprise donation, Kushner attended prayers and Shabbat dinner regularly, recruited students to Chabad’s programmes, performed workaday tasks for the house and served as the MC when Chabad dedicated a new building in 2003.

On a personal level, Kushner was “like a part of the family” to Zarchi and his wife, Elkie, the rabbi says. From his earliest days at Harvard through his senior year, Kushner attended the Zarchi children’s birthday parties, sent flowers to the family and received chicken soup from Elkie Zarchi at his dorm when he came down with the flu.

“It was most apparent in the first impression what kind of mensch this young man was,” said Zarchi, now 43, who was unabashed in his praise of Kushner.

“How considerate and how polite and respectful and appreciative he was at that age. He was always years beyond his age in the way he carried himself, the way he related to others, the way he led.”

In the years since Kushner came to Harvard, his family has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Chabad-Lubavitch institutions in the United States and Israel. In 2007, according to Ha’aretz, his family’s charitable foundation gave \$150 000 to the institution.

Chabad arrived on Harvard’s Cambridge

campus in 1997, two years before Kushner’s freshman year. Run by emissaries of the Chabad-Lubavitch Chasidic movement, campus Chabads offer Orthodox ritual services and Jewish programmes to students of all backgrounds, often as an alternative to Hillel, the legacy nondenominational Jewish campus organisation.

Chabad has built a sizeable following among Jews who, like Kushner and his

and donors. Kushner’s father, New Jersey real estate mogul Charles Kushner, sat smiling in the front row. Jared complimented Elkie Zarchi’s cooking, quoted Margaret Thatcher and praised the Chabad’s feeling of community. At the end of his speech, he embraced Rabbi Zarchi.

“When people walk into your home, they enter as guests,” Kushner said to the Zarchis, occasionally stumbling over his words. “After

weekend and attended Shabbat dinner. During the subsequent four years, Zarchi says, Kushner was instrumental in bringing undergraduates to Chabad, which had been geared to graduate students. Two people who attended Harvard with Kushner told JTA that he was quiet, unassuming and dedicated to the Chabad mission.

Kushner would bring friends to Friday night dinner from the Fly, his “final club” (or Harvard-style fraternity), and would sometimes perform yeoman’s work for the rabbi. One night during his freshman year, after spending a few hours with Zarchi studying Tanya, a Jewish mystical text, Kushner saw it had snowed outside, asked for a shovel and cleared the sidewalk in front of the house.

“When he saw importance in a project, he committed himself to it,” Zarchi said. “He was able to galvanise his friends and his social circle to follow and collaborate with him. If he got involved in the project, he worked the hardest. There was no task beneath him and no goal too high to reach.”

Since his graduation nearly 14 years ago, Kushner has stayed connected to Chabad. He has helped organise the institution’s alumni events, including a Shabbat dinner that he and his wife, Ivanka Trump, hosted a few years ago.

In 2004 and 2005, while Kushner’s father was on trial in New Jersey for illegal campaign contributions, witness tampering and tax evasion, the family would occasionally eat Friday night dinners with the Zarchis at Harvard Chabad while Kushner’s brother, Joshua, was a student at the Ivy League university. Charles Kushner served 14 months in prison for the charges.

During that time, Zarchi said, Kushner displayed the same total fealty to family that led him to shepherd his father-in-law to the unlikelyst of election wins.

“You rarely see someone who’s more committed, more loyal to his family, than Jared was,” the rabbi said.

Kushner and his wife have bought a home near a Chabad house in Washington, DC, and Zarchi and Kushner have stayed in touch during and since Trump’s campaign. (JTA)



modern Orthodox parents, may not be Chassidic themselves but support its programmes and outreach efforts.

Speaking at the 2003 dedication, the 22-year-old Kushner, dressed in a suit, blue tie and small black kippah, stood in front of a small room filled with students, rabbis

conversing and experiencing your warmth, there is not a person who does not leave as another one of your children. We are all grateful for the selflessness and dedication that both of you show on a daily basis.”

Kushner’s relationship with Chabad began when he visited campus for a pre-freshman

## Canadian shul and mosque join to sponsor refugee family

**ANT KATZ**

A shul and a neighbouring mosque in Thornhill share a parking lot. Now, they also share a family!

Temple Har Zion and Imam Mahdi Islamic Centre teamed up last March to raise half a million rand to help bring a refugee family from Syria to Canada and assist them in settling in. The family has since arrived in Canada.

What had been dubbed “the Thornhill refugee project”, has brought to Canada the eight-member Elendari Druze family. The Druze, a sect of Islamic origin, is located mostly in north Israel, Lebanon and Syria.

Andrew Hazen, co-chairman of the refugee project from Temple Har Zion, told the Liberal newspaper that the shul had decided to team up with the mosque because they thought this was a good way to increase “collaboration and contact and demonstrate Canadian values in action”. The mosque feels a similar “tikkun olam” - referring to the Jewish concept of healing and repairing the world.

Hazen acknowledges that some people believe because of the Jews’ tumultuous history of fleeing persecution, they are a natural choice to sponsor refugees.

The argument was made, he says, that if anyone is doing this, it should be a Jewish congregation “because our parents and grandparents knew what it was like to be a refugee”, Hazen added.

Many of the shul’s members are first- or second-generation Canadian, he said, and the Reform shul is dedicated to social action and inclusion which encompasses reaching out to interfaith couples and families and promoting equality of women in religious services.

The shul and mosque are situated beside each other. The mosque, founded by Iranian-Canadian Muslims, is “proud to have collaborated with its neighbour” it says on its website. “We are hoping this project will be a starting point of more collaboration between Muslim and Jewish communities in Toronto and Canada,” the website adds.

## Vicki Mervis makes the world a better place through dance

**SHARON GOMER**

Vicki Mervis (42) reaches out to the underprivileged through the medium of all forms of dance. Largely shunning the limelight, this Trinity-qualified dance teacher, steeped in musical theatre and even rock ‘n roll, modern jazz and hip hop, is eminently qualified to see to the needs of the younger generation, although she does not exclude adults.

Active in the Gallo Manor/Morningside/Wendywood area of Sandton, she puts on a concert every year with her whole studio and enters them for Trinity exams. Wherever there is a need, Mervis is willing to help and she often goes to Soweto schools to perform for disabled and underprivileged children there. She regularly invites underprivileged people to watch her concerts and towards the end of last year she put on her

annual concert at the Fairway School in Corlett Drive where her eager students shared with the audience what Mervis had taught them, releasing their imagination and giving them a voice to express themselves through dance, body movement, acting and singing.

Mervis shares her passion for dance with her students who in turn love her to bits. She has over the years been able to change the lives of many underprivileged kids - and adults for that matter.

This Jewish woman gives so much and never expects anything in return, but in her way she is changing the world for the better.

To her, “teaching” in every aspect of the word is one of love, of furthering a young person’s life, of very often giving them the direction that they have been looking for.





# First female chairman of Constantia Shul

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER**  
**CAPE TOWN**

Hayley Pogrund has been elected the first woman chairman of the Constantia Hebrew Congregation in its 34-year history. Though not the first female member to occupy this position in an Orthodox synagogue, the occurrence is sufficiently rare as to be noteworthy.

Pogrund cut her communal service teeth as chairman of her sons’ nursery school for five years over a decade ago and was, she says, “looking for something to do” aside from her voluntary work for Nechama. A newcomer to the shul committee, she has been catapulted straight into the top job.

Undaunted, Pogrund is brimming over with enthusiasm and plans for the shul. An information technology professional, she has an honours degree in computer science from UCT. Her work involved developing systems and problem-solving and she sees this as tying in with her new role.

“It’s almost like stepping into a company and doing a consultancy (seeing) where you can improve it. My aim is not to just keep things ticking the way they are - I want to try and turn things around, to try and make (the shul) a place where people want to go - and not only on Shabbat and Yomtov.”

First up is the shul’s public relations which she says “needs a bit of a shake-up. We’re looking at getting the website reinstated, possibly a Facebook page and regular communication with the members from me in the newsletter to keep the community involved; communication is key,” she stresses.

Reflecting on her new role, she says that in certain respects, a “paradigm shift” will be



necessary.

“One of the first questions when I became chairman was: ‘Who’s going to stand on the bimah on Shabbos?’ So what if it’s not a chairman that does it, that’s just what’s traditionally happened.

“I don’t feel side-lined by not doing that,” she adds. “It’s merely a perfunctory role.”

As for the prohibition against women addressing the congregation during the service, this could

be done at the brocha, she says.

Pogrund has experienced “absolutely no antagonism” to her election, despite being warned of this possibility by a male committee member. On the contrary, she says “the enthusiasm from the community has been absolutely amazing”.

On the role of the shul in the lives of its members, she feels that it serves as one’s extended family. Education features very strongly in her plans with additional programmes in the pipeline.

Another “huge area” of focus will be children and the youth, along with the employment of a new youth director. Youth lunches and afternoon games on Shabbos are also envisaged to retain the elusive post-bar- and batmitzvah age group.

As for the adult members, monthly get-togethers ranging from a Ladies’ Rosh Chodesh Club, a Friday night supper or purely social events are planned. Also envisioned is a survey to gauge what the congregation wants in a shul; what would make them come to shul if they are not already doing so.

“One of the things about Constantia Shul is it crosses borders of social status and wealth,” Pogrund remarks. “One becomes friendly and one realises that one can connect with people of a different age group, a different social status - I think it’s a huge advantage.”

Rabbi Kalman Green, spiritual leader of the congregation, comments: “We asked Hayley Pogrund to become the chairman of our congregation and committee because she is supremely qualified for the job, is excited about doing it and has a tremendous track record in clear thinking and concern about what goes on in the community and to be perfectly blunt, the gender had nothing to do with the choice at all.”

## Porter tells of learning from being the patient

BEERSHEBA - Whatever your age or medical condition, you will surely feel fortunate by comparison when reading emeritus Professor Basil (Boaz) Porter’s new book, *My Medicine, My Body* - a chronicle of his ailments since childhood through his eighth decade and the lessons he learned.

The 73-year-old, South-African-born and -educated paediatrician, survived a long list of ailments and injuries and almost died several times over.

Porter has for decades been a senior paediatrician and was a founding member of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev’s faculty of health sciences and international co-ordinator of the Israel Ambulatory Paediatrics Association. He was responsible for the first teaching clinic for community paediatrics in Ofakim.

He later established the child development centre at Soroka University Medical Centre and studied the field of behavioural developmental paediatrics at Boston Medical Centre.

Much of his career has been devoted to improving medical education in general, focusing particularly on the importance of the doctor-patient relationship.

But the doctor was himself often turned into a patient, wearing a hospital gown and feeling anonymous - *Jerusalem Post*

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Securing your future in Israel



12 SA JEWISH REPORT		Letters		3 – 10 February 2017	
<b>Disclaimer</b> The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report. <i>The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za</i>		<b>Guidelines for letters</b> 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.			
<b>TRUMP WILL BE BETTER FOR ISRAEL THAN OBAMA HAS BEEN</b>		<b>JACOB ZUMA PATIENTLY DODGING BULLET AFTER BULLET</b>			
<p>Surreptitiously, and like a thief in the night, the Obama administration, released \$221 million to the Palestinian Authority, defying Republican opposition, who had blocked the release. The release of these funds was done in Obama’s waning hours as president.</p> <p>Emboldened by America’s vote on December 23, last year, in favour of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, condemning Israeli settlements, the Obama administration furtively released the allocated funds for the Palestinian Authority.</p> <p>Hence my surprise when I read Gidon Feen’s commentary “Obama leaves a rich Jewish legacy” in Jewish Report of January 27.</p> <p>I was compelled to read on, despite my conflicting views. World affairs have substantially changed and it is dubious whether the media have been attentive to this fact.</p> <p>On November 16, last year, The Algemeiner wrote: “The case for Trump in Israel is less about Trump and more about Israel”, although Donald Trump has said, of Netanyahu: “Terrific guy, terrific leader”.</p> <p>One thing is clear about the Trump administration and that is he will reinforce the economy and security of both Israel and America, thus reducing global instability.</p> <p>Moreover, the Trump administration is aware of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel</p>		<p>President Jacob Zuma has the patience of Job. Other than patience, the two men are as incompatibly immiscible as oil and water.</p> <p>Time and again we have seen Zuma with his back to the wall. With enduring patience, underscored with what can only be perceived as chicanery and deception, he has dodged bullet after bullet, ever mindful of end goals to invariably come out on top.</p> <p>Now, according to a recent media report, Zuma’s patient manoeuvring will again be rewarded with disgraced Brian Molefe seemingly on his way to taking a seat in Parliament. It will be the first step in Zuma’s scheme to fire his nemesis, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan , and replace him with Molefe as finance minister.</p> <p>If Zuma’s manoeuvring comes to fruition, the nation’s finances will be controlled by him, aided and abetted by the infamous Ajay and Atul Gupta. Molefe, in concert with his puppet-masters, will happily oblige.</p>			
		<b>Errol Horwitz Fresnaye, Cape Town</b>			
		<b>THE YEAR 2017 IS THE TIME TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE</b>			
		<p>Having followed media coverage over the last 22 years, it is time that we as society, the media, business and government, change the narrative of this country.</p> <p>Our biggest issue is that nine per cent of the population controls 90 per cent of the wealth, which leaves 91 per cent with only 10 per cent of the wealth. These 91 per cent should have their voices heard to a larger extent.</p> <p>Yet an impression since 1994 is that the most whining and complaining come from the wealthiest nine per cent. Furthermore, this appears to be viewed as “the collective consciousness and narrative of the nation”.</p> <p>To add perspective, if a tourist visited South Africa and read every newspaper article, opinion piece and letter published since 1994, what impression would they take as to our biggest issue?</p> <p>I’m confident it would not be unequal wealth distribution but crime, corruption, an ANC government, maladministration, state capture, BEE (the irony), quotas and also Aids. This would be due to the South African narrative created since 1994 by the wealthiest nine per cent via the media. I can easily imagine media coverage emphasising: “Victory as Jacob Zuma resigns”. Conversely, I can hardly imagine media coverage that emphasises, “Victory as new economic reform policies passed”.</p> <p>Considering that the latter would be a victory for the majority, why is it hard to imagine coverage presented like this? Have we endured 22 years of a captured media? Do we lack powerhouse editors, publishers and journalists with an accurate point of reference of who all constitute South Africa and where that weight lies? Or does our media just play to</p>		<p>the money?</p> <p>The fact that our tourist would have an incorrect impression of our biggest issue should cause every publisher, editor, columnist and investigative journalist to reflect deeply on what makes headlines and why.</p> <p>I recently read a 2017 South African “dream list” of a prominent publisher and wealth redistribution did not feature. For how much longer must this elephant wander around a seemingly unconscious room as an inconvenient truth?</p> <p>The 91 per cent’s unequal share in our economy and the reforms needed to address it, is the headline issue of our time. Most other social ills and issues stem from this. Middle class people generally don’t hijack each other and knowledgeable people hold governments accountable to higher standards.</p> <p>The sooner we support addressing this issue the better for all. The challenge is that society has to care and individuals have to think past themselves for it to work. You have to see your neighbour as yourself, as primarily we are all human first with secondary racial classifications being ignorant at best and indoctrination at worst. It is time to renew our minds and purge our hearts.</p> <p>We need a new narrative with our main issue and its reforms being embraced socially. Our media must be responsible to ensure that this is reported on significantly and positively. Here’s to believing that when our tourist visits again in five years’ time, this will be clear.</p>	
				<b>Andrew George Sandton</b>	
		<b>REDI TLADI'S HYPOCRISY ON ISRAEL KNOWS NO BOUNDS</b>		<b>SIFRIN TOLD TO PUT HIS COMMENTS IN HIS PIPE - AND SMOKE THEM</b>	
		<p>A source I trust told me about 702 Talk Radio chat show host Redi Tladi, berating the leader of the Democratic Alliance, Mmusi Maimane, for visiting Israel.</p> <p>(I never listen to 702 because of its anti-Israel/ anti-Semitic bias). Tladi was interviewing the DA spokesman last week and wanted to know why the DA leader would go on such a visit. She accused Israel of supplying the apartheid regime with weapons to fight the ANC, but omitted to mention the following:</p> <p>1) France trained the apartheid Special Forces that fought the ANC in Angola (“We fear naught but G-d” by Paul Els). Els was in the regiment. Why did she not mention this?</p> <p>2) MAN trucks of Germany developed a special vehicle for apartheid forces to use in the Angolan war. Why did she not mention this?</p> <p>3) Both Saudi Arabia and Iran supplied the apartheid government with all the oil it required. This alone kept the war going for many years. Had there been no oil, the apartheid government could never have survived.</p> <p>I sent an e-mail to 702 but I’m not holding my breath. It’s high time Jews stopped supporting 702, especially Redi Tladi.</p>			
		<b>Sonny Myerson Cape Town</b>		<b>Jack Miller Greswold, Johannesburg</b>	
<b>LONG LIVE THE YESHIVA COMPLEX AND SCHOOLS</b>					
<p>In “Ten Days, Ten Ways: Paths to the Divine Presence” edited by then Commonwealth Chief Rabbi Jonathan, Lord Sacks, the following quote by Daniel J Elazar from “People and Polity” is included:</p>					
<b>Communities built around schools</b> <i>The history of the Jews has been a history of communities built around schools. They are the key institutions because they convey learning. Greek civilisation survived for 500 years after the Roman conquest of the Greek city-states, because the Greeks, like the Jews, had developed academies and they could live around those academies. When the academies failed, Greek civilisation disappeared. The Jewish people has never allowed its academies to fail.</i>					
<p>It is difficult to assess how much the Glenhazel community has grown and thrived largely because the late Gerald Leissner in partnership with Rabbi Abraham Tanzer and other caring Jews nurtured the growth of the Yeshiva complex and schools, drawing many Jewish families to this ever-expanding suburb for their children to imbibe their excellence. Long may the community around the Yeshiva complex and schools survive as a living tribute to them both.</p>					
<b>Edna Freinkel Johannesburg</b>					



# Israel has true and loyal Christian friends in Mozambique



Shalom Mozambique-Israel Cup participants.

## DAVID SAKS

Devotion to the cause of the State of Israel flourishes in the most unlikely places, even in societies where the Jewish presence is small to non-existent. Such is the case in Mozambique, where the work of Beth-El Associacao Crista Amigos De Israel - Mozambican Christian Friends of Israel - testifies to how much can be achieved by those inspired by their Christian faith to promote the Israeli cause, despite adverse conditions.

Beth-El, headed by Pastor Carlos Tembe, has been tireless in its lobbying of the Mozambican government to improve diplomatic relations with Israel. Last December, its efforts bore fruit when a delegation headed by Pastor Tembe was given a meeting with the Mozambican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation and the Director of Africa and Middle East.

Earlier in the month, Pastor Carlos also

met with the Mayor of Maputo. At both meetings, the need for Mozambique to forge ties of friendship and co-operation with Israel, described as the “first-born nation of G-d” which “promoted tikkun olam in the world”.

Pastor Carlos took the opportunity to express concern over the country’s consistently voting against Israel in the United Nations, referring in particular to the recently adopted Unesco resolution that effectively denied the connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem.

Mozambique could not “deny the truth and history of humanity”, he said, because historically, Jerusalem belonged to “the people of Israel and not to the Muslims

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or Arabs”. It was affirmed that Christians had a “spiritual affinity with the Holy Land”; the government should hence “work to be Israel’s best friend”, and Mozambique would thrive accordingly.

The delegation also drew attention to the now largely forgotten support extended by Israel to the people of Mozambique during the struggle for independence against Portugal.

Beth-El reiterated its previous requests for an Israeli

embassy to be established in Maputo, and for Mozambique to establish an embassy in Tel Aviv.

The delegation was assured that the Mozambican government was open to co-operating with Israel in several areas, as demonstrated by the visit to Israel the previous April of a multi-sectorial delegation for purposes of exchanging experiences in such areas as water management, agriculture and meteorology.

In addition to political lobbying, Beth-El has been active in organising prayer meetings, sports events (notably the Shalom Mozambique-Israel Cup, a regular football competition to attract the youth) and Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations.

Earlier this year, they were given the opportunity of presenting their objectives and beliefs to Gospel in Action Ministry, one of Mozambique’s largest and fastest growing churches. More than 2 000 people took part in the event, in which the Israeli flag was proudly displayed.

Of this ground-breaking gathering, the official Beth-El report comments: “We have no words to describe this Divine deed. We dream that one day Mozambique and Israel will become friends.”

#LOOKINGBACK

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**SINAI INDABA VI**

# You give these UJW women lemons - they’ll make lemonade!

## OWN CORRESPONDENT

Approximately four months ago members of the Union of Jewish Women paid a visit to the Jumpers Informal Settlement in the inner suburb of Jeppe in Johannesburg, home to over 1 000 people.

They saw poverty, raw sewerage flowing in the area and many unemployed people.

However, they also saw an opportunity for growing vegetables in an open area alongside the shacks.

Some of the residents approached, expressed interest in learning how to start a vegetable garden. UJW paid “Food and Trees

for Africa” to do an assessment, and give the residents two days of training - including how to make compost.

Although the organisation had said that there was little prospect of success, UJW decided to persevere with the project. Gardening tools, lengths of hosepipe and seeds were bought by the women’s organisation and the month of January saw the first “harvest”.

Members of UJW and those who had contributed toward the project were amazed to see the magnificent cabbages, spinach and other vegetables which the enthusiastic women living in the

settlement had grown.

Currently tomatoes, peppers, brinjals, cabbages, onions, potatoes, beans and mealies are growing.

The vegetables will be used to help feed the community and it is hoped that some will be sold.

Lisette Datnow, the Garden of Hope’s project manager, said there are many challenges that have been overcome and many more to address, such as the rat problem.

She added that she feels very privileged that she and the UJW members have been able to improve the lives of those working so hard to make the garden a success.



# UJW brings holiday cheer to Durban patients



Durban UJW Chairman Tessa Goldreich with Dr Ian Macleod and Dr Phil Garrett. ANT KATZ

The Durban branch of the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) again brought cheer to ill patients over the festive season. Tikkun olam is always at its best - and of most value to South African Jewry - when it is seen to be offered, as it should be, to the country’s broader community.

The Durban branch once again spread cheer by handing out grocery vouchers to patients attending the Kathleen Voysey Clinic.

The clinic, housed at the Methodist Church Hall, is run entirely by volunteer staff, including doctors, nurses and pharmacists. It is a primary healthcare facility which provides HIV, Aids and TB-related treatment, care and support services for underprivileged adults.

Testing is also done for hypertension and diabetes and minor wounds are dressed there.

The UJW started this project a number of years ago by donating food packs, UJW National Chairman Lynne Raphaely told JR Online, “but decided a few years ago to rather donate supermarket vouchers so that the patients can choose what they’d like to purchase”.

Once again the Durban women have done the community proud.



# Bravery and humanity of a Japanese diplomat recalled at poignant exhibition

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER**  
**CAPE TOWN**

“Sugihara didn’t only save my grandfather, he also saved me. Because if not for Sugihara I may very well not be standing here today.”

These were the words of Rebbetzen Sarah Feldman of the Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town, speaking on Monday at the opening of the Jewish Refugees in Shanghai exhibition at the South African Jewish Museum. Her grandfather, Rabbi Shimon Goldman, hailed from the city of Shedlitz in Poland.

When Hitler invaded Poland, signalling the start of the Second World War, Rabbi Goldman, then a teenager, escaped to Lithuania and was fortunate to have been issued a visa by the Japanese consul there, Chiune Sugihara, acting contrary to his government’s express instructions.

“Sugihara was faced with a huge moral dilemma,” Rebbetzen Feldman related.

“His humanity won. Together with his brave wife Yukiko, this righteous couple worked non-stop issuing 300 visas a day - the amount that would usually take a month to issue.” In so doing, the couple saved 6 000 Jewish lives.

“Sugihara issued thousands of visas until the consulate closed and he was forced to leave Lithuania. He continued issuing documents from his train window and as the train pulled out of the station he gave the consul visa stamp to one of the refugees who was able to use it to save even more Jews.”

Because Rabbi Goldman and his fellow rabbinical students only had a three-month visa for Japan, they had to make alternative arrangements. So, they took the short boat trip to Shanghai - then under international rule - and open to refugees.

In his memoir “From Shedlitz to Safety”, Rabbi Goldman describes “the large and cohesive Jewish community that greeted them, which even included organised kashrut facilities.”

After Japan entered the war in December 1941,

Shanghai became in effect a Japanese city, along with the establishment of the Shanghai Ghetto with curfews and military occupation. Rabbi Goldman spent five years in the city, continuing his studies at the Rabbinical Academy Tomchei Temimim that had been transported from Europe.

“Life was tough, hunger was a daily challenge, but thanks to food and aid coming from overseas he and his fellow students survived,” Rebbetzen Feldman said.

The rabbi was in fact the only member of his family to do so. After the war, he received a visa for America, passing away last year at the age of 91.

“On his tombstone is listed the names of his parents and siblings, none of whom has a gravesite of their own.

“In an interesting twist of fate, I have a cousin who is now the Chabad rebbetzen in Shanghai,” Rebbetzen Feldman concluded.

- This is but one of the stories of the 30 000 Jewish refugees who found sanctuary in Shanghai during World War II. “Many were students and rabbonim from some of the greatest yeshivot of Eastern Europe,” Gavin Morris, director of the museum, remarked at the opening.
- Others stories are recounted at the exhibition that brings together for the first time photos, personal stories and artefacts from the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum.
- Professor Evance Kalula, director of the Confucius Institute at UCT that organised and co-hosted the exhibition with the South African Jewish Museum and the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, noted that in terms of contributing to their host countries, the Jews of South Africa and Shanghai were “very similar”.
- “It is an important story for us showing China as a place of refuge,” he said referring to the exhibition, adding, “We do forget sometimes that refugees do contribute to society wherever they are.”

• *The exhibition runs until 19 March.*



“Cutting the Cake” - wedding photo of Marianne Turner and Gary Matzdorff, 1947. Both were refugees in Shanghai during the war.

## World News in Brief

### Trump ban order: 7 Jews held for over 6 hours

WASHINGTON - Among the travellers delayed for hours by the Trump administration’s executive orders banning travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries, were seven people with ties to the Syrian Jewish community, according to a report.

Florida Today, the state’s subsidiary of USA Today, reported on Monday that federal authorities had detained the seven people for over six hours disembarking at Port Canaveral from a Royal Caribbean cruise ship. At least three of them were US born, the news site said, quoting Ruth Singer, an attorney involved in the case.

One woman, the mother to the three US natives, was Syrian but was not a citizen. She had permanent residency - a green card - and had lived in the United States for 20 years.

No explanation was given for the detention, but there have been multiple instances since President Donald Trump issued the order last week Friday of authorities detaining green card-holding travellers who have citizenship in one of the seven banned countries, one of which is Syria.

Some members of the Syrian Jewish community in the United States maintain ties with Syria so they can travel there and supervise properties and businesses still held in the country. The US Syrian Jewish community generally maintains friendly, if quiet, ties with the Assad regime.

Singer told Florida Today that the seven were treated well and quoted one of the men as saying as he left: “It’s a good thing we were Jewish.” (JTA)

### Geert Wilders calls Trump critics ‘hypocrites’

AMSTERDAM - The Dutch anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders has called critics of President Donald Trump’s executive order on refugees “hypocrites” for failing to protest against predominantly Muslim countries that ban Israeli passport holders.

Wilders, whose rightist Party for Freedom has been leading in five major polls conducted during January ahead of the March general elections, made the assertion on Sunday about Trump’s order, which includes a 90-day suspension of allowing in most travellers from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Iran.

Posting on Twitter a table from Wikipedia showing 16 countries that allegedly do not allow in holders of Israeli passports, Wilders wrote: “So where were the protests and demonstrations of the left? #hypocrisy.”

Of the 16 countries listed - all of them predominantly Muslim - 11 are Arab states. Of those, six are countries classified by Israel as enemy states, which citizens of the Jewish state are legally prohibited from entering according to

Israeli law. Israel does not exclude granting a visa to any applicants solely on the basis of their nationality, according to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Wilders, who in his youth lived for two years on an Israeli moshav in the Jordan Valley, has called Israel “a place where I feel home” and said it was “close to his heart”. He also has called Israel a “canary in the coal mine” and “the West’s first line of defence against Islam” during his many visits there.

Wilders has repeatedly said he argues for “Judeo-Christian values,” which he said are threatened by Islam in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Last month a Dutch court convicted Wilders of incitement to discrimination for promising during a speech three years ago to make sure the Netherlands has fewer Moroccans. Wilders was acquitted in 2011 of hate-incitement charges in connection with a short video in which he inveighed against Islam, a religion he has called “evil and fascist”. (JTA)

### Trump aide Boris Epshteyn wrote Holocaust statement...

WASHINGTON - The White House statement for International Holocaust Remembrance Day that has generated controversy for omitting Jews, reportedly was written by a Jewish aide to President Donald Trump.

Boris Epshteyn, a special assistant to the president, crafted the statement, the political news website Politico reported on Monday evening, citing an unnamed source “with knowledge of the situation”.

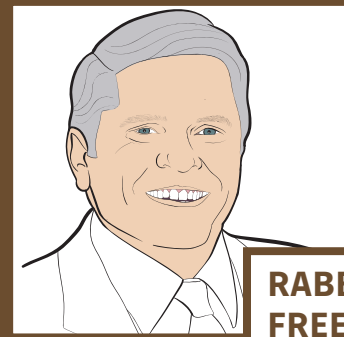
Epshteyn, a former Republican political strategist, immigrated to the United States from his native Moscow in 1993 at age 11.


On Monday, White House press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters at the daily briefing: “The statement was written with the help of an individual who is both Jewish and the descendant of Holocaust survivors.” Asked if it was Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and a leading adviser, Spicer refused to say.

Spicer also said that complaints, including from major US Jewish groups, about the omission of Jews from the statement issued last week Friday, were “pathetic” and “disappointing”.

“The president went out of his way to recognise the Holocaust and the suffering that went through it, and to make sure America never forgets the people who were affected by it and the loss of life,” Spicer said.

“To suggest that remembering the Holocaust and acknowledging all of the people - Jewish, gypsies, priests, disabled, gays and lesbians - I mean it is pathetic that people are picking on a statement,” he said. (JTA)





**RABBI BINNY FREEDMAN**

IDF company commander, Rosh Yeshiva and founder of Orayta, guitar-wielding storyteller, lover of Israel, gifted teacher – **Rabbi Binny**’s expertise lies in applying classic Jewish concepts to contemporary life in a very personal way. A survivor of the S’barro suicide bombing in 2001, his views on a meaningful life, Zionism and serving G-d have made Rabbi Freedman a regular on CNN, MSNBC and WCBS.

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**SINAI INDABA VI**



# Dirmeik writes a valuable guide to improve your life and direction

**BRIAN JOSS**

If Linda Dirmeik has her way, Attimo will be a regular guest at homes and high schools everywhere.

Attimo is the friendly character who graces the pages of a workbook called “Aim For What You Want” and the guide or facilitator that will help you work through the programme which is intended to help you grow, improve your life and find direction.

Dirmeik, a Capetonian, says her qualification for writing and publishing AIM (Attitude. Image. Motivation), is her experience in life.

“I had to become the breadwinner for my family at 35 and it was by having the correct tools that I became successful. In 1987, I was fortunate enough to be trained in this field with Mannie Edelstein Training Consultants, later with Success Motivation International (SMI) and above all Torah study.

“I decided to write the workbook, as I wanted more people to be able to afford this essential ‘tool’ for life. The guide, was written as I will no longer be the facilitator,” Dirmeik said.

She was introduced to goal setting and motivation at the age of 35 and said she wished she had known about it when she was growing up. At the time she was a coach

working in the corporate environment.

“However, one day the principal of Carmel College in Durban asked me to write something for his pupils as they had a ‘shocking attitude’ and that led me to write ‘Aim For What You Want’, suitable for high



Linda Dirmeik: Her workbook, “Aim For What You Want”, will help you grow.

school pupils. Many mothers have done the course and they can pass what they have learned on to their young children and set an example by putting into practice the knowledge they have gained from the workbook.

“I know that children will become more confident, achieve better results at school,

become more self-sufficient, have improved self-esteem and have a positive attitude. It has already been shown by thousands of students and schoolchildren who have been on the Aim programme.

“Everybody has different needs and the workbook is personalised so that every individual - including parents - who wishes to improve and grow, can do so,” Dirmeik said.

She has published the book herself. “I feel very confident that what I have written is good and worthy of self-publication.

“Before the book was published I shared it with Rabbi Dr Abraham Twerski, who runs a ‘psychology rehabilitation home’ in Pittsburgh, America, and once I had his approval, I applied for copyright both in South Africa and in the US at his suggestion,” she said.

Dirmeik says the “Aim For What You Want” programme creates a reality (devoid of the thinking that limits our potential) around five key areas of life: our social circle, our family, our physical being, our ethical being and our career/education.

The workbook is divided into 10 modules including Word Power; Finding Strength and Weaknesses; Communication; Setting Goals; Motivation and Relationships. There



“Aim For What You Want”, the workbook.

are pages where you can jot down your thoughts. Some of the questions are quite probing and though there is no right or wrong answer they will require some deep thinking. But it will help you grow and find direction. It’s your personal life coach. The workbook is free of jargon and is written in plain English.

• The cost of both books is R278 with postage. Visit: [www.a-i-m.co.za](http://www.a-i-m.co.za) (which was under construction at the time of going to print) or phone Dirmeik on tel/fax (021) 761-1148 or e-mail [linda@a-i-m.co.za](mailto:linda@a-i-m.co.za) for more information.

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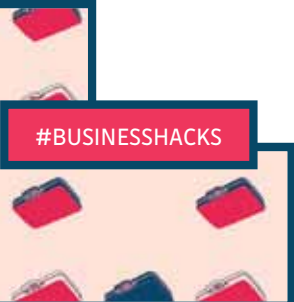
JOCELYN ANGEL

As well as focusing on Israel and the current problems it faces, the learners of King David High School, Linksfield always keep their strong connection to their past.

The entire school gathered during break last week to participate in International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The learners stood in a silent group, bearing the placards “We Remember”, and engaged in a moment of silence to commemorate the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

The school was very proud of its learners for the solemn and respectful way in which they commemorated this horrific event.



CHARLIE HARARY

**Charlie Harary** was born knowing what it means to survive. But learning how to thrive has become his life's mission. Harary graduated from Columbia Law, and after making his mark as the first VP and legal counsel at RXR Realty New York, he moved on to co-found H3 & Company, a multimillion-dollar VC and advisory firm.

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SINAI INDABA VI

## Early introduction to science at Sydenham Pre-Primary

SUE BENJAMIN

Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primay School's "STEM Room" (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) is up and running! Research shows that the earlier one guides and supports children's wonder about the world and promote learning related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) - the more successful they will be in all areas of learning. The school's Science Room is fully functional now and the children are busy exploring, discovering, guessing and hypothesising!



Looking through their microscopes are Ella Hovsha; Liat Haifer; and Skyla Benater (front).

More news on our website [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## Torah Academy Boys' High awarded for excellence in Matric 2016

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Torah Academy was last week Friday chosen by the Gauteng Department of Education as the best performing independent school, Eastern District, in the National Senior Certificate 2016 exams. The award was made by GDE Chief Director Moses Nkonyane, for the school's overall performance, top marks

by two learners, Yocheved Cohen (dramatic arts) and Doron Joffe (business science), and the consistent 100 per cent pass rate. Nkonyane presented trophies and certificates to the school. Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, principal of the TA Boys' High, said: "We are thrilled - now I know everyone recognises the school's achievements. We are so proud of our matrics."



Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, principal of Torah Academy Boys' High School; Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of TA; and Rebecca Sarchi, principal of TA Girls' High School.

## Cleaning while having some old-fashioned fun

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary arranged some summer fun with a "car wash" for the senior and grade R children last week. The children had lots of fun getting their hands wet and soapy and cleaning their bikes until they were sparkling. A great tactile learning experience while at the same time having good old-fashioned fun!



Mila Wise; Lia Gruskin; Jesse Abro; Joshua Amler; Daniel Ginsburg; and Tyler Meyers.



# Celebrating three generations of KDVP achievements



Photo: Yael Gordon

Jared Woolf stands proud at the Matric Valedictory Evening.  
NIRVANA ROGERS

Matric pupil Jared Wolf’s story celebrates three generations of family commitment to King David Victory Park High School.

Jared’s achievements span from being awarded

provincial swimming colours and winning the SA Youth gold medal for 200m breast stroke at the SA Youth and Senior Nationals as well as first place at the Prestige Inter School Gauteng Gala in 2015.

In 2016 he was deputy head boy as well as cricket and swimming captain. In the same year he won third place at the Prestige Inter School Gauteng Gala which resulted in him obtaining swimming honours by the school.

Jared’s father Graham Woolf was a head boy at KDVP High in 1987 and his granddad was acting headmaster at KDVP High from May 1969 to August 1969 and later become headmaster from September 1975 to December 1998.

Jared was awarded top student in humanities subjects in 2016 - the humanities trophy award, which was previously won by both his uncle Stuart in 1984 and his father Graham in 1987.

In addition he was also awarded the “best all-round” trophy which his dad was awarded in 1987, while he was head boy at KDVP High.

In his valedictory speech, Jared said inter alia: “King David has given me far more than just an outstanding well-rounded formal Jewish education. It has instilled in me a love for sport and provided great lessons in team work, leadership skills, sportsmanship and mutual respect.

“My school has also instilled in me a set of values and morals and taught me the importance of being a responsible citizen so that I am able one day to give back to society of which I am a part.

“It is all of these tools and values that are now a part of me and which will guide my life into the future.”.

• He obtained eight distinctions in the 2016 matriculation examinations and intends studying actuarial science at Wits.

## Crawford Sandton elects student leaders for 2017

### OWN CORRESPONDENT

Congratulations to Crawford College Sandton’s newly-elected Student Executive Body. They have great responsibilities and a tradition of excellence to maintain.

But the school is confident that these leaders too will serve with commitment, dedication and passion.

The school is excited about the new visions and aspirations that the new leaders will offer and wishes them a successful and meaningful year ahead.

Crawford Sandton knows that it can count on the grade12s and the school to support the team in achieving even greater things this year.



Photo supplied

Arielle Traub; Jonathan Sundy; Jaymee Gobetz; Sean Terespolsky; Temima Rachbuch; and Yarin Neuhaus.

## Oodles of first day fun at Rosabelle Klein



Photo: Caron Levy

### CARON LEVY (PRINCIPAL)

The first day of school is often fraught with tears and uncertainty - some tears from the moms and some uncertainty from the children themselves!

The first day at King David Rosabelle Klein Nursery School in Waverley was a happy and joyous occasion, with little people greeting old friends with shouts of delight and happiness!

The first weeks here at school have seen content children learning, playing and interacting in the shade of our trees in our magnificent playground.

Each day heralds another few hours of learning and friendship. Welcome to the 2017 academic year at RKNS!

Pictured are (top): Ben Hack and Adam Lauter and (bottom): Levi Tucker; Jayden Fittinghof; and Eli Joffe.

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# Diamond city Kimberley, steeped in Jewish history

SUZANNE BELLING

They say “a diamond is forever” - and this has proved a truism in the mining city of Kimberley. Although numbering 25 souls, despite demographics and moving to major cities and overseas, the Kimberley Jewish community - members of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation - has not vanished into the city’s Big Hole.

Former Kimberley residents and other interested parties have attended reunions over the past years, including the congregation’s 110th anniversary in 2012, and every Rosh Hashanah the congregation almost doubles in size.

Solid as the stone for which Kimberley is famed, is Adrian “Barney” Horwitz, chairman and CEO of the congregation, a lawyer with a practice in the city. He and Barry Katz, from and old Kimberley family, are largely responsible for conducting services. The trio which runs the Jewish community is complemented by David Allen, president of the GWHC.

Horwitz is a keen historian and is in demand for his talks on Kimberley and the significance of what he terms the “Jewish sojourn” there.

Kimberley’s Jewish community produced six mayors between 1906 and 1967, including William Sagar, JP Justice of the Peace, Ernest (later Sir Ernest) Oppenheimer, Bernard Cohen, Gustave “Gus” Bowman Haberfeld, Lionel Jawno and Cecil Jack Sussman, some of whom served for more than one term.

Colonel Sir David Harris – known as “The Grand Old Man of South African Jewry” - a director of De Beers and commander of the Kimberley Town Guard during the siege in 1900 - was MP for Kimberley and Griqualand West in the old Cape Parliament and subsequently in the Union Parliament.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer who moved his residence from Kimberley in 1916 succeeded Sir David Harris, remaining an MP until 1938.

A malicious rumour that did the rounds regarding the Oppenheimer family and the Kimberley Shul has finally been debunked as loshen hora.

The Oppenheims had been active in Kimberley and the congregation. Ernest’s son Harry

was born and had had his bris there. However, on the death of Harry’s mother, May, Sir Ernest married Caroline “Ina” Harvey and the family converted to Christianity.

The story goes that the Oppenheimer family had put up a plaque in the shul to mark Harry’s barmitzvah and because they no longer practised Judaism asked for the plaque to be removed. When the congregation refused, the Oppenheims were said to have offered to buy the synagogue, raze it and have it rebuilt at their cost - minus the plaque.

“No such thing happened. There never was a plaque. Plus the records show - to which Barney Horwitz attests - the family left Kimberley when Harry was 11, he didn’t have a barmitzvah there or anywhere else for that matter,” says Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, country communities rabbi of the Board of Deputies, who ministers to the Jews of Kimberley.

The Kimberley Synagogue was built on land donated by De Beers. The original shul building was a somewhat primitive galvanised iron structure on the site of the present Cecil John Rhodes memorial statue.



The Kimberley Synagogue, to many, is the most beautiful in southern Africa - Byzantine in style and modelled on a shul in Venice.

In July 1902 GH Bonas, president of the congregation, laid the foundation stone. The shul was officially opened in mid-September 1902. The next month, Bonas was presented with a solid silver replica of the synagogue in appreciation of his work for the congregation.

Many years later, this valuable replica, was discovered in a London pawnshop by a congregant, who serendipitously was visiting the United Kingdom. It was immediately bought and returned to Kimberley. It is now on loan to the Cape Town Jewish Museum.

The synagogue today is one of few in South Africa to be in use for over 100 years. However, the

Kimberley Jewish community itself dates back to 1873. Even before that there is a record of individual Jews having settled in the city.

The main feature of the synagogue, with its ornate stained-glass windows, is an imposing domed ceiling, depicted as a blue sky with stars. Marble steps lead to the Aron Kodesh, the surrounds of which are painted to resemble marble. There are 613 seats in the shul, symbolising the mitzvot of that number.

Twelve Sifrei Torah enable every male in the congregation to have a chance to walk around the bimah during the Simchat Torah hakafot.

There is a famous yad (hand or pointer to read the Torah), with a blue white diamond set on the forefinger.

There are two Jewish cemeteries in Kimberley. One has been walled in to keep out vandals, but the West End Cemetery is still in use.

During the 1990s Horwitz arranged, through a Muslim “contact”, for observant graduate medical doctors to do their prescribed community service at a hospital in Kimberley. Instead of staying in doctors’ quarters at the hospital, they stayed in the shul house. The last spiritual leader - the Rev Shmuel Kruglak - left in the early 1990s and Rabbi Silberhaft stepped in in 1996. Among the spiritual leaders was the Rev Joe Matzner, who served Kimberley during the seventies and now lives in Johannesburg.

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# SINAI INDABA VI

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World News in Brief		What's On	
<h2>At least 17 bomb threats called at US Jewish centres</h2> <p>NEW YORK - At least 17 Jewish community centres across the United States were targeted with bomb threats in the third wave of such mass disruption in January.</p> <p>Paul Goldenberg, director of Secure Community Networks - an affiliate of the Jewish federations of North America, which advises Jewish groups and institutions on security - said the threats were called in late Tuesday morning. Some of the messages were live.</p> <p>"In the past we know that the numbers can grow exponentially," he said, adding that perpetrators have been "leveraging technologies to make mass calls".</p> <p>Goldenberg confirmed that threats had been called into JCCs in Albany, Syracuse, New York; West Orange, New Jersey, Milwaukee, San Diego and Salt Lake City.</p> <p>The JCC in New Haven, Connecticut, received a live call at 11:45 on Tuesday threatening violence. The JCC is housed in several locations following a December 5 fire, and evacuated about 100 people from those sites following the call.</p> <p>After law enforcement determined that the threat was not credible, the evacuees returned. The New Haven JCC was also targeted in a wave of bomb threats about two weeks ago.</p> <p>"We recognise that we live under a new set of circumstances that we have to be responsive to, and take every possible precaution to keep our people safe," said New Haven JCC CEO Judy Diamondstein.</p>		<div><div>Friday ( February 3)</div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UZLC hosts international journalist Paula Slier on "Reporting from the Edge". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.</li><li>• Lunch hour classical music concerts at the Auto &amp; General Theatre on the Square every Friday at 13:00. No booking. Unreserved seats at R50 (incl coffee and biscuits) available at the box office from 12:30. The Judell Ensemble Chamber Music Concert series on a selection of Poulenc's works for wind instruments, piano and voice featuring Polina Minatcheva (piano), musicians and vocalists. Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.</li></ul><div>Sunday (February 5)</div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RCHCC hosts a presentation by Eli Rabinowitz on "Traces and Memories of Jewish Life Connecting to our Litvak Shtetls". Donation R90 (incl refreshments). Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378 or e-mail: <a href="mailto:rchcc@telkomsa.net">rchcc@telkomsa.net</a> or <a href="mailto:rene.s@telkomsa.net">rene.s@telkomsa.net</a></li><li>• Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts Dr Rose Lerer Cohen visiting from Israel, a board member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, on "Lithuania — History &amp; Migration - Influences on Genealogy &amp;</li></ul></div> <div><p>Citizenship", covering Lithuania's early beginnings, destruction of its Jewry and migration to SA. Venue: HOD. Time 19:30. Donation R25 (incl light refreshments). Contact Hannah (011) 485-2188 or <a href="mailto:igssa16@gmail.com">igssa16@gmail.com</a></p><div>Monday (February 6)</div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UJW adult education division hosts Dr Jane Marston on archaeology of the ancient Near East, "The Looting of the Baghdad Museum". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.</li></ul><div>Thursday (February 9)</div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hebrew Club meets on the 2nd floor at Beyachad. Time: 11:00 — 12:00. Calling all fluent Hebrew speakers to hear interesting Hebrew lectures on economy, history, technology, family memories, etc. Information: Abigail (011) 640-2376 or 072-432-9198.</li><li>• JJAC invites Jewish singles and dating couples, ages 27 - 49 to "Table Tennis &amp; Games Evening". Venue: Sandton Shul. Information:</li></ul></div> <div>E-mail <a href="mailto:whatson@jjac.co.za">whatson@jjac.co.za</a> or Sheli Berger 082-929-9765.</div> <div>Friday (February 10)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lunch hour classical music concerts at the Auto &amp; General Theatre on the Square every Friday at 13:00. No booking. Unreserved seats at R50 (incl coffee and biscuits) available at the box office from 12:30. The Tony Yoko Jazz Trio with Sophia Nemand (piano/vocals), Marc Duby and Tony Yoko. Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.</li></ul> <div>Sunday (February 12)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Second Innings hosts Dr Leonard Carr on "Reassessing Your Life Investments - Becoming The Beneficiary Of Your Own Goodness". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Information: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9616.</li></ul> <div>Monday (February 13)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UJW adult education division hosts Itai Melchior, Embassy of Israel to South Africa, Head of Trade &amp; Economic Mission on "Israel's Water Story". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.</li></ul>	

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# Trump’s sledgehammer makes a villain of everyone



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Wherever they live, most Jews have family memories of forebears arriving in a new country as immigrants or refugees after escaping from places such as Nazi Germany or Eastern Europe where they would be killed or persecuted if they stayed.

The Jewish psyche instinctively understands a refugee’s feelings when a country’s doors are closed to him because of colour, culture or religion.

A famous South African incident is the Stuttgart, a ship which arrived in Cape Town in October 1936 with 537 German Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. It prompted displays of Afrikaner hatred for Jews by the anti-Semitic Greyshirts organisation who protested their arrival, saying Jews were unassimilable, of questionable morality and a threat to

Afrikaners. Fortunately, the refugees managed to disembark.

Today’s flood of refugees fleeing war-torn Middle Eastern or African states poses dilemmas for countries, which fear granting them entry as Islamist terrorism shakes the world. Last week Friday US President Donald Trump signed an executive order barring refugees and citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries - Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen - from entering the United States, echoing populist sentiments among Americans.

Who are the refugees and the immigration officials implementing the order? The many human faces of the conundrum are portrayed powerfully in a play currently on at Johannesburg’s Market Theatre called “When Swallows Cry”, by playwright Mike van Graan.

In the opening vignette set in Somalia, the son of a white Canadian mining magnate, at whose mine near Mogadishu workers were killed when they went on strike, has gone there as a volunteer teacher to help heal the damage people such as his father have caused.

The father and others had used their money to ensure the country was run by a tyrant helpful to them. Civil war rages, with terrified people trying to flee. The teacher is held hostage and beaten by Muslim insurgents who threaten to turn him over to radical Islamist group Boko Haram to get a ransom to rebuild a devastated village.

The Canadian’s capturer films him with a cellphone and posts it on Facebook so that his friends and relatives back home will see him describing the devastation ruthless colonialists have wrought.

The second scene is an American immigration entry point, where a distraught Muslim Somalian with a valid visa is being interrogated. Officials find a Qur’an in his baggage and demand to know what he intends doing in America.

On their data-base they find his family name is identical to someone listed as a terrorist threat. He says he doesn’t know the man, pleading to be allowed admission, promising that all he wants is to make a safe new life away from his blood-soaked country. After they decide to put him on a plane back to Somalia, he grabs an official’s gun and shoots himself in the head, choosing to die rather than go back.

The third vignette, a harsh refugee detention camp in Australia, shows two black Zimbabweans who came on a leaky boat after walking from a devastated Zimbabwe to Kenya. Their family members died en route. A white Australian officer beats them mercilessly. They plead to be allowed in, but the assault becomes more ruthless. The officer loses his restraint and screams about his family who had been white farmers in Zimbabwe and whose land had been violently seized, forcing them to flee. In uncontrollable rage he shoots the refugees.

Van Graan graphically depicts how there are villains, victims and untold stories on all sides. In art, as in life, people cannot be tarred haphazardly with the same brush like a homogeneous mob. The Greyshirts tried to do that with the Stuttgart’s Jews. Trump’s sledgehammer approach is doing it with Muslims and will only cause more hatred.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog [sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com](http://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com)

## Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



## Closeness between Board and SAUJS to advantage of both

With the new academic year about to get underway, the focus is shifting once more to our university campuses. Orientation week commenced at Wits, with SAUJS using the opportunity to introduce itself to

first-year students and sign up members. For Jewish students, many of who are finding themselves for the first time in a much broader environment, SAUJS provides a wide range of social, educational, religious and outreach activities in which they can remain connected to and build on their heritage.

Where required, SAUJS stands up for the rights of Jewish students, including taking action against anti-Semitism and related activity on our campuses.

Over the years, a close working relationship has developed between the Board and SAUJS. We regularly collaborate in running various community outreach projects, an example being the participation of a Jewish delegation in last year’s Human Rights Day commemorative events in Sharpeville.

The national chairman of SAUJS sits on the Gauteng Council and National Executive Committee of the Board and through regular reports-back on these bodies keeps the broader communal leadership in touch with what is happening on campus.

The Board, working with SAUJS, also assists in resolving various difficulties that arise affecting Jewish students, including the setting of exams and tests on Shabbat or Yomtov.

As has been frequently stressed in previous columns, it is up to the relevant students to carefully check their timetables and timeously bring to our attention

any clashes that occur. The earlier we are alerted to scheduling problems, the better chance we have of arriving at an acceptable alternative arrangement with the institution concerned. The relevant contact details are (011) 645-2521/ [sajbd@sajbd.org](mailto:sajbd@sajbd.org)

Over the years, the Board’s Cape Town and Durban branches and the National Office in Johannesburg have been entrusted with administering a range of bursary portfolios on behalf of needy and/ or academically deserving Jewish students.

In the case of Cape Town and Durban, bursaries are only granted for study at a local institution within those particular provinces; more flexibility is allowed regarding those administered in Johannesburg.

Most of the bursaries are also open to similarly qualified students from the broader community.

The awards for the current academic year have now been finalised. Those interested in applying for 2018 can contact one of the relevant branches: [sajbd@sajbd.org](mailto:sajbd@sajbd.org) (National), [cknj@djco.co.za](mailto:cknj@djco.co.za) (Durban) and [joshua@ctjc.co.za](mailto:joshua@ctjc.co.za) (Cape Town).

One of the things that will inevitably be on everyone’s minds is whether we will see a renewal of last year’s violent protests that caused such havoc on campuses throughout the country.

While it is still early days, there appear to be hopeful signs that this time round, clearer heads will prevail when it comes to addressing the various issues of the day. Whatever transpires, the Board will continue to carefully monitor the situation and, as required, work with SAUJS and the administration concerned to ensure the continued safety and well-being of our students.

• 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

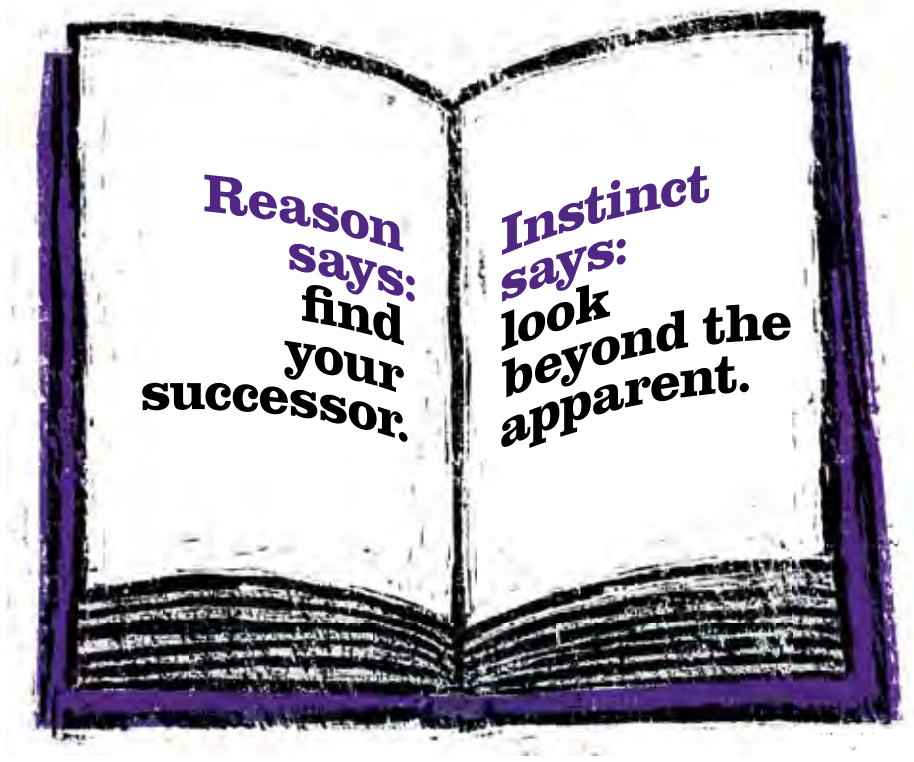
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# Maccabi SA coup as Jonathan Kaplan roped in

JACK MILNER

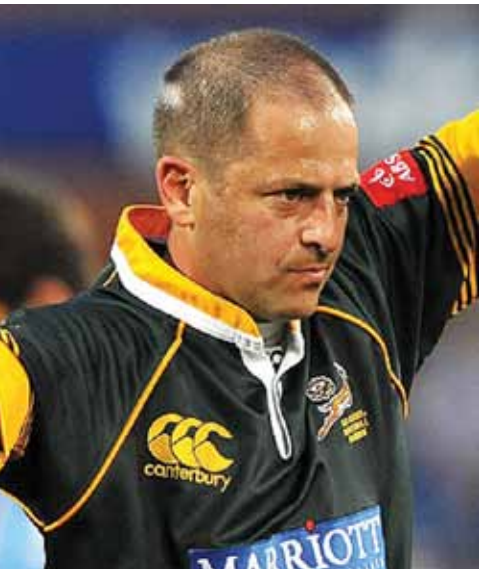
Jonathan Kaplan, one of the most respected and highly rated rugby referees in the world in recent years, has been appointed “Director of Referees” for this year’s Maccabi Games. Kaplan,

who has put his whistle away on international level, is still maintaining a keen interest and passion for the game.  
Kaplan joined a number of South African Jewish rugby greats when he was inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

He will not only referee games at the great sporting event in Israel, but will also conduct lectures and workshops with Israeli referees during the tournament.  
“I have been around the world and refereed all the greatest players in all the greatest arenas over a long period of time,” said Kaplan, who is also a Maccabi SA ambassador. “But during that time I did not get to referee my own people at the Maccabi Games, which was very disappointing.  
“I am privileged to finally be going to the Games to referee some of the fixtures. I am looking forward to being involved and helping out where I can.”

Kaplan’s position at this year’s Maccabiah is a huge feather in the cap for Maccabi SA, who negotiated the agreement with the Maccabi Organising Committee to appoint Kaplan.  
Meanwhile Maccabi SA is confident it will be able to send a highly competitive and well-prepared senior rugby team to Israel in July.  
The next step is to raise the necessary funds and the team is therefore embarking on a national fundraising campaign. Maccabi SA appeals to the community to assist the team achieve their goal of winning back the rugby gold medal - which is a real possibility.

Maccabi SA has competed in the rugby competition since the sport’s inclusion at the 1981 Games. In that period South Africa has been one of the most dominant countries in the competition, winning seven medals, including five golds.  
However, following the limited success of the Maccabi SA Open Rugby XV at the 2009 and 2013 Games, Maccabi SA undertook to review the senior rugby structures and implement improved systems to find a way to regain the much sought-after gold medal this year.  
At the start of the team selection process in 2016, it quickly became apparent that the traditional trials process would not yield the required crop of competitive players. Instead it was decided that the best Jewish rugby players in South Africa would be identified and offered a place, based on merit and the level of competition they are involved in. The resulting team is split nearly equally between Johannesburg and Cape Town.  
The recruitment phase has been highly successful and some impressive players have been



Jonathan Kaplan has been appointed “Director of Referees” for this year’s Maccabi Games. selected. Captain of the team is Paul Cohen who was the stand-out player at the 2013 Games and a former Varsity Cup player at UCT.  
The most important piece of the puzzle is selecting the right coach and the team is lucky enough to have recruited Kevin Musikanth as head coach. Musikanth boasts impressive credentials including a memorable two years with UCT in which that university won both the Varsity Cup (in dramatic fashion) and the World University Cup in Oxford, England.

The current 2017 touring squad:

- FORWARDS**  
David Geffen (prop), Jake Glass (prop), Kiernon Rabie (prop), Asher Meyerowitz (prop), Jared Goldblatt (hooker, prop), Sean Patterson (lock, flank), Brandon Sweet (prop, flank), Keegan van der Linde (flank), Hacjivah Dayimani (8th man, flank), Cullen Collopy (hooker, flank), Tyrone Sussman (lock), and Tyrell Tytinger (8th man, flank).
- BACKS**  
Daniel Stein (scrumhalf), Ryan Goldberg (scrumhalf), Jonathan Halladay (scrumhalf), Jordan Chait (flyhalf), Dylan Coll (flyhalf, fullback), Ryan Gordon (wing, centre, fullback), Brent Kier (centre), Jesse Wilensky (wing, fullback), Paul Cohen (wing, fullback), and Josh Pinn (centre).

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