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# south african Jewish Report

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## ‘All that’s left is a blackened wasteland...’

See pages 2 and 3

Photo: Jan Venter



Generations of Wind Blown  
Unsettled Souls and Unsettled  
with a Deep and Shining Soul



# Fighting fire with fire

TALI FEINBERG

As Knysna and the Garden Route were declared a disaster zone in the wake of last week’s devastating fires, Jewish people came out in full force to assist those who had lost everything. Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, visited Knysna in the days after the fire. In a Facebook post, he said that Israel donated R25 000 of food and produce to help feed the firemen and other first responders, which he presented to Knysna Mayor Eleanore Bouw-Spies. Lenk made sandwiches at the relief centre and discussed the way forward with the mayor. George resident, Myron Rabinowitz, chairman of the Garden Route Jewish Association (GRJA), is working with child welfare organisations in the area to ensure that the youngest and poorest victims of the fires are taken care of. Rabinowitz is concerned that all fire victims should receive trauma counselling, which will help them rebuild their lives in the months and years to come.” The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies is working closely with the GRJA to identify the most urgent needs of the victims, says Liza-Jane Webb, media officer of the Cape Board. “Our community has been overwhelming in their support. We have received R128 000 cash donations, as well as donations of goods, services and accommodation. Students from SAUJS manned collection points in Sea Point; people are helping in any way they can.” Webb says that there is still a need for basic household goods like plates, cups, bedding and towels. There is also a need for essential aid, which is water and toiletries, including nappies. Manpower is needed to pack and sort goods.

“Social workers and trauma counsellors are also in dire need to counsel victims,” says Webb. “Although the fires have mostly ended, it’s important that our support continues over the weeks while the victims rebuild their lives.” The Cape Board is heartened by how communities across South Africa have come together and rallied in support. “It’s been bittersweet,” concludes Webb. Plettenberg Bay Shul Chairman Johnny Amoils, says that the extent of the devastation

“We feel that the onus is on us as the Jewish community, to assist wherever possible...”

is difficult to comprehend. “How did this happen in our utopia?” is the general sentiment expressed. In a letter to his community, he wrote: “We feel that the onus is on us as the Jewish community, to assist wherever possible.” Financial donations are most urgent, as this will allow the shul to purchase items that are particularly needed by Jewish families and others. He is grateful for the support of Jewish communities across the country: “It has been remarkable to witness. Their generosity has given us a lot of momentum.” Samantha Lurie who lives on Thesen Islands, has hosted five families during the evacuations. She is involved in the relief efforts. “Financial donations and places to store donated goods for the months ahead, and building materials, are still urgently required,” she says. Many families whose homes burnt down,

are uninsured, while there is a worry that those who are insured, will leave the town or even the country to start over. In addition, many families with lower incomes, have lost jobs like gardening or domestic work. The mood on the ground is positive. “We are having our Oyster Festival in a month’s time, and Knysna will be rebuilt even more beautifully than before!” Pam Tudin of Thesen Islands, said that those on the island hosted evacuated families on the first night of the fires. By morning, several of those hosted had lost their homes and were experiencing shock. Johannesburg resident Dean Cohen, a designer by profession, has created a sticker with an emblem, which he hopes can be used as a licence disc sticker or as a decorative item, which can be purchased for a nominal fee, with the funds going towards fire victims. Jacob Lazarus of RAM Hand-to-Hand Couriers, says that the company had donated and delivered 500 blankets and eight tons worth of fresh bottled drinking water, and is assisting DHL in its deliveries, after it opened its stores as drop-off points. Jewish day schools, shuls, companies and individuals from around the country, have all rallied in support, but the true test will be in the months and years ahead, as the Garden Route rebuilds itself.

Shabbat Times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:05	17:58	Johannesburg
17:26	18:21	Cape Town
16:46	17:39	Durban
17:06	17:59	Bloemfontein
16:57	17:52	Port Elizabeth
16:51	17:45	East London

## Parshat Shelach

# Spying on Judaism?

Someone came in to my office on Tuesday with questions. Pretty strong ones too. About religion, G-d, and Torah; questions that I’ve heard before. But after 45 minutes he stood up and said words I very rarely hear: “Thanks rabbi, you’ve answered my questions.” But this is rare. Yes, very rare that questions are asked in genuine pursuit of answers. All too often they’re not really questions. Excuses is probably a better description. This week we read about 10 of the most famous and colossally tragic sceptics of all time. The 10 spies out of the 12 who come back from the land of Israel, sceptical that the Jewish people would be able to enter the land. Only Joshua and Caleb remain faithful to the mission. But weren’t they just doing their job?

Isn’t the whole premise of a spy sent by an advancing army to explore the possibilities (or lack thereof) to conquer the suggested territory? The truth is, while we often think of them as “the spies” that Moshe sent, they weren’t really spies. In fact, in the entire story in the parsha, they are never once referred to by that name as spies (or meraglim in the original)! Their mission is not to spy, but to scout or tour (Latur et Ha’aretz (similar to the Hebrew for tourists which is tayarim)). A scout is also sent to explore and verify the land to ensure. But a scout’s position is not one that will undermine the premise of his mission. He gathers information. A spy on the other hand is someone with the power and influence to not only gather information, but with the ability to radically alter the premise and change the plans. A scout comes for information. A spy comes with an agenda. Questions are good. G-d wants us to scout the land and question the territory in front

Rabbi Asher Deren  
The Shul of  
Blouberg - West  
Coast



of us. Whether it’s the ethical premises of Torah or the spiritual value in mitzvot or anything else on our mind. Of course we should question. But are we questioning our Judaism or spying on it? As a sceptic by nature, I was blessed to study as a student of the Lubavitcher Rebbe obm, in a community where questions and exploration was and still is embraced. The Rebbe wasn’t worried about those who asked questions, but he was concerned about those who weren’t looking for answers. As we approach Gimmel Tammuz, the 23rd yearzeit (on June 23), I take inspiration from Caleb, one of the two faithful scouts, who resisted the allure of cynical scepticism with the faith he gathered at the resting place of his ancestors in Chevron. In that spirit the Rebbe’s ohel is a place where I can come to so that the strength of my questions overwhelms the toxicity of my cynicism. That’s what gives me strength to keep on going, and asking.

South African

Jewish Report

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# Watching in horror as their homes were razed to the ground

TALI FEINBERG

Grateful to be alive, a Jewish family in Plettenberg Bay this week recounts how in the face of rampant fires and imminent danger, they went to the Kwikspar to buy a few things.

“What were we thinking,” said Ariella Kaplan, who described what had happened to her, her family and once beautiful eight hectare Plettenberg Bay farm during the worst fires and winds the region has ever seen.

“Looking back, it was a totally ridiculous thing to do under the circumstances. We were not thinking clearly at all.”

Nothing could adequately prepare her and her husband Clive for what greeted them when they went back to view the damage to their property.

“All that’s left is a blackened wasteland. Our house had been obliterated. The guest house was nothing but a burnt-out shell. The only remaining area was my mother’s flatlet, her kitchen melted...her dining room table stood unscathed and on it stood a Siddur and Kiddush cup which she had been planning to take, but got left behind in the last minutes.”

That happened last Saturday, three days after multiple fires began to rage across the Garden Route, destroying homes and creating an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the area.

On the second day (Thursday) of the fire, Ariella, her children, her mother and her animals, had been evacuated from the farm after a harrowing night.



Clive was in Johannesburg for work. The family returned to their then unscathed property the next day, thinking their ordeal was over. Alas, it was just beginning.

On Saturday morning, despite it being a beautiful, still and sunny morning, Ariella felt a “restless energy” and didn’t want to unpack, as there had been a warning of expected high winds.

She suggested to Clive - who had returned - that they go help their friends, Erez and Louisa Shneor clearing their home which had been

destroyed.

“As we were leaving, the wind was starting to pick up. When we turned out of our gate and headed down Airport Road, we saw a huge blaze had started up behind the airport and in the direction of the Shneor’s house. Rescue vehicles were rushing to the scene.”

“I kept saying to Clive that we needed to head home in case we were not able to get home.”

After just 25 minutes away from home, she says: “We drove on past our gate, and as we rounded the bend we saw a huge blaze. The wind speeds were crazy and it was driving this monster towards us.

“We rushed home, threw our bags, dogs and cats into the cars. My mom and Lizzy (our domestic worker) were packing furiously.

“We tore out of there, with all souls accounted for, only to be told that the road was closed on both sides and we were directed to turn into an open farm field. We drove our vehicles across the neatly ploughed rows and sat in the middle of the field to wait it out with about 60 other cars.

“One would think that we were safe on

this open land with no vegetation around us, but after a few minutes a wall of fire was approaching and we were urgently evacuated again and moved to the airport landing strip.

“But there too, the flames were approaching from the other direction, so we were moved to an area between the hangars. The wind and smoke was indescribable.

“We sat and watched in horror as the flames got higher and higher. Each time the smoke turned black, we knew another house was taken.



Photos: Jan Venter

“On Monday morning we took the children to school to try and settle them back into some sort of routine as quickly as possible. Clive and I were then ready to go and take a proper look at what was once our home. We weren’t expecting much, we were just grateful that we are all alive, having made it out with roughly 10 minutes to spare,” says Ariella.

Their friends, the Shneors, also lost their Plett home and farm to the fires. Erez describes how they had initially felt safe, and spent time transferring all of their precious belongings to a large shed they thought would be safe.

They had just completed this evacuation and were going to leave to help others, when a fireball from a tree landed on the roof of the shed, destroying all of their belongings and Erez’s tools and machinery which he needs for his work as a builder.

As they fled to safety, Erez said the fire was like “the cutting of a cake” - it just kept taking more and more. They are currently sharing a nearby home with another family, and are grateful to be safe and in a house.

Tanya and Derek Kushner live on Thesen Islands in Knysna - one of the few safe havens - when the fires broke out, recounts Tanya. Like other island residents, the Kushners opened their home to evacuees. They also faced suffocating smoke, power failures and limited water, and after a few days decided to evacuate because the smoke was too overpowering.

In a series of WhatsApp messages, Tanya described the scene to family as it unfolded: “I cannot believe the goodwill of the people - everyone is helping, giving and sharing.”

Johannesburg couple Taryn Kahn and Graham Ziegler were in Plettenberg Bay on holiday to celebrate Taryn’s birthday, and fled

the fire with their lives. On the evening of Wednesday, June 7, they went out for dinner to celebrate her birthday, and returned to their holiday home (which had no power since the fires broke out), setting alarms on their phones to wake them to check if the fire was close.

Graham awoke suddenly before his alarm went off, and saw that the fire was 200 metres away. The couple dashed to their rental car with minimal possessions, and tried to drive away on the main Robberg Road, which was engulfed in flames.

They then took a dirt road through the bush, and eventually abandoned their rental car and ran down to the beach. They made their way to a highway where they were picked up and taken to a place of safety, which was later evacuated.

That evening they returned to their holiday home, which had been surrounded by fire but miraculously not damaged. The rental car had also survived.

Dr Merle Friedman lost her entire Knysna home to the fire. A trauma counsellor herself, she says the effects of losing one’s house are more overwhelming than she ever imagined.

Shammas of the Plettenberg Bay Shul, Mendel Winer, also had to evacuate, but says he is lucky that his house is still standing. He travelled to open the Plett Shul before Shabbat.

Famed Jewish artist Beezy Bailey, was sent a haunting photo of his holiday home burning to the ground. In a Facebook post that has since gone viral, Bailey wrote: “I’m more interested in how beautiful this photo is of my Plett house on fire than sad. I’ll do a painting of it.”

He added: “Let us unite in times like these, something we South Africans are so good at, pick ourselves up by our boot straps and rebuild broken hearts, homes and lives together.”

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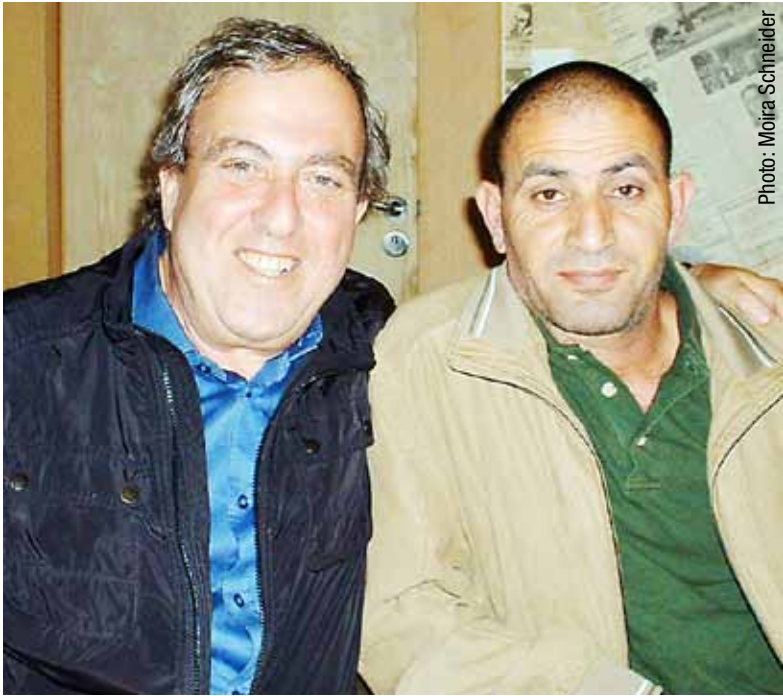
# Two fathers co-joined in Parents Circle through common loss

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

Rami Elhanan and Bassam Aramin share an unshakeable bond forged through tragedy - they have both lost young daughters to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And now the unlikely pair has a joint mission: to eradicate the hatred that underpins the seemingly intractable situation through the activities of the Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF). Rami's 14-year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed by two Palestinian suicide bombers in Jerusalem in 1997. Bassam's 10-year-old daughter, Abir, was killed by an Israeli border policeman in front of her school in East Jerusalem in 2007. "This was the beginning of a journey," Rami, a seventh-generation Yerushalmi, reflects of that terrible time. "The bubble that

I was living in blew up and I had to find a reason to get out of bed in the morning." A year later he was invited to join the Parents Circle. This was a meeting that would change his life. "I was 47 years old and it was the first time ever in my life I have met Palestinians as human beings, not as workers in the streets, not as terrorists, not as transparent people," he remembers. Today he describes Bassam as "my brother and my light in the darkness." "This meeting was so powerful and dramatic that it really changed everything. It made me understand that without the ability to talk to each other, it will never stop. The death of my daughter would be just a link in a chain of violence that would never end because every brutal activity brings another brutal activity in an endless cycle of violence." Both girls were born and died in

the same hospital, on a Thursday afternoon, Bassam notes. "I said it's the same killer, the same criminal - the hatred that killed our daughters." So, instead of descending further into a never-ending cycle of revenge and violence, the two have resolved to direct their pain towards reconciliation between the two sides. "We teach people that you need to wake up before your bubble blows up - we don't want you to join us," Bassam says. They were on a week's visit to South Africa as part of spreading their message internationally. The Parents Circle is a grassroots organisation consisting of around 600 families, each of whom has lost a close family member to the conflict, going back 100 years to the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Rami, PCFF co-director, explains: "We deeply believe that without reconciliation between the two sides, any peace agreement will be only a ceasefire. Without reconciliation, we won't be able to touch the roots of the conflict and we won't be able to make people understand the narrative and the pain of each other. "We are not a political organisation. What unites us is our pain, the reason we lost our children and the firm understanding that a basic condition for peace is the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and creating a free and independent Palestinian state," says Rami. "We are not a psychological support group, we are not there to hug and kiss each other and eat hummus together. We are there to make a political difference." The group's main educational project for youth, sees them targeting Israeli learners in high schools and Palestinians in their community centres. This involves bereaved parents from both sides telling the youngsters their story. They also explain their choice of non-violent resistance and working together for reconciliation and peace. "We choose to talk to youth that are pre-army service in Israel or young Palestinian adults. We also talk to young students, young adults on both sides and



Rami Elhanan (left) and Bassam Aramin of the Parents Circle - Families Forum.

young adult groups," says Efrat Tal, director of grants and finance of the organisation, who is accompanying the two men. The Israeli government allows it. "We are the only organisation of Israelis and Palestinians that are allowed into mainstream Israeli schools to talk and it's because of the special status of the members of the organisation," Efrat explains. The Israeli government also sees the place for the Narrative Project, an adult education project, which tries to get both sides to acknowledge the other side. "Each side sees his own history in his own way - we have a radical disagreement between both sides," Bassam points out. This involves bringing together 15 Israelis and 15 Palestinians from the general public, who usually have something in common, such as educators, health professionals, grandmothers or the bereaved, to explore each other's personal and national narratives. Over 1 000 individuals have been touched in this way since 2010. "They're not supposed to agree on a mutual narrative, they're not supposed to accept each other's narratives," explains Efrat. "They're supposed to learn of each other's narratives and to acknowledge that there are two narratives on the table when we talk about Palestine and Israel." "So, we bring a Palestinian

historian and an Israeli historian and they tell the story of their national narratives," Bassam says. "We bring the whole group to what was a Palestinian village before 1948 and then we visit Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, not to compare, but to understand how each side received his own narrative." Bassam adds: "In the end, we can see the result - they want to understand each other, they want to create a kind of third narrative." Rami appeals to the South African Jewish community to be more active. "Talking as a Holocaust survivor's son, I'm saying that ruling, oppressing, humiliating and occupying millions of Palestinians for so many years without any democratic rights is against the very basic values of Judaism and being against it is not anti-Semitism. "We expect Jews all over the world - but especially here - to stop saying: 'My country right or wrong' about Israel and to understand that the Occupation is killing us, it's ruining the moral fibre of the State of Israel. Every Jew on earth feels that something terrible is happening in Israel and they are afraid to say it. "Being against it is not a sin, you're not a traitor, you're a true Jew. We are all victims of hooligans, of bullies, of criminals - it's time to stop it."



Abir Aramin (left) and Smadar Elhanan who were killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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The annual fundraiser culminates in a black-tie gala banquet and honours members of the Jewish community who have excelled in business and the humanities.

Send an e-mail to [nominations@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:nominations@sajewishreport.co.za) for each nomination. You can nominate as many people in as many categories as you wish. Each nomination should include the nominee's name, telephone number and e-mail address, the award for which the nominee is nominated, and a short motivation.

Do you know anyone who has contributed in an extraordinary manner in their specific field over their career? Perhaps you know someone who has gone way beyond expectation in community service? How about that special person who has contributed substantially to improving the lives of other South Africans...?

You know those people – we all do. Unless you nominate them, they may never get the recognition they deserve.

So, look at the award categories and get typing up your nominations.

The three Absa business awards are for Listed and Unlisted Companies, and Entrepreneurship. The humanities awards are: Lifetime Achievement Award; Community Service Award; Arts, Science, Sports & Culture Award; and a Humanitarian Award.

But hurry. Do it before nominations close in two weeks' time.





# ‘Google McDuff’ passes 500 million YouTube views

ANT KATZ

Twenty-year-old Johannesburg “wildlife entrepreneur”, Nadav Ossendryver, started building his digital business, LatestSightings.com, at the age of 15. This month, his YouTube channel, known as “Kruger Sightings”, has reached the half-a-billion viewership - an African record.

His success comes from innovating a new business model from his passion for wildlife. Through this, he has created the largest wildlife crowd-sourced channel in the world and the top YouTube channel in Africa.

Reaching half-a-billion views, says Nadav, “is a massive accomplishment”, but it is another accolade to add to a very long and impressive list. And next week he will add another... turning 21.

He is the CEO and founder of Latest Sightings (Pty) Ltd. People visiting the Kruger Park and other South African game parks, love taking videos of their sightings. They post their videos to the Latest Sightings partnership programme created by Nadav. They retain ownership of the video, while Nadav owns the marketing rights. If accepted, the video is put up on YouTube. The game watcher shares the considerable spoils that Nadav’s channel earns from ads on the videos.



His journey began in 2011 when he was on a family trip to the Kruger National Park. Says the digital entrepreneur’s dad, Ilan: “There were no animals and Nadav kept asking me to stop other drivers and ask if they had seen anything.” It was a bad day at the park... nobody was seeing any game.

And so it was that the bored, 15-year-old digital-savvy high-schooler sitting in the back seat realised that his family’s experience was in no way unique. He began thinking of a way to solve the problem digitally. The result: Latest Sightings was born and became a smash hit.

When he was 16, in 2013, Nadav became involved with humanitarian aid to animals. He assisted in a relief effort for Kruger Park staffers who lost their homes in devastating floods. His Latest Sightings community partnered with Land Rover SA to collect 1 000 kg of goods and R100 000 in cash.

The year 2014 was a seminal one for the young entrepreneur, whose nickname is “Google McDuff”, as he won the first-ever Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award and went on to matriculate with six distinctions from King David Linksfield. He also won the East Wave Radio Nelson Mandela Youth Leadership Award.

From then on, unencumbered by academic studies, it was all systems go. And the extraordinary youngster’s highlights include:

2017: He became UN Youth Ambassador for Technology. He was also invited to testify at the Wildlife Justice Commission at The Hague on behalf of African youth. There, he discussed the “Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking”.

2016: He made the Forbes “African 30 under-30 Most Successful People” list. He received a United Nations World Summit Award (WSA) in Singapore for his app.

2015: He participated in a youth delegation to Hanoi, Vietnam, to present the World Youth Wildlife Declaration to Asian governments and engage with Vietnamese youth and leadership on rhino horn.

2014: Nadav was the keynote speaker at the opening of Facebook Africa’s offices. He presented at the Wits School of Economics and Business Science to graduate students in 2014 and 2015. He was also chosen as Forbes Africa’s Person of the Year 2014, with the

prestigious business magazine dubbing him “Nadav of the Jungle”.

2013: He helped start the Rhino Art

campaign (still an active partner in Project Rhino), and became an “Eco Ambassador” for the Endangered Wildlife Trust. He was awarded as the youngest “Virtual Honorary Ranger” ever appointed by SANParks.

That year, he also spoke at the One Young World conservation conference, appeared as a guest speaker at an event where R27 000 was raised for the SanWild animal rehabilitation centre and presented at the Tech4Africa Conference, Africa’s biggest ICT event.

Initially, Latest Sightings focused on the Kruger National Park, but, says Nadav, “we have now extended our range to include other national parks and reserves.”

In total, over 500 000 people are using Latest Sightings across all their various platforms and social media channels.

“In combination with our YouTube channel,” says Nadav, “Latest Sightings also has an app that showcases these remarkable sightings as they happen in the Kruger and Pilanesberg National Parks and even up to Malawi.”

But that’s not all: Nadav’s Latest Sightings has big plans for new initiatives in the coming years. And, he says, he plans to expand globally.

# Israel Encounter 2017 / 2018

**When?**

- JHB mixed group  
25th Dec 2017- 5th Jan 2018
- Cape-Town group  
1-14 Jan 2018
- Girls Group  
25th Dec 2017- 5th Jan 2018
- Boys Group  
21st Dec 2017 – 31st Dec 2017

**How much?**

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# Jewish Report

## Saluting the brave youth of '76

It was 41 years ago that South African schoolchildren stood up against the apartheid government and said “no” to being forced to learn in a language of their oppressor, a language they felt was alien to them. Their protest was a loud, clear and unequivocal “no” to an inferior “Bantu” education. Teenagers put their lives where their mouths are and in their droves took to the streets, first in Soweto and then in townships all around the country. They were brave. They were determined. They were angry. They were just children.

Police and soldiers fought stones with live ammunition. Some of those soldiers were young Jewish conscripts who didn’t want to be there, but they too had no choice. Such was the times we were living in...

Our parents were afraid. Was this the uprising they had feared might happen because of the so-called “swart gevaar” (black danger)? Parents at Jewish schools wondered, discussed and debated in hushed tones whether it was time to buy that one-way ticket to Israel, England, Australia, the United States or Canada.

Many did emigrate. Most Jewish people weathered the storm and were - dare I say - hardly affected by this rebellion. However, the government gave an official number of 176 people who had been killed, but the real figure was closer to 700, mostly children who died during the June 16 Uprising.

My dominant memory of that time - I was in the equivalent of grade 5 - was being in class with Shana Edelstein when she was called out and told that her father, Dr Melville Edelstein, had been killed in Soweto.

It was horrible! He had gone to work in Soweto that day, as he did for 18 years, and he was mistakenly beaten to death by an angry mob. Seeing Shana’s anguish really brought home to us at King David Linksfield the reality of the violence that was taking place in the townships.

One of our own tribe was lost and Dr Edelstein will forever be the Jewish link to the June 16 Uprising. (See the story on the Edelstein family on page 8.)

But that day represented so much to us - it was a day that children stood up for what was right. It was a day that saw the beginning of change in this country. It was a day where the brutality of the apartheid government stood out for the world to see.

This momentous day will never be forgotten by those of us who were around at the time, both black, white, Jewish and others. But, for those of us who were not yet born at the time, June 16 is a public holiday.

We, at the SA Jewish Report, did the exercise of asking Jewish high schools to ask pupils what this day means to them. Those who responded had interesting insights. (See page 13.)

While some were very well aware of the importance of the day, there are so many youngsters for whom this is just another holiday. This concerns me because this day is so integral to our history as South Africans. In the same way as we say “lest we forget” about the Holocaust, we need to make sure our children know what happened in this country so we can ensure atrocities like June 16 never happen again.

In working on this edition with a focus on youth, I realise how much the youth is aware of their own voice and how we - as adults - need to listen to them. We need to understand what is important to them and give them a platform.

We did this for the leaders of the Jewish youth movements this week (page 10-11). This brought home to me how much we can learn from the youth. They are unfettered, unscathed and very, very smart and they see things clearly. Let’s give power to their voices!

Happy Youth Day and Shabbat Shalom.

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
**Editor**

# Dateline: Middle East

## The volatile playground of the Middle East

PAULA SLIER

In a simple worldview, Israel is seen as the enemy by all those Arab countries with whom she has not signed peace treaties.

But a little beyond, in the murky corridors of cigarette smoke and away from the prying eyes of journalists, deals are made, handshakes clasped and promises murmured. The Middle East is a strange place, and its politics are often even stranger.

For years now there’ve been reports of increasing co-operation between Israel and Saudi Arabia. There has been talk of a Saudi embassy opening in Tel Aviv and behind-the-scenes intelligence sharing.

At first glance, it might not make much sense; after all the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. But if one looks at the rifts in the Arab world, especially between the Gulf States (of which Saudi Arabia is one) and Iran, it’s overwhelmingly clear that there are many interests Jerusalem and Riyadh share.

First and foremost, both view Tehran as the main threat to regional peace and fear that that country will use her nuclear know-how against them. Saudi Arabia controls Islam’s holiest sites and as a Sunni nation, competes with Shia Iran for religious leadership and political influence across the Muslim world.

When it comes to Israel, most Israelis are convinced Tehran is building a nuclear bomb to destroy their country.

Enter Qatar, another Gulf State, which, although small, has huge reserves of oil and gas. It doesn’t share Israeli and Saudi obsession over Iran and insists on remaining independent. It walks a narrow line - on the one hand hosting the largest American airbase in the region, while at the same time underwriting Al Jazeera, the Middle East’s largest news network, often criticised for being anti-Semitic and biased against regimes its sponsors don’t support.

For years Western countries have been accusing Qatar of funding Sunni extremists like the Muslim Brotherhood and more recently, the Islamic State. Qatar has always denied the charges, but last week things came to a head when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, cut diplomatic ties.

The development came not long after US President Donald Trump’s visit to Riyadh and Jerusalem - his first overseas trip - in which he promised a united front to contain Iran and crush Islamic terrorists.

At first glance, it would seem Jerusalem has much to benefit - finally the Arab world is taking a stand against Iran and Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Saudi Arabia is insisting Qatar end its support for Hamas before its relations with the rest of the Arab world can be

reinstated.

Such a stance no doubt weakens the Palestinian movement and undermines its influence in the Gaza Strip that it controls. In response, Hamas expressed “shock” and claimed Israel now had the perfect excuse “to carry out more violations against the Palestinian people”.

But Gaza is in a mess. Home to about two million residents, essential infrastructure is non-existent and much of the population live below the breadline and is jobless. Observers are warning the situation is a ticking bomb.

Qatar is one of the largest financial contributors to reconstruction efforts in Gaza and the flipside of being forced to end this, could well worsen the economic situation in Gaza and increase military tension with Israel.

And history is important. Israel has had trade relations with Qatar since 1996 when the late Israeli President Shimon Peres visited Doha and opened an Israeli trade bureau there. Qatar has persistently said that boycotts against Israel are counterproductive and promised that Israeli athletes would be welcome to compete in the Football World Cup it is hosting in 2022.

What’s more, Jerusalem has in the past used the Qatari monarchy to convey messages to Hamas.

For years Western countries have been accusing Qatar of funding Sunni extremists like the Muslim Brotherhood and more recently, the Islamic State. Qatar has always denied the charges...

As part of the boycott, Jordan and Saudi Arabia last week closed down Al Jazeera bureaus in their countries. Over the past few years there have been numerous calls for Israel to do the same because of the network’s negative coverage of Israel. Right now, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is reportedly mulling over the matter.

But he would do well to remember that the Middle East is a volatile playing ground and although current developments seem to suggest that the Israeli vision of normalising relations with Arab states while isolating the Palestinians could soon come to fruition, no one can be wholly sure what deals are being cut behind the scenes.

• Paula Slir is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural winner of the *Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the South African Absa Jewish Achievers*.





# Bomb hatred with love – the advert that shocked the Arab world



HOWARD SACKSTEIN

A suicide bomber sits at his workbench, prepping his explosive vest for death. The voice of a young child is heard over the scenes of his impending destruction, saying: “I will tell G-d everything, that you’ve filled the cemeteries with our children and emptied our school desks. That you’ve sparked unrest and turned our streets to darkness.”

So begins the most audacious television advert ever flighted in the Arab world. On the first Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the world of advertising was forever changed when the Kuwaiti-based telecoms giant, Zain, launched a ground-breaking anti-terrorism television campaign that shocked the Arab world.

The launch also coincided with the second anniversary of the massive ISIS bomb blast at a Kuwaiti mosque, which killed 27 worshippers and injured 227 others.

In the advertisement, Zain - which has 45 million cell phone subscribers throughout the Arab world and Africa - tackled the issue of Islamic extremist terror head on. The stark images of the suicide bomber are contrasted with footage of children playing soccer, a grandfather kissing the feet of his grandchild and a young couple preparing for their wedding vows.

“That you’ve sparked unrest and turned our streets to darkness and that you’ve lied, G-d has full knowledge of the secrets of the heart.” berates the child.

Undeterred, the angel of death wearing his explosive suicide vest, boards a bus in search of martyrdom. But the bus is filled with victims of fundamentalist terror, who confront the bomber. While proclaiming his belief in G-d, the bomber is challenged by a grandfather holding a child: “You come in the name of death, but G-d is the creator of life.”

The advert becomes a struggle for the soul of Islam, as both sides chant “Allahu Akbar” the Islamic phrase, named Takbir, meaning “Allah is Greater”.

Prominent as a passenger on the bus, is the iconic image of Omran Daqneesh, the child from Aleppo in Syria, whose blood-stained image became an international symbol of the Syrian civil war after he survived a Syrian/Russian airstrike.

Seated on a jarring bright orange ambulance chair, the child represents all of those children who have been the victims of civil war, terrorism and strife in the Middle East. The child sings to the suicide bomber, challenging his faith.

Regardless, the bomber walks through the valley of his own destruction, witnessing bombed buildings, smouldering cars and destroyed schools. Appearances by the real-life victims of terror are interspersed with footage from terrorist attacks in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, all places where Zain operates as a mobile network operator.

The emotive soundtrack builds to a crescendo as people stream out of mosques and schools to confront the terrorist. Among those streaming out, are real victims of terror including Ibrahim Abdulsalam, who was injured in the Kuwait mosque blast, and a bride who survived the bombing of her 2005 wedding in Amman, Jordan.

As the music rises, the crowd is joined by United Arab Emirates’ pop star Hussain Al Jassmi, who sings:

*Let’s bomb violence with mercy,  
Let’s bomb delusion with the truth,  
Let’s bomb hatred with love,  
Let’s bomb extremism for a better life.*

An emotive musical soundtrack defies the suicide bomber. “Worship your G-d with love, with love not terror,” sings Hussain Al Jassmi, “Be tender in your faith, gentle not harsh. Confront your enemy, with peace not war.”

The crowd chases the bomber until he falls to the ground, whereafter Al Jassmi offers him a hand to redeem himself. Rather than the carnage of a suicide bomb blast, the sky explodes in fireworks.

Witnessed by the bride who survived the attack on her own wedding day, the original intended victims marry at a ceremony attended by the suicide bomber himself as a guest, now dressed in a suit.

The advert is bold, stark and evocative. Originally flighted on television, the video has now gone viral on social media, where more than seven million viewers have seen it on YouTube. Its message is clear: This Ramadan, “let’s bomb hatred with love”.

While breaking new ground in the world of advertising, the campaign is not without its detractors.

The inclusion of the image of Omran Daqneesh has been the focal point of criticism. The five-year-old Syrian was injured not by ISIS, but by either Syrian President Assad’s or Russian forces in an air raid that killed eight people, including Daqneesh’s brother, Ali.

“The child Omran is a victim of Assad’s barrel bombs and not the terrorism of Daesh [ISIS],” wrote one Syrian writer. “Part of justice for any victim is to expose his killer. Zain’s ad distorts the truth.”

Other activists considered it inappropriate for Zain to use the images of terror victims in a commercial way.

Despite the criticism, the advert has received an overwhelmingly positive response in the Arab world. One comment on Facebook read: “It’s wonderful. We need these beautiful words these days. I wish those words are applied through actions in the Muslim world.”

The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U49nOBFv508> or search in [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for Zain anti-terrorism advert.

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# Recognition for a father lost on June 16

NICOLA MILTZ

For decades, while the country commemorated the June 16 Soweto Uprisings as the day South African youth changed the course of history, the bereaved Edelstein family sat quietly at home and reflected on it being the day their father and husband was brutally murdered.

It was the day in 1976 that ripped the family apart, following the murder of its pivotal member, Dr Melville Edelstein, who remained the unsung hero of Soweto.

Dr Edelstein was the only Jewish person among what was believed to be up to 700 people killed on June 16, 1976. A sociologist and highly regarded academic, he had devoted his life’s work and efforts to humanitarian and social welfare projects in Soweto.

For him it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time on that fateful day, when the peaceful protests turned violent as students took their anger and frustrations out on him - a lone white man - after police had opened fire on the protesters.

His untimely death and the uprisings throughout the country,



Shana Rosenthal, Rhona Edelstein and Janet Goldblatt, fondly remember Dr Melville Edelstein who this week is commemorated in Israel for the part he played in uplifting the lives of many Soweto residents during apartheid.

sent shock waves through the Jewish community, resulting in a mass wave of emigration, panic and fear.

But a grieving Jewish family was left to pick up the pieces and chart a new way forward in a country that they didn’t believe recognised his efforts to bring about peace and transformation in the highly fractured and racially divided South Africa.

Only in recent times has his indelible contribution to the changing socio-political landscape been marked and acknowledged as forming an integral part of our history.

“It used to upset me every year on June 16 to know that my husband had died in vain, that no one acknowledged his part in helping to alleviate the struggles of the people of Soweto,” said Rhona Edelstein this week.

However, following a highly acclaimed and note-worthy 52-minute documentary on Dr Edelstein’s life and times, by filmmaker and director Kevin Harris, he has finally - belatedly - received the recognition he so richly deserves.

Last year - 40 years after Edelstein’s tragic killing - a

memorial with a blue plaque was inaugurated, in the presence of his family, at the site where he died - 3940 Mphuthi Street, at the corner of Mailula Street in Central Western Jabavu.

In Israel this week, the family has been invited to attend a special re-screening of the documentary: Remembering Dr Melville Edelstein - The Life & Death of a Good Man - at Beit Hatfutsot - The Museum of the Jewish People.

“Our father loved Israel with all his heart. This special day will mean so much to his family here in Israel, who have for years mourned his passing,” said his daughter Shana Rosenthal.

She and her sister Janet Goldblatt and their mother Rhona, have travelled to Israel for this event.

When they return to South Africa, there will be a wreath-laying ceremony organised by the City of Johannesburg’s heritage committee on community development. It was going to take place this week on June 16, but has been rescheduled to allow for the family’s return from Israel.

The Community Development Department has invited the Edelstein family to return once more to the site in Soweto where

Dr Edelstein was killed, for a solemn wreath-laying ceremony.

“The family of schoolboy Hastings Ndlovu, one of the first victims killed by police on June 16, has been invited. There is a shared sense of loss and solidarity between the two families,” said a spokesman from the Department.

Janet Goldblatt and her family’s wish for recognition has come true.

Testifying before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Soweto hearings in 1996, Goldblatt, appealed for a monument to be dedicated to her father.

She said at the time: “He loved the people of Soweto almost like he did his own family,” and he believed in equal education for everybody she added.

Dr Edelstein was serving as deputy chief welfare officer of the then West Rand. He had instituted many projects aimed at assisting youth, disabled, poor and marginalised communities within Soweto where he had worked for many years.

Although the family’s wounds of pain run deep, they are comforted by the knowledge that Dr Edelstein has left a lasting legacy which has now been recognised.

# Just who was Morris Isaacson?

SUZANNE BELLING

Morris Isaacson - whose name is synonymous with Soweto and the Soweto uprising on 16 June 1976 - “went against the stream” and “while people talked, he did”, according to his grandson Kevin Isaacson.

“He had a vision, wisdom, motivation and a belief; his thinking was ahead of his time,” said Kevin about his grandfather after whom the famous Soweto school is named.

Speaking to the Jewish Report from his home in Kfar Saba, Israel, on the eve of Youth Day in South Africa, Kevin said, “I never got to hear him or feel him (Morris died on April 11, 1953, before Kevin was born) but I am proud to be part of his legacy. It was unpopular to do what he did in his time, but whereas many people just talked, he actually did.”

Earlier this year, Kevin, his wife Dr Atara Isaacson, an educator, and Stanley Sapire, former chief justice of Swaziland, visited the Morris Isaacson School. After Kevin’s father, Jeffrey, died last year, he wanted to find out more about his grandfather and see for himself the fruits of his grandfather’s philanthropy.

Morris came to South Africa from Lithuania in 1896. His father had been an innkeeper and when the Russian government at the time, introduced a monopoly on the sale of alcohol products, Morris decided to emigrate to South Africa.

He was met at the Johannesburg station by a “landsman” who took him by carriage to one of his relatives. The family member gave Morris lunch and two gold sovereigns, but did not have room to put him up.

The young man took a job as a shop assistant in Brakpan, on the East Rand and, later, while working in Pretoria, he was taught English by a missionary. Morris became enamoured of the philosophy of Theodor Herzl and formed the first Zionist Society in Pretoria, where he also witnessed the swearing-in of President Paul Kruger on his re-election as president of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

Morris tried his hand at about a dozen different occupations, from working in a mineral factory to selling insurance.

According to his great friend, the late Richard Feldman, Morris was “a born socialist” who took part in the 1913 strike and playing a prominent role in the 1922 Rand miners’ strike. Morris had been elected to the national executive of the SA Labour Party.

He was among those who established the Labour Party weekly, “Forward” and was a protagonist of the formation of the Jewish War Relief Fund. By the end of the First World War, Morris was a prominent Jewish leader, president of the Jewish Guild, treasurer of the Jewish War Memorial Fund and, later, chairman of the SA Jewish Orphanage.

In its early years, the orphanage was run by the Jewish Ladies’ Communal League, which was encountering difficulties with the rapid influx of orphans from Europe after the war, particularly the Ochberg orphans in 1921.

Under pressure from Morris and others, the League “abdicated” and Morris found himself with an orphanage on his hands, one that managed to take in all the Jewish orphans.

Morris was the prime mover behind moving the orphanage to new premises in Parktown to “Arcadia”, the magnificent former home of Randlord Lionel Phillips. Morris did not like using the term “orphanage”, so the home became known simply as Arcadia. Now part of the Chevrah Group, it retains its name.

Through his activities in the orphanage, he met Mavis Myers, daughter of the matron. They married in 1921. She took charge of the 100 overseas orphans and became known as “Mummy Mavis”.

Morris’ business career as a trader and hotelier flourished. He and Mavis moved to Warmbaths (now Bela Bela) in 1926, where they ran the Warmbaths Hotel for many years.

He and Feldman remained lifelong friends. In Morris’ later years, Feldman, who was an MEC in the mid-1940s, was instrumental in involving him in black education. After Mavis died in 1949, Morris was the major contributor to the establishment of the Mavis Isaacson Hall, in Moroka, which served as a day creche for working mothers in Soweto.

Morris will provided a substantial sum for the Morris Isaacson Foundation, which inter alia granted hundreds of bursaries to black students.

The work of the Foundation led to the building of the Morris Isaacson Primary School in 1953 and, two years later, the famous Morris Isaacson Secondary School was opened.

Among the foremost anti-apartheid activist leaders who passed through the school’s portals, was Murphy Morobe. The learners took their studies



Above: Principal of the Morris Isaacson School Steven Khanyile, with Morris’ grandson Kevin and his wife Dr Atara Isaacson, who visited the school earlier this year.

Right: Philanthropist Morris Isaacson.

seriously, but on June 16, 1976, the school was pivotal in the protest walk from the Naledi School to the Morris Isaacson School.

Students from numerous Soweto schools began to protest in the streets of the township in response to the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools. It is estimated that 20 000 learners took part in the protests. They were met with fierce police brutality. The number of protesters killed by police is usually given as 176, but estimates of up to 700 have been made.

In remembrance of these events, June 16 is now a public holiday.

Morris’ name lives on through



the school named after him and evokes positive memories of one of the first Jews to actively oppose the Nationalist regime.

“It’s our heritage,” says Kevin, whose parents Myra and the late Jeffrey were vehemently anti-apartheid. It was one of the reasons they made aliyah in 1963 when Kevin was only three. Kevin returned to South Africa for visits when he was a young boy, “but my trip to Soweto this year was my first real one in some 50 years”.





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# The state of Jewish youth today

As part of commemorating Youth Day 2017, Jewish Report asked the leaders of the Jewish youth movements and the South African Union of Jewish Students, to give us their views on the state of Jewish youth today.

**MARTIN SKUDICKY,  
ROSH MACHANEH OF BNEI AKIVA 2017**



The Jewish youth of South Africa carry a sense of desire to shape and mould the future into their own. They are doing some pretty special things while, at the same time, trying to balance more than just a fidget spinner in their everyday lives.

The key values of the youth that stand out for me, are unity, pride, generosity and sincerity. It is clear from the way they engage with each other, as well as with other ethnic/cultural groups, that they are a product of the warmth that the South African Jewish people are known for.

Another indicator of their values is the fact that so many initiatives that help South Africans socially, environmentally or culturally, are being largely driven by our youth. They are an incredible source of change and are key to propelling this community and country to a better future.

When I look at how our Jewish youth view their community, it can often vary. Some prefer and enjoy being in the “bubble” of our Jewish community, whereas others enjoy socialising with various groups of people from various schools and backgrounds.

Bnei Akiva believes in an equilibrium of this, engaging in chessed and interacting in the South African community, while still striving to stay close to our own Jewish community. A real Bnei Akiva chanich stands firmly behind the Jewish community and no matter what our differences may be with other South Africans or Jews, there is a unique unity we enjoy and cherish as Jews and as South Africans.

It is hard to say where the majority of the Jewish youth are holding from a religious framework, but the amount of love, respect and traditional practice in this community is unparalleled.

I have had the privilege of seeing crowds of hundreds gather to say tehillim for someone who is ill. I have experienced the power of hearing roaring voices proudly declare “Shema Yisrael!” at ruach sessions on camp.

I have been moved by the views of how to treat a fellow human being with respect and dignity when conversing with kids, teenagers and young adults.

This is but a few of the many more amazing mitzvot performed by our unbelievable Jewish youth on a regular basis.

Ultimately, when I take into consideration our youth as a whole, I look back at what John F Kennedy once said: “The future promise of any nation can be directly measured by the present prospects of its youth.” And what an immense future that is for us as a community!

**ADAM DISON, HABONIM DROR  
SOUTHERN AFRICA MAZKIR KLALI**

I’m driving my nine-year-old relative home who’s a learner at a Jewish day school. He turns to me and says: “Adam, I’m gender fluid.” I was slightly shocked at his eloquence, and happy he is able to tell me something like this that is potentially very difficult for someone to talk about. He goes on to explains his take on this in his own young and eloquent way.



Obviously, very young children say things they don’t fully understand. Yet what is interesting here is the proliferation of this discussion that society is having with itself. The discussion about gender in all senses is a flash point for youth these days.

Whether it’s Facebook discussions being trolled by those who are for or against; or school classes being interrupted be the common “don’t assume my gender”, this discussion is everywhere.

However, with many other topics today, the youth have a much harder time saying exactly what they mean.

Ask a Jewish youth today about their take on wealth inequality in South Africa post-apartheid and you will get a far less thought-out answer - whatever their take on this is.

This may be based on which issues face youth in their everyday lives. Our youth are to some extent sheltered from South Africa’s other far bigger problems, but such is the nature of a community that is relatively well-off.

With this being said, I think we are seeing a generation growing up in a time where they can and do say: “I oppose these norms and I will be different.” Such signs are always inspiring even if they are juvenile, because it shows that the youth understand their role in society; they understand that they are the future.

Whatever is the reality for youth today, is likely to be the reality in the future society they will create. If they choose now to break down gender norms, this will be the outcome. The same is true for many issues. With this as the reality, I believe everyone should be hopeful for this generation.

While we are young, we have shown a healthy disregard for norms, a strong connection to our Jewish heritage and tradition and a passion for learning. We should not forget the famous spiritual and cultural Jewish leader Martin Buber’s words: “The youth are humanity’s eternal hope for happiness.” With each generation, Buber continues, the possibility that the youth will create a society that is better than the one we have, is always likely and an imperative of youth.

Along with the youth today, comes many hardships, especially at school level. Youth are told not to think differently or that some ways of thinking should never be explored.

Education today has less to do with making sure we are creating a generation who is strong-minded, ready for the challenges of life after school, and more to do with ensuring high grades are achieved to ensure a good university in later life.

The clearest showing of the failure of the first (not thinking differently) is the way in which Jewish youth interact with each other. Taught to hate those with different thoughts and fuelled by various forces in their lives, youth

often wind up hating each other even within our schools.

This is probably the biggest challenge we should face together, creating platforms for youth to discuss their ideas and come together. This does not need to be a unity around one idea. In fact, it would be un-Jewish for a Jewish community to be united in their thought.

Like Hillel and Shamai, Orthodoxy and Reform, Likud and Avodah, we must celebrate diverse Jewish thought and empower it. Often these differences have brought Jewish people into conflict with each other, but we must try to raise a generation which will be different, better and achieve nuanced constructive debate.

**RUBY ICHIKOWITZ,  
SAUJS NATIONAL LIAISON OFFICER**

Youth Day on June 16, offers an opportune



time for us as South Africa’s next generation to reflect on our role in our great country.

As the “born free generation”, we have been afforded the privilege of growing up in a democratic South Africa, but we also have a duty to uphold and celebrate this hard-fought democracy. I am proud to call myself an Afro-optimist and believe that our generation has benefited immensely from our stability and freedom which we often take for granted.

Our new-found democracy has not been the only factor to shape Jewish youth of today. We have been moulded by a tightly bound community, with very strong principles and values, as well as a great sense of Jewish affinity, whether it be religious or cultural.

Through my four years at Wits University, I have seen that many of my Jewish friends and peers are on the other side of the optimism scale to me.

It can be argued that the university campus is not the most comforting place for our students. It can be argued that political animosity towards Israel might manifest itself into isolated incidents of anti-Semitism. It can be argued that Jews are stereotyped by many.

However, in my experience, there is a very simple explanation for this: One of our strongest strengths is our tremendous sense of Jewish community, but it might be one of our biggest weaknesses as well. We tend to focus all our efforts and energy inwards and can often distance, isolate and exclude us from our broader South African brethren.

I believe that 99 per cent of animosity that students might experience on campus, is because of a lack of authentic and meaningful

interactions with people outside of our community.

It is often assumed that we as people might be racist because we stick so closely together, yet we stick so closely together not because of racism, but because we assume that we are unwelcome. The fact is that neither of these assumptions are true and there is no reason why this vicious cycle should be perpetuated.

Unfortunately, our classmates do not get to know us because of the beers we share, nor because of the soccer we play together, nor the social issues we add our voices to. Rather, we are perceived through dated propaganda and misconceptions.

How are we to expect those stereotypes to be broken when there is nothing for people’s opinions to be reformulated on?

As SAUJS, we are strong believers in being active citizens within our broader South African and African communities. In our experiences, once the initial barrier of misconception is broken, tremendous friendships are formed and we very quickly learn how much unites us rather than divides us.

By working with diverse organisations from the Inala Food Security Forum to the Black Lawyers Association, we have tried to bring us closer to groups and organisations across the political and social spectrum. We believe in dialogue as a form of conflict resolution and that through interaction we can drive social change. Not only is this SAUJS’s stance on issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, but it is our advice that this should be taken to heart by all our constituents to be used in their daily lives.

In our experience, simple engagements demystify our Jewishness and we are no longer antagonised to the extent that we used to tolerate. This is simply because we have open doors and started conversations.

Zulu philosophy teaches us of ubuntu, the concept that “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”, which literally means that a person is a person through other people. In our community, we are fortunate to live these principles of ubuntu every day.

As the youth of today, we need to understand that it is our duty as fellow custodians of our great nation, to be active South African citizens. University life presents a multitude of opportunities for this. We encourage everyone to join a SAUJS committee, run for school councils, or even for the SRC at your university.

Let us draw inspiration from the amazing Jewish personalities who have driven immense change in our society, such as Helen Suzman, Ruth First and Joe Slovo and let us broaden the spirit of ubuntu which is already innately within us, to include the entire broader South African community.



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# THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

## Netanyahu tries out an undiplomatic foreign policy



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends the weekly Cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem on May 14, 2017. (AFP Photo/Pool/Abir Sultan)

RAPHAEL AHREN

On Tuesday, Israel’s government announced it was restoring ties with New Zealand, some six months after clipping its relations with the island nation and others, in retaliation for Wellington’s support of a United Nations Security Council resolution critical of West Bank settlements.

“I regret the damage caused to New Zealand-Israel relations,” New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English wrote on Monday to his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu, according to a statement from Netanyahu’s office, which added that the countries would once again exchange envoys.

Last December, Netanyahu raged against Wellington and other capitals, over the UN vote, kicking off a new, aggressive foreign policy doctrine that mercilessly avenges every perceived hostile diplomatic act, but which the prime minister claims has helped bolster Israel’s standing in the world.

Netanyahu has been following what might be summed up as a belligerent foreign policy approach, which the prime minister’s supporters hail for championing Israel’s national pride, but which critics charge has harmed Israel’s standing, sacrificing ties with allies on the altar of domestic politics.

The new policy became crystal clear on Christmas Day, when Netanyahu - who is also foreign minister - summoned the top

diplomats from 10 countries to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem for a dressing-down over their respective capitals’ support for the Security Council resolution.

In the case of the US, which opted not to veto the resolution and thus allowed it to pass, he both summoned the ambassador and castigated outgoing president Barack Obama for ostensibly “ambushing” Israel with the “shameful” resolution.

He went on to curtail relations with Senegal and New Zealand for

having co-sponsored Resolution 2334, and cancelled planned meetings with the prime ministers of the UK and Ukraine for having voted in favour of the motion.

He has repeatedly cut funds to the UN to punish the body for anti-Israel resolutions. He shunned the German foreign minister because he met with leftist NGO Breaking the Silence.

He did not hesitate to risk Israel’s sensitive ties with Jordan and Turkey, when he instructed aides to issue unusually harsh

statements condemning Amman and Ankara over statements he didn’t like. The list goes on.

“We are adopting a much more aggressive policy with regard to actions directed against the State of Israel,” Netanyahu said on Monday at the weekly faction meeting of his Likud party. Announcing his intention to bar Israeli NGOs from accepting donations from foreign governments, he recalled his demand that Denmark stop funding pro-Palestinian groups “that glorify terrorists”.

Copenhagen agreed to Netanyahu’s request, ostensibly bolstering his claim that only a combative foreign policy yields tangible results.

Only world powers like Russia, China and the US under Trump, have avoided his wrathful sanctions, despite supporting UN measures critical of Israel in the case of Moscow and Beijing. As for Washington, Trump’s apparent leak of sensitive Israeli intelligence, calls to curb settlement building, and failure to move his embassy to Jerusalem as promised, have to date evoked only smiles from Netanyahu.

At least in the short run, Netanyahu’s take-no-prisoners approach seems to be effective. New Zealand and Senegal

made great efforts to get back into Israel’s good graces. So did Ukraine. Neither Turkey nor Amman picked a fight after Israel’s rebukes.

The German president, who arrived in Israel two weeks after the country’s foreign minister, refrained from meeting Breaking the Silence, a group his predecessor and he had made a point in seeing on previous trips.

Various UN agencies still pass resolutions critical of Israel, but the wording has steadily become softer and fewer countries support them. “For the first time in Unesco, more countries voted to oppose or abstained than voted in favour, and of course this is important,” Netanyahu gushed in May, after the UN’s cultural agency passed yet another resolution denying Israel’s claims to Jerusalem.

Some - unsurprisingly including opposition politicians - accuse Netanyahu of eroding Israel’s standing in the international community. Netanyahu might win little diplomatic battles, but risks losing the war, they argue.

Even some who were highly critical of UNSC Resolution 2334, which lambasted Israeli settlement building, said it was reckless to cancel a planned meeting with the UK’s Theresa May and disinvite the Ukrainian prime minister.

### PALESTINIANS SEEK TO FORCE FIFA TO RULE

The Palestinian Football Association (PFA) on Tuesday appealed to the world’s top sports court, seeking to force FIFA to rule on the future of Israeli soccer clubs playing in the West Bank.

The case filed at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), is aimed at voiding a FIFA resolution, passed at its Congress last month, to push back a decision on the Israeli clubs until March 2018, at the latest.

The PFA argues that the presence

of six Israeli clubs in the West Bank is in breach of FIFA statutes, which forbids another member association playing on another territory without permission.

The Palestinians had called for a resolution stating that as a full FIFA member, the PFA has the right to block Israeli teams from playing on its land.

In its CAS appeal, the PFA called for FIFA’s postponement decision to be declared “null and void”.



### PLO VOWS TO KEEP PAYING PRISONERS

The Palestine Liberation Organisation is still paying wages to convicted terrorists imprisoned in Israel, contradicting comments by US Secretary of Defence Rex Tillerson, that the provocative policy has been stopped.

Issa Qaraqe, head of the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners’ Affairs, said that the PLO had not stopped paying wages to families of prisoners held in Israel and had no intention of stopping.

“There is no end to the payments” of Palestinian prisoners and families of convicted terrorists, he said. “We reject ending the subsidies to the prisoners and families of martyrs. We will not apologise for it.

“The American and Israeli pressure is an aggression against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority,” Qaraqe says, adding that “almost every other household among the Palestinian people is the family of a prisoner or martyr”.

There are some 6 500 Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli jails.

“I know that the allowances were paid this month, and they will be next month too,” Qaraqe told Haaretz.

His confirmation backs up Israeli claims that the wages were still being paid, despite Tillerson telling US senators the day before that they have stopped.





SOUTH  
AFRICAN  
ZIONIST  
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STUART WINER  
JERUSALEM

Leading figures in Israel’s academic community have sharply rejected plans for an ethical code that would limit lecturers from expressing a political opinion to students during lessons.

A committee of university heads said in a statement last Saturday that Education Minister Naftali Bennett’s intention to apply the code, was “violating academic freedom”.

Last December, Bennett asked Asa Kasher, who wrote the IDF’s ethics code, to draw up a document laying down the lines for acceptable behaviour by academic lecturers regarding political activism during teaching sessions.

Kasher recently presented the code to Bennett and the latter now plans to submit it for approval by the Council for Higher Education in Israel, the national governing body for academic institutes, according to report last Friday in the Yedioth Ahronoth daily.

Although the code is not directed at any particular political orientation, Israeli academia is often seen as left-leaning. Bennett, head of the religious-nationalist Jewish Home party, has been seen as attempting to limit left-wing voices in educational institutions while bringing in more views from the right.

Under the proposed code of ethics, lecturers would be prohibited from promoting their political opinions during teaching sessions and from participating in, or calling for, support of academic boycotts against Israeli institutes, a measure that has been pushed by pro-Palestinian campaigners around the world.

# Academia shudders at plan to ban politics from university classrooms

The code also calls for academic institutes to establish a unit to monitor political activity on campus. Lecturers who have complaints filed against them could face a disciplinary citation from the institution and, if the activity continues, then possible additional disciplinary action, according to the code.

“The proposed ethical code formulated by Professor Asa Kasher removes from the academic institutes the freedom to lay down the rules for behaviour and conduct

“Absolute academic freedom - yes. Advancing a political agenda by an academic lecturer - no. It’s unacceptable that students are afraid to express their opinions in class due to fear for their grades, or that lecturers call for a boycott of the institution where they teach.”

Chairman of the National Union of Israeli Students, Ram Shefa, also protested the code and explained that union representatives met with Kasher months ago when he was formulating the guidelines. Students expressed their

media after tweeting that the code was “a document that is not ethical or valid. It is another step by the rulers to silence and wipe out any debate and freedom of thought, this time in academia. It is suitable for dark regimes, not Israel.”

Bennett, on his own Twitter account, accused Livni of not reading the document.

“Yes Naftali, I read it,” Livni responded. I hope that reading is still permitted. I don’t take back a word. Do you apply the ethical code to Rabbi Levinstein as an educator too? Just



Students walk through the Tel Aviv University campus in Israel.

by members of the academic staff,” the university heads said in the statement.

They added that the code “seriously and fundamentally violates academic freedom”.

The university chiefs demanded that they be given an opportunity to express their objections during a debate on the code by the Council for Higher Education.

In a statement last week, Bennett defended the code, saying it would prevent lecturers from promoting political agendas in academic institutes and that it was to be applied equally to both the left and right of the political field.

“The matter isn’t directed against any political side, it is sweeping for left and right - and anyway no side has any reason to object,” Bennett added.

objection to the code while supporting their right to express their opinion without fear of consequences, Ynet reported.

“The code is far from its ostensible ethical goal. Everything is political and it is impossible to separate between politics and other areas of life, and even more so in academia,” Shefa said.

Criticism also came from politicians, including MK Ofer Shelah (Yesh Atid), who compared it to a form of “thought police”. MK Erel Margalit (Zionist Union) called it a “political code”.

“Its only purpose is to silence voices and cause lecturers to be afraid,” Margalit wrote on Facebook last Sunday.

Zionist Union MK Tzipi Livni got into a heated sparring match with Bennett on social

asking.”

Livni was referring to Yigal Levinstein, head of a pre-army religious academy who in March caused an uproar after making disparaging remarks about female IDF soldiers.

MK Zehava Galon, leader of the left-wing Meretz party, tweeted that it was a “Bolshevik code that undermines the education for democracy and pluralism”.

But the right-wing Im Tirtzu student group welcomed the code, saying it would restore “sanity to Israeli academia. The ethical code compiled by Professor Asa Kasher is a correct and appropriate step toward the goal of ending politicisation in academia,” Im Tirtzu head Matan Peleg said in a statement.



## News and views from the Fed Off to the Games - SAZF wishes the Maccabi SA team good luck

ROLENE MARKS

Maccabi South Africa, a proud affiliate of the SAZF, has been deeply rooted in the community for over 80 years and has participated in every Maccabiah since 1935. This year is no different! The Games take place from July 6 - 17.

As the world’s third largest global multi-sports event and largest mainly Jewish sports competition, the Maccabi Games takes place every four years in Israel.

The objective of these Games is to facilitate a worldwide gathering of athletes in Israel and to stage the highest possible levels of sports competitions, while strengthening connections to the State of Israel and Jewish people globally.

The South African team is made up of a delegation of 295 of which 260 are participating in the actual sporting arena. Even more remarkable is that 160 of those athletes are under the age of 18.

The South African Maccabi team will be competing in 16 sporting activities, which consists of athletics, bowls, cricket, cycling, football, futsal, golf, gymnastics, karate, netball, rugby, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis and water polo.

This is a huge achievement for our South African athletes, who have been preparing for months and continuously perform with distinction. Included in the South African delegation is Jonathan Kaplan, one of the most respected and highly rated rugby referees in the world. He has been appointed “Director of Referees” for this year’s Maccabi Games.

Sporting events and competitions are of pivotal importance in bringing communities together. Their unifying quality is powerful and universal language. This unity creates a positive energy and a sense of togetherness. It instils a sense of hope and peace, enabling us to build a stronger bond between Jewish communities across the globe.

The South African Zionist Federation, in association with our partners at the Israel Centre, would like to wish the Maccabi SA team best of luck for the upcoming Maccabi Games. We look forward to hosting the athletes for their “send-off party” this weekend, where we get to “meet and greet” the talented participants.

\* To find out more about the Maccabi Games and Maccabi South Africa, visit [www.maccabi.co.za](http://www.maccabi.co.za)

# Amazon still selling ‘Free Palestine’ clothes

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF AND JTA

Online sales giant Amazon continues to sell shirts and other clothing items calling to “Free Palestine”, after Sears and Walmart removed similar items from their websites.

The items are offered by Amazon via various third parties, and include shirts, hats and pins, some bearing Palestinian flags and many featuring a fist, symbolising resistance.

One shirt demanding “Free Palestine” features a drawing of a map that covers the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan

River, thus including all of Israel.

Sears said last week Wednesday it had removed a line of clothing featuring the slogan from its website. The clothing was offered for sale by another company, Spreadshirt Collection, and included tank tops, T-shirts and hoodies featuring a variety of pro-Palestinian messages.

The clothing was offered for sale through Sears Marketplace, which provides a platform for third-party sellers to market their wares through websites managed by Sears.

The designs included a clenched fist in the colours of the Palestinian flag and statements

opposing the Israeli occupation.

Ynet news reported that Walmart was also selling the shirts and featured a screen capture of them for sale, but by late Wednesday last week, they were no longer available.

Amazon has also been under fire recently for selling Holocaust-denying books on its website.

After receiving complaints, the company initially removed the texts only from its websites in nations where Holocaust denial is illegal, including Italy, France and Germany. The books remained available for some time on Amazon’s US and UK stores, though they appear to no longer be available.





# Anne Frank’s diary saved her ‘Secret Annex’

MATT LEOVIC  
AMSTERDAM

Although it’s difficult to fathom today, the building that concealed Anne Frank’s wartime hiding place was nearly toppled by a wrecking-ball in 1957. Six decades and millions of visitors later, the venerated Anne Frank House is undergoing another makeover in the Amsterdam edifice’s 382-year history.

The brick-faced canal-house at Prinsengracht 263, was where the diarist, her family, and four other Jews hid from the Nazis for two years during the Second World War. The main building dates to 1635, and its adjoining “back-house”, or annex, was added in 1740.

with its pristine furniture, Anne Frank lugged water for her baths.

At the other end of the building, facing the murky canal, one could peek through the office curtains to glimpse people roaming the Jordaan neighbourhood, a hotbed of black-market activity.

Also in the front-office, the Frank sisters were given filing work to do by Miep Gies and the other helpers. The girls became “night fairies”, appearing downstairs after dark to complete assignments. Peter van Pels’ cat, Mouschi, had run of the house, and was described by Gies as a “spritely, lean black tomcat, very, very friendly”.

In hindsight, the annex members’ regular forays into the office and warehouse did not make for a tight security regime, with

By the time Otto Frank - the annex’s only survivor - returned to Holland in 1945, the house was in ill-repair. The leaky structure was not even standing on its own, and would have collapsed had one of the adjacent buildings been demolished. There was talk of repairs and opening a museum, but a distinct lack of funds to do so.

A decision was forced in 1955, when a Dutch business prepared to demolish the house and several adjacent buildings. Before developers could pounce on Prinsengracht 263, however, a prominent newspaper organised citizens to protest.

“The Netherlands will be subject to a national scandal if this house is pulled down,” wrote the editors of Het Vrij Volk. “There is every reason, especially

Nazi death camps. Preserving the annex honoured Dutch Jews, of course, and it also elevated the Dutch men and women who helped hide Jews from the Nazis.

Intense post-war emotions were projected onto the endangered canal-house, and protests against the building’s demolition were held on-site.

In 1957, an alliance between Otto Frank’s foundation for the museum and the University of Amsterdam, helped seal the deal. The canal-house would be repaired and opened to the public, and the university would build student dormitories next-door. By the time the Anne Frank House opened in 1960, the diary and a Hollywood film had made the “secret annex” familiar to millions of people.

Approaching 60 years of operation in 2020, the museum is building new classrooms and tourist facilities during the next two years. Fresh content will be added to the exhibition about Anne Frank’s short life, including a focus on the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

“Many of our visitors are aged under 25 and come from countries outside of Europe,” said executive director Ronald Leopold. “So, it’s important to go deeper into the historical context and the background to the life story of Anne Frank in the museum.

“We’ll be giving more information on what happened during the Second World War and the Holocaust, how it could happen, and what this means for us today,” said the museum head.

Illustrating the shrine-like role of the canal-house for diary fans, the museum bookstore sells more postcards featuring Prinsengracht 263 than of Anne Frank herself. Visitors can also purchase an intricate, do-it-yourself model of the phoenix-like structure, allowing them to hand-assemble the rescued hiding place.



Anne Frank’s hiding place bedroom during the 1950s (left) and her restored bedroom at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam today

At one time or another, the structure was a private home, a horse stable, an appliance store and - just before Otto Frank purchased the premises for his spice business - a piano-roll factory.

“It’s more like being on vacation in some strange pension,” wrote Anne Frank on July 11, 1942, shortly after her family fled to the annex. “The Annex is an ideal place to hide in. It may be damp and lopsided, but there’s probably not a more comfortable hiding place in all of Amsterdam. No, in all of Holland.”

Strewn upon the wooden floor following the Nazis’ August 4, 1944, raid on the hiding place, Anne Frank’s red-chequered diary and notebooks were rescued by the helpers who worked in the office. Events from every corner of the old house had been recorded, from romance in the attic to theft in the warehouse. More than 1,3 million people visit these rooms each year to honour Anne Frank, who would have been 88 on June 12.

Once settled into the hiding place, the diarist could open a window in the attic for fresh air. There was a view of a chestnut tree, and the majestic Westerkerk church bells could be heard throughout the day. Some annex inhabitants were unnerved by the frequent chiming, but not the hiding place’s youngest inhabitant.

Although the captive Jews spent most of their time in the annex, they made use of the full premises during evenings and weekends. Into Otto Frank’s former office

one suspicious employee setting traps to determine if people were hiding. In terms of noise, Peter van Pels’ parents had frequent shouting matches, while their son chopped wood and once spilled a large sack of beans down the stairs. The annex faced a courtyard shared by two-dozen buildings, making it difficult to conceal people indefinitely.

In Otto and Edith Frank’s bedroom, markings used to track the growth of their daughters were preserved on the wall, as was the diarist’s famous “photo wall” with movie stars and Britain’s young Princess Elizabeth.

Visitors cannot climb up to the attic today, but a strategically placed mirror helps them see the famous window from below. The chestnut tree died several years ago, and saplings were taken to plant around the world.

Several episodes of panic shook the “undergrounders”, as people in hiding were called, including night-time robberies with thieves roaming around the house. British air-raids were especially harrowing for people in hiding, unable to evacuate as fires ignited in the neighbourhood. There was the constant fear of betrayal, growing hunger, and Allied armies who - it seemed - were never going to invade Europe.

Ultimately, it was the publication of Anne Frank’s diary in 1947 that rescued the house, inspiring a coalition of activists in Amsterdam and abroad to save this part of her story.

considering the enormous interest from both inside and outside the country, to correct this situation as quickly as possible. If there is one place where the fate of Dutch Jewry is most clearly revealed, it is here,” wrote the editors. Of 140 000 Jews who lived in the Netherlands before the war, more than 100 000 were murdered in

## Radiohead’s Thom Yorke still under pressure over Israel concert

Pro-Palestinian groups have hit back at Radiohead singer Thom Yorke, who has called criticism of his band’s upcoming concert in Israel “patronising” and “upsetting”.

Dozens of high-profile artists had signed a letter sent to Radiohead in February, urging the band to cancel its July performance in Tel Aviv. Earlier this month, Yorke said the letter was “offensive” and called out its signees for assuming the band is not informed on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since then, several groups have chastised Yorke for his rhetoric and criticised him for refusing to further discuss the topic.

“Thom’s is a simple choice: will he stand with the oppressor or the oppressed?” said film director Ken Loach in a statement through Artists for Palestine UK on June 5.

“Yorke complains about Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu and the dangers of divisiveness,” the rest of the Artists for Palestine UK statement continues. “He doesn’t seem to appreciate that Radiohead’s concert is itself a political statement, and a deeply divisive one. It’s telling the Israeli public they really don’t need to bother their heads with the Occupation and the boring old story of Palestinian suffering.”

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign called Yorke’s remarks “saddening”, and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel said that Radiohead will be on the wrong side of history.

On June 2, Yorke said that the letter, spearheaded by former Pink Floyd singer Roger Waters and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel, was akin to “throwing s\*\*\*” at Radiohead in public.

“It’s deeply distressing that they choose to, rather than engage with us personally, throw s\*\*\* at us in public,” Yorke said. “It’s deeply disrespectful to assume that we’re either being misinformed or that we’re so retarded we can’t make these decisions ourselves.” (JTA)





SOUTH  
AFRICAN  
ZIONIST  
FEDERATION

ALEX SUSKIND

In the “Simpsons” episode “Sleeping with the Enemy”, local punk and two-tone laugh machine Nelson Muntz, pines for his estranged father with a throaty rendition of “Papa, Can You Hear Me?” from the movie “Yentl”. (“Papa, can you seeeee me? Papa, can you fiiiiinnd meee in the noiiiiighht?” he belts off-key.)

In modern comedy, Jewish humour is part of the bedrock, so it’s unsurprising that a reference to a famed rabbinical love story would make its way into the most consequential sitcom in history.

Yet “The Simpsons”, which turned 30 in April, doesn’t always get credit for its Judaica bona fides. Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie, may grudgingly attend church every Sunday, but their world has as much Yiddish in it as Herschel Shmoikel Pinchas Yerucham Krustofsky.

For the uninitiated, Krustofsky, better known by his nom de plume, Krusty the Clown, is the show’s unofficial Jewish spokesman. His birth name is first revealed during the season three episode “Like Father, Like Clown”, where he’s asked to say grace before dinner with the Simpsons.

“Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech haolam...” begins Krusty. “Hee hee,” says Homer, “he’s



Jacob the tour guide, with the Simpsons at the Western Wall.

talking funny talk.”

“No, dad,” says Lisa. “That’s Hebrew.”

Saying the hamotzi brings back painful memories for Krusty, who soon regales the table with the sad tale of his childhood. Krusty’s past is the typical Jewish migration story: His parents, immigrants from the Old Country, land Stateside somewhere in the first half of the 20th century in “The Lower East Side of Springfield” - a neighbourhood filled with tailors, butchers, and yarmulke stores - where they look to raise their son.

But much to the consternation of his father, a rabbi at Temple Beth Springfield, young Herschel decides to skip out on a “respectful profession” and instead pursues the life of a clown.

“Oy vey iz mir,” shouts Rabbi Hyman Krustofsky (voiced by Jackie Mason), when he later discovers Herschel’s secret career path. “You have brought shame on our family!”

Back at dinner, Krusty goes into a tailspin. He’s finally let the truth out, but he has nothing to show for it, leading Bart and Lisa to come up with a plan to reunite father and son.

They eventually ply the rabbi with Talmudic references about parent-child relationships as a reason to forgive his “boychik”. and by the end of the episode, Herschel and Hyman are patching things up with a rendition of “Oh Mein Papa”.

The episode, itself a parody of the 1927 film “The Jazz Singer”,

not only inspired viewers to contact long-lost relatives, it transformed Krusty from lovable supporting character into the cartoon’s Jewish conduit.

“Jewish kids are grateful he’s up there,” “The Simpsons” writer and producer Mike Reiss told the Denver Post in 2013.

In another interview with author Marc L Pinsky, Reiss explained the lengths the writers went to make sure “Like Father, Like Clown” accurately represented the teachings of the Torah.

“To write this thing we had three rabbis on the payroll,” he said. “They were working with us all week to make sure we got it biblically correct. We love to do our homework on the show.”

Reiss is another piece of the “Simpsons” Judaica puzzle. The show’s original creative team featured a murder’s row of Jewish talent, including Reiss, James L Brooks, Sam Simon, and voice actors Hank Azaria and Harry Shearer (ironically, non-Jew Dan Castellaneta does the voice of Krusty).

Simon himself is a model for the Jewish tradition of tzedakah; before he died from colon cancer in 2015, he promised to donate his estimated \$100 million fortune to charity.

This crew would help set the tone for “The Simpsons” by peppering its storylines with winks and nods to their religion: the “chai” hanging around newsman Kent Brockman’s (née Kenny Brockelstein’s) neck, the appearance of the “rapping rabbis” (Springfield’s answer to the Benedictine Monks), the “Itchy and Scratchy” bris episode

(which ends with Itchy turning Scratchy into a kiddush cup), Homer asking Marge if they’re Jewish (when she tells him no, he celebrates by cutting into an entire pig).

Even lesser-known characters like Dolph, who is seen throwing on a talit and running off to Hebrew lessons, and Duff Beer spokesman Duffman, are later revealed as members of the tribe.

Despite these revelations, “The Simpsons” wouldn’t make its way to Israel until 2010, where predictable shenanigans ensue: Homer gets hassled by customs for saying regular pancakes are better than latkes, and Bart gets beaten up by a young Krav Maga expert.

The episode of course includes an appearance from Krusty himself, seen stuffing pleas into the Western Wall to help pay off his unpaid parking tickets. He may be the show’s lovable resident Jew, but, as his father tells him in a later episode during a dream in “Jewish Heaven”, he’s also kind of a schmuck.

By then, Rabbi Hyman Krustofsky has passed away and Krusty assumes that despite their reconciliation, his dad never really liked his humour. But Bart drags Krusty to the synagogue of Hyman’s favourite rabbi, who likes to recite some of Krusty’s old jokes.

Turns out, the afterlife vision that featured his deceased father wasn’t true at all, as Krusty adds one more Jewish-influenced joke to the “Simpsons” archive: “My father respected me but could never tell me,” he says. “That’s Jewish heaven!”

# TV stations shun commissioned anti-Semitism documentary

MARC NEUGROSCHEL  
COLOGNE

A new documentary on European anti-Semitism was financed with over €170 000 of taxpayer money. So, why is it not being shown to the public? Because the TV networks holding the rights refuse to broadcast it.

The 90-minute film, “Chosen and Excluded - Jew Hatred in Europe” by German producers Joachim Schröder and Sophie Hafner, was commissioned by German public TV broadcaster WDR on behalf of its French-German partner channel Arte.

Presenting the various ways in which anti-Semitism is expressed in contemporary Europe, the documentary shows right-wing neo-Nazis, BDS activists and a demonstrator dressed like a hippie, who designates himself a libertarian and praises the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”.

Anti-Semitism among workers’ rights activists in France, is featured alongside cases of Muslim Jew-hatred, some of which culminate in the torturing and cold-blooded murder of Jews.

However, once the documentary was

submitted - and approved by the editor - the heads of the networks decided that it would not be broadcast because the movie allegedly “fails to meet formal requirements”.

Throughout Europe, the decision has roused much criticism: The French daily Le Monde and German anti-Semitism researcher Monika Schwarz-Friesel, among others, call it a case of censorship.

Seemingly, the controversial crux of this alleged “censorship” is Israel.

Paying special attention to the

denigration of the State of Israel as one of the most prevalent contemporary forms of Jew-hatred, the documentary highlights the activities of NGOs that engage in anti-Semitic Israel bashing while receiving European tax money.

In order to contextualise anti-Semitic libel about the Jewish State by contrasting it with the reality on the ground, the producers included footage from Israel and the Palestinian territories.

That footage, ironically, is what Arte

programme director Alain Le Diberder, states as the major reason for pulling the plug on the production.

In a media statement Le Diberder claims that the producers failed to comply with the requirement to deliver a documentary about anti-Semitism in Europe, because they included too much footage from Israel and too little from European countries.

“This is ludicrous,” says Serap Güler, a member of both the WDR network’s programme council as well as the executive committee of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s CDU-party.

Michaela Engelmeier, a Social-Democratic member of the Bundestag (Germany’s federal parliament), likewise calls Le Diberder’s statement “incomprehensible”.

Volker Beck, an MP for Germany’s Green Party and president of the German-Israeli Parliamentary Friendship Group of the German Bundestag, says the decision not to show the documentary “is even more disturbing when considering that Arte and WDR have shown programmes which could be seen as criticising Israel one-sidedly.”



A screenshot from the documentary “Chosen and Excluded - Jew Hatred in Europe”, showing a Nakba Day demonstration in Berlin.



# The state of Jewish youth

>> Continued from page 11

MARC NATHANSON, MAZKIR OF NETZER SA

The youth in South Africa are doers, as one would see from the #FeesMustFall protests, and Jewish youth are much a part of the action generation.

Jewish youth today are still grounded in values that make the Jewish people so prominent, special and display an amazing sense of togetherness. They carry the values that the Torah teaches and this is shown in our interactions with one another (Jews and non-Jews alike) and our wanting to support each other. We value diversity, unity, social change, Zionism and kindness.

The Jewish youth today, to my knowledge, has grown closer together and have developed a greater sense of community. As progressive Jews, we aren't always accepted by the rest of the community. Netzer madrichim and channichim often approach me, asking why Orthodox Jews do not regard us as real Jews. I am often left without an answer.

I too would love to understand this because I believe that all Jews are Jews.

Orthodox Jewish youth could be more sensitive to Progressive Jews, because it is often very hard to enter an Orthodox shul and to be accepted as a person, but have your Judaism questioned. This happens to so many of us.

While young Jews are very accepting of others, more needs to be done.

We can often be found at the forefront of many political events. A case in point is Israel Apartheid Week. It was clear how the dedication of the youth to ensure that Zionism isn't thrown in the dirt, was admirable. It amazed me there how the Jewish youth came together in support of Zionism and unity.

I have a strong belief that Jewish youth have a major role to play in this country and that it will take it to greater heights.



# Is Jacob Zuma the new King Kong?



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The theatricality of politics in South Africa today rivals a Shakespearean tragedy, with characters so colourful that The Bard himself would have revelled in its richness. Every morning one wakes to the news of something else to boggle the mind.

The leaked Gupta e-mails incriminating scores of political players with the stain of corruption, will provide years of fertile material for stage theatre. Characters range from the highest in the land, to the person in the street: fired former SABC head Hlaudi Motsoeneng, scandal-ridden former Eskom CEO Brian Molefe, the sinister Gupta family plotting from their Saxonwold palace how to steal more money from the country, President Jacob Zuma's former wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma who wants to become president, former DA leader Helen Zille with her damning colonialism tweets, and on and on.

And Zuma himself, with more than 700 corruption charges hanging over his head.

Given all this, there is irony in the upcoming re-staging of a famous play that caused waves in 1959 and became an international hit - King Kong. Produced by Cape Town's Fugard

Theatre, it will start touring in a few weeks' time.

It tells the story of a rural Zulu man, Ezekiel Dhlamini from Vryheid district in KwaZulu-Natal. Like many of his kin, he goes to Johannesburg - the fabled Egoli, City of Gold - to seek his fortune. He becomes a star boxer, known and revered by his nickname "King Kong".

His successes go to his head; he turns into a bully and braggart. When, one day, he is matched against middleweight "Greb" Mthimkulu, he prances around the ring like a Zulu war dancer. His opponent lands a left on his jaw and King Kong is floored. His decline follows; he receives scorn rather than adulation.

He stabs his girlfriend to death, is sentenced to 12 years hard labour for murder, and drowns in a river near Leeuwkop Prison farm.

While this African jazz musical accurately captures intriguing aspects of racial South Africa, its most important achievement was its staging in Wits University's Great Hall in Johannesburg with black performers to a white audience - a radical step, as apartheid's architects were honing the system to prevent such a thing.

The play was written by Harry Bloom, promoted by businessman Clive Menell, sets designed by architect Arthur Goldreich, and music by Todd Matshikiza. Leon Gluckman, a champion of South Africa's developing theatre, was the producer, with director Stanley Glasser. The play's jazz musicians, the Manhattan Brothers,

went on later to an international career, never returning to South Africa.

Jacob Zuma should attend a King Kong performance. He might recognise himself. He too comes from humble rural origins in KZN, with minimal schooling. In the anti-apartheid struggle he played in the big league alongside icons such as Nelson Mandela.

In post-apartheid South Africa, he rose to become Citizen Number One, with so much power that it went to his head. Seeking self-enrichment rather than serving the people, he did things that shamed his office and the once-illustrious ANC.

Intoxicated with power, he ignored the people's angry voices, becoming despised by leaders such as Ahmed Kathrada who had been his allies against apartheid. The SA Council of Churches, Helen Suzman Foundation, Nelson Mandela Foundation, trade unions and others, told him to leave the stage.

He was booed in Parliament and at public meetings and transformed into an object of derision. Yet, he clung to his accumulated riches and the dark areas of influence he still controlled. In which river will he find his end?

King Kong and Jacob Zuma. One day a play will be written about Zuma's disgrace, the Guptas and their corrupt cabal. In the meantime, South Africans ride the rollercoaster, trying to make sense of it all.

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

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# Take students’ spend seriously, urges brand guru

ANT KATZ

South African students have become far more narcissistic in their approach to brands and expect the brands to work for their money.

This is according to Student Village’s fifth Annual Student Spend Report, called “A Brand Me Generation, Buying Experiences”, which was published last month.

One of the most significant trends Student Village picked up in the attitude of students, is that “this year students have had an almost narcissistic change. Previously, it was ‘what brand defines me’ - now it is ‘what brand compliments me’,” says Ronen Aires, co-founder and CEO at Student Village.

The survey also picked up some huge movement in trends. “Students now perceive and use brands to support their personal brand by putting themselves first and then positioning brands to support who they are,” said Student Village co-founder and director Marc Kornberger. Clothing and footwear spend has increased substantially, almost threefold since the 2015 report.

Also, says Kornberger, “students are focused on emancipating, enhancing and elevating themselves by buying experiences and creating memories”.

To do this, today’s students need more money. And they are prepared to work for it. The million-odd students rely on part- and full-time work for 29 per cent of their income.

The average male student of 2017 is spending R2 917 a month, while their female counterparts spend a little less, at R2 612.

Kornberger says students have become less accepting of information presented to



them, choosing rather to challenge the status quo. They are intent in “making brands work harder for their attention”.

Aires agrees: “Brands feature in social media feeds for a few seconds,” he says. And it is that which should drive brands to being more authentic and relevant. “They have got to be smart and agile in the way they communicate.”

Marketers must realise that younger people are in a perpetual state of “continuous partial attention”, says Aires. In an age where people seek immediate gratification, brands must be sensitive or risk getting bitten. “Brands must take students seriously,” he stresses.

Students, according to Student Village, have a combined annual spend of R32 billion - and Jewish students would seem to come in at the top end when it comes to individual spending and saving.

“Jewish students should be taken seriously by brands,” says Aires. “They are future or current consumers and trendsetters.” He refers to them as “opinionistas” and says they are a force to be reckoned with. “They are future leaders and employers.”

On average, South Africa’s 985 212 students have more disposable income to spend than the average South African - to the tune of about R1 400 a year.

“While we speak about youth in their entirety, there is no average student,” says Aires. However, he adds, students’ spending habits mirror our society in general.

The latest report also shows that students are doing whatever it takes to work to support their lifestyle ideals, giving rise to the “gig economy” - the economy of the digital age, says Kornberger.

Johannesburg-based students in general live at home, says Aires, and therefore have lower cost-of-living expenses. This is even more true of Jewish students, he says, and it means that “Jewish students need to hustle less” to acquire the money they need to meet their lifestyles.

The Jewish youth market fit into what pundits refer to as the “tech profile” and, as such, are early adopters of new tech and platforms. They fit in the group of high spenders, who spend more than the average of R2 700 a month, he says.

A Jewish student, who asked not to be named, agrees that Jewish students are early

adopters and says: “Say a new iPhone comes out, a Jewish student would get it more easily, and earlier, than the average student.”

The 2017 study shows, however, that male students spend an average of R554 per month on clothing and footwear, while young women spend just R428. Male students spend an average of R261 a month on liquor, while girls curtail themselves to R211.

Female students, on the other hand, spend more in categories such as toiletries and grooming, at R193 per month (vs their male counterparts at R73); and contraception, where they spend an average of R118 (R85).

The study shows that premium clothing brands favoured by students include Cotton On, Factorie, H&M, Woolworths, sportscene and Markham. In terms of cell phones, Samsung has a commanding lead of 49 per cent, followed by Huawei at 15 per cent and iPhone at 11 per cent.

Between 2015 and 2017, online shopping by students grew phenomenally, according to the report. Students spent an average 18 per cent of their income online in 2015, which has grown to a huge 40 per cent this year.

Buying travel and electronics online, however, grew more slowly. The average student’s online spend grew from 17 to 22 per cent and from 16 to 22 per cent respectively.

The report shows that students generally have more disposable income than their parents. And, while they do save, it’s short-term saving for their next purchase, says Aires; more students want to move out of home compared to previous surveys.

Speaking from his own experience, Aires says one of the main things Jewish students save for, is to travel.

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# How children today understand Youth Day

It has been 41 long years in the history of South Africa since the June 16 uprising. Much has happened in the interim and the country is a very different place to what it was then.

What do our children know of this momentous day and what understanding do they have of what it meant for South Africa?

The SA Jewish Report asked a number of Jewish high schools to ask a few of their learners, and this is what they had to say:

- “Youth Day symbolises a shift in our culture. It was the day that the students used their voices to say the right thing and have an impact on the resistance against the apartheid system. It was a turning point in the fight for justice. To me June 16 symbolises freedom. It was the day that caused our nation to take a step towards equality.” - **Alexa Novick, King David Victory Park, grade 12.**



- “Youth Day signifies how much appreciation we should have for the bravery of the students. They played a significant role in creating the democratic South Africa we are blessed to live in.” **Tehilla Menachemi, Torah Academy Girls’ High, grade 10.**

- “June 16 is the day that commemorates the struggles of the youth of South Africa living under the apartheid regime, dictating that Afrikaans would be the official language of instruction in black township schools in South Africa. These schools were characterised by poor facilities, inadequately trained teachers and segregation. This day honours the unity of school children in the fight for equal rights for students in South Africa.

“Every day we hear about the fact that unemployment in South Africa is at its highest. The #FeesMustFall movement has called into light the question of whether education is a privilege or a right. Youth Day reminds me of the fact that although Afrikaans is no longer a compulsory language of instruction, we still have a long way to go before all South African youths are afforded equal opportunities”. – **Crawford College Sandton, Grade 12 (17).**

- “Youth Day is when children our age stood up against an unjust, unequal education system, exemplifying courage and strength. It is symbolic of the youth having a voice, which we also wish to emulate in our lives.” - **Yeshiva College Girls, Grade 11.**

- “It is a day that reminds us that as youth, it is not only a world that we are living in now, but we have the ability to transform the world into something more powerful and significant in the future.

“Youth Day reminds us how powerful we are. In keeping June 16, 1976 in mind, we are reminded although the people who were so influential in the June 16 Uprising are no longer the youth of the

country; they remind us how important it is to be mindful that such young people could be so impactful and so can we. We must never underestimate the power of the youth.” – **Shane Bassin, King David Linksfield, grade 12.**

- “To me Youth Day means that even as a minor, I have a voice and a means of expression. It is a shame that others had to die for it.” **Avi Cobb, Torah Academy Boys’ High, grade 9.**
- “Youth Day... is a day we can remember the bravery of South African students to fight for their cause and reach for equality. Today, Youth Day represents the power of the youth.

“Through recent years we have witnessed the ground-shaking possibility that the youth has to instrument change. Youth Day is a reminder that change is not dependent on age. We, the youth, have the right, responsibility and autonomy to fight for our cause. We are the future and have the power to instrument our ideal future today.” - **Gila Dove, King David Victory Park, grade 12.**

- “To me, Youth Day is a day that I can use as inspiration to make a difference. It shows that no matter how old I am or how important I am, I can make a difference. In the country we live in, it is a lesson that all of South Africa’s youth can learn. If we try to make a difference, like the children of Soweto did, we can overcome the racial differences and discrimination of our past that is still occurring today.” **Crawford College Sandton, grade 11 (17).**

- “So, for all of us youth, we must not forget that if it weren’t for the protests (even at the expense of many unnecessary deaths) we might still be living in an apartheid country, since it was those protests that laid the grounds for the release of Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid.

“Youth Day is a public holiday and there’s nothing better for me than a relaxing day off school, but even more important than enjoying a nice long weekend, is for me to reminisce on why today is a public holiday, to think of those youth who were brave enough to fight for their rights and for me to acknowledge how privileged I am to be able to receive such a great education.” - **Noam Levy, Torah Academy Boys’ High, grade 10.**

- “Youth Day is to commemorate the struggle for liberation, which was carried out by the youth and students of a divided South Africa. We as students can greatly relate to the need to fight for liberation and create unity. On this one day of my year, I am able to pay respect to the sacrifices that were made in order to gain a free and democratic South Africa.” – **Josh Molin, King David Victory Park, grade 12.**

- “Youth Day is very important to me because I am reminded of the courage and strength of the students who chose to protest against the oppressive education system and I am immensely grateful to them, as well as all those who lost their lives in the fight for paving the way for me to be able to achieve a high standard of education, where students of every race and ethnicity are accommodated for.” **Crawford College Sandton, grade 12 (18).**

- Some schools chose to name the scholars who spoke and others chose not to.



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# From indescribable pain to giving back through sport

NICOLA MILTZ

The pain of losing a child is indescribable. The pain of losing a second child only three years later, is beyond a universe of inexpressible agony. For most it would simply be too much to bear.

For Belinda Walt, each day is torture, but a blessing seen as a gift to give back to the community that has held her through the darkest of hours.

This week, in an effort to keep the memory of her two sons aflame, she held the sixth Walty Fun Day at the Sandton Action Sports Arena - an annual event characterised by undiluted fun and laughter in which children and young adults come together to play sport “for all the right reasons”.

It is not about winning or losing, it’s about comradeship, solidarity, mirth and pure happiness.

“That’s what my boys would’ve

wanted,” says Belinda, whose sons spent many hours at the action sports arena as youngsters.

Dean Walt died in a tragic car accident on April 22, 2011. He was not wearing a safety belt. His older brother Dylan, was next to him in the car. Three years later, on December 22, 2014, Dylan took his own life. He had been in training in the Israeli Defence Force in the prestigious Golani Egoz combat unit. It had been his wish to serve in the Israeli army.

His death completely and utterly blindsided Belinda and Dylan’s father, Ivan.

“I never ever thought anything would happen to him because I knew his brother Dean was watching and protecting him from above,” she says.

“He seemed so fine. He was doing so well. But he never spoke about his feelings. He was very private.”

His depression was a silent illness that he kept to himself. Even his closest friends had no inkling.

What keeps Belinda going is the wholehearted love and support that she has received from close friends and family and the community at large. This and her annual visits to Israel where she stays with Dylan’s host family. “They loved him and were very good to him,” she says. She also spends time with Israeli soldiers while there.

“There are some amazing people out there, people are so generous and loving,” she said.

This year the Walty Fun Day saw 250 boys and girls of varying ages come together in a frenzied fancy dress to play indoor cricket and netball in a four-hour orgy of joy and comic relief.

Said Chadd Silver, one of Dean’s best friends: “While the Walty Fun Day pains me to be reminded that my special friends are not here with us, it also rejuvenates me and reminds me that my relationship and our memories are eternal and beyond this world.”

Initially the Fun day attracted children from the Jewish community, mostly from King David Schools. But its popularity has spread and today children and young adults come from all over. Funds raised have in the past gone to the Reach for a Dream Foundation and Yad Aharon, but now all proceeds go to Arcadia.

One of the owners of the Sandton Action Sports Arena, Jono Leaf-Wright, of DJ Coaching, has made the venue available each year.

“Belinda’s strength after the devastating loss of her two boys is



Belinda and the boys together on the day.

remarkable and the fact that she can turn this pain into something so positive and give back to children less fortunate, is even more amazing. She comes back every year to continue the legacy of her boys and it really shows tremendous courage.

“Dean and Dylan were in and out of the arena as youngsters, training and playing with their friends and they will always hold a special place in my heart and the arenas’.

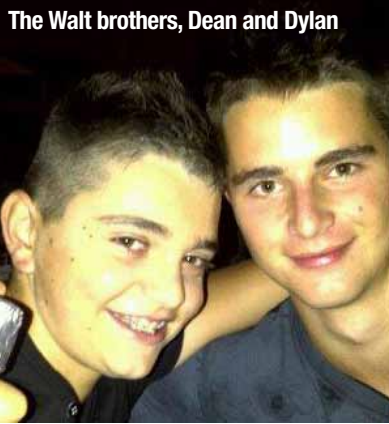
“The day brings together kids from different communities to remember two special boys and to play sport for all the right reasons in the spirit of fun, without the emphasis on winning or losing,” he said.

The event this year raised in excess of R100 000 with all proceeds going to Arcadia.

“I want the money raised to go towards extramural lessons for the children. They should also be able to

go to ballet, soccer and cricket. I don’t have children; some of them don’t have parents. This way I can play my part in giving them something to look forward to,” says Belinda.

The Macabbi soccer team to Israel has asked her if they can play in her sons’ memory in July. She has been invited to a small capping ceremony which coincidentally is taking place at Arcadia this week.



The Walt brothers, Dean and Dylan

## Letters

### STORY ON ZUMA'S JEWISH GRANDCHILD SENSATIONALIST LASHON HARA

“What do Presidents Donald Trump and Jacob Zuma have in common?”

This (on last week’s front page) - was meant to pique readers’ interests - and it probably did.

But it is misleading... and even in poor taste.

The full-page article explains that both have Jewish grandchildren. But the similarities end there. The circumstances are as different as chalk and cheese. Trump’s high-profile daughter, Ivanka, converted to Orthodox Judaism, is married and has three legitimate children. President Trump refers to them with admiration and love.

In the case of Jacob Zuma’s Jewish grandchild, he may not even know that this child exists - among his 22 (plus?) children and who knows how many grandchildren. There seems to be no relationship.

Whereas I am usually happy for my family to read the Jewish Report, I was uncomfortable with this article because the values are not ones that I espouse: premarital and unprotected intercourse, out of wedlock pregnancy with the “playboy” son of a corrupt president, who is on the gravy train, including relationships with the Gupta family.

He doesn’t seem interested in providing for this child and she seems to have to scrape by and pressurise him for any support - despite the millions that he has and that his family have organised for themselves...

In the same issue of Jewish Report was a letter about this Duduzane (Zuma’s son) and

the Dubai flat he purchased with questionable funding. This reads like a soap opera.

But really: Who cares? Why was this article printed? It has the status of a cheap gossip and sensationalist supermarket tabloid. In Jewish terminology: lashon hara!

Two weeks ago the Jewish Report published an article about the tragedy that befell a young high school learner in our community. I noticed in the editor’s column of last week that the paper did not publish another article about this recent tragedy, saying “the SA Jewish Report will not get in the way of the family’s privacy”.

While these two stories are very different, this single mother is dealing with her own struggles and took precautions to protect her (and her child’s) privacy. Why wasn’t that respected by this paper? Why add to the challenges that she already has to deal with?

Not a worthy article for Jewish Report.

**Michele Engelberg  
Johannesburg**

*Our role at the Jewish Report is to provide news of interest to and involving the community to the community, to hold to account the leadership of the community etc. This story is of real interest to our community as it shows that there is blood link now between our community and President Jacob Zuma. We were very cautious not to identify the woman and child concerned so as not to cause any harm or dispersions on her or her son, thereby protecting her privacy and integrity. – Editor*

**Guidelines for letters:** Letters of up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

### LACK OF LETTERS IN SAJR DISPLAYS A ‘PAREV’ ATTITUDE

Some time ago I had an exchange of correspondence with the newly appointed editor of the SA Jewish Report. The subject of that correspondence was to express my disappointment at the relegation of the letter page(s) to a measly few column centimetres and the publishing of only two or three letters.

The positive response I received from the editor was that the “lifeblood of a good newspaper was the letter page” which gave some hope that the SAJR would revert back to the days when a full page or even two pages, were devoted to letters to the editor.

Alas under the current editor, or perhaps acting under orders from the ownership or board, the newspaper has not lived up to “the lifeblood” of a good newspaper. It seems that editorial policy is to remain “parev” and to not allow any controversial letter published.

How disappointing that the

narrowminded attitude of either ownership or editorial policy, has denied our community the option of lively debate; such debate in a time like this, is more important than ever before, given the many issues that either divide or unite our community.

The politics of Israel, with such diverse opinions, as well as local issues, are now being suppressed, reminiscent of the days that the apartheid regimes tried to control our thoughts.

**Allan Wolman  
Johannesburg**

*The truth is we use 96% of all the letters we receive. The only ones we don’t use are either repetitive, filled with hate speech or written by the same writers every week. We try to get as many different views as possible. Since I joined the newspaper in February, we have had letters in every edition bar one. – Editor*

### RABBI ISAACSON PAYS TRIBUTE TO RABBI KURTSTAG

I have expected for some time now to hear that the Av Beth Din, Rabbi Moshe Aaron Kurtstag, shalita, together with his wonderful Rebbetzin Batya, will shortly be leaving us to settle in our true homeland Eretz Yisrael, where their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are waiting with open arms to welcome them.

It was Rav Moshe who, together with the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, of blessed memory, whole-heartedly readmitted me to the Orthodox fold. It was also Rav Moshe who, together with Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein,

shalita, on behalf of the Jewish community presented me with a citation in recognition of my years in the anti-apartheid struggle.

This much-treasured document today has pride of place in my living room, and will be reproduced in a forthcoming book on my life and career.

“The air of Eretz Yisrael is conducive to wisdom,” say our sages. With your arrival, Rav Moshe and Batya, it will be even more conducive.

**Rabbi Ben Isaacson  
Johannesburg**

**Disclaimer:** The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.  
Email: [editorial@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:editorial@sajewishreport.co.za)



# These young Jews are optimistic about their future in Europe

TOBY AXELROD  
BERLIN

It’s a drizzly Saturday morning in May. Some 160 young Jews, mostly European and ranging from Orthodox to secular, have come to the Hotel Berlin to talk about everything under the sun. Well, almost.

The upbeat, weekend-long event did not focus on anti-Semitism, the Holocaust or Israel, and thus the gathering reflected a shifting approach to Jewish continuity in Europe, 72 years after the end of the Second World War.

Under the theme “Our World in Transition”, participants in Junction Annual - a three-year-old programme of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) - opened up a Pandora’s box of challenges young Jews in Western countries face.

Junction - an initiative that’s aimed at the 25- to 40-year-old set - is one of the latest examples of a trend among Jewish organisations to let young adults determine their own agenda.

“Young adults have a tremendous amount to offer, and it’s healthy for Judaism and for Jews, and I think many organisations know that,” said Jonathan Schorsch, professor of history at the School of Jewish Theology at the University of Potsdam, who facilitated a discussion at the conference on “what it means to be ourselves in a multi-cultural world”.

One thing the weekend’s event made clear: Despite threats of terrorism and rising anti-Semitism, young European Jews aren’t ruled by fear. Most are not leaving for Israel - even if by and large they are Zionist. They’re staying.

This is Generation 3.0, the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors or of those who grew up behind the Iron Curtain, and they are now finding their voices. They are starting Jewish projects outside existing communal structures. European Jews - who number about 1.4 million - are no longer keeping a low profile. And they are getting support from the United Kingdom-based Rothschild Foundation and the US-based Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, along with other organisations that want to cultivate this spirit.

In Berlin, where the recent Junction event took place, Generation 3.0 includes people like Martin Schubert, 38, of Berlin, a grandchild of Holocaust survivors. He and his wife, Alisa Poplavskaya, are alumni of the Tevel b’Tzedek programme - a Jerusalem-based non-governmental organisation that brings Jewish volunteers from around the world to rural villages in Nepal and Burundi.

“It is always better to have an identity where your pride comes from having the power to help others, than from being the victim,” said Schubert, who, together with Poplavskaya, gave a couples coaching workshop at the conference.

Berlin graduate student Nataliya Pushkin, 26, recently became a host for Moishe House Without Walls - meaning she’ll receive funding to create events for her Jewish peers, “from tikkun olam to social events, religious learning and holidays and festivities”, she said.

“For us to go further as Jewish communities, we need the voices of younger people,” Lela Sadikario, the Milan-based director of Junction, told JTA.

“Younger people often roll between the cracks of the organised Jewish communities,” said Schorsch, who is starting a Jewish Activism Summer School at the University of Potsdam, in which Jewish millennials can focus on projects that help both non-Jews and Jews.

Schorsch said he hopes to bridge a gap between religious and secular Jewish identity. Jews seem to face a choice of “either or”, he said, when in fact you need both.

Sarah Eisenman, the New York-based director of JDC’s Entwine project, which seeks to engage those aged 24 to 36, said she wants “this generation to see Jewish global responsibility as a cornerstone of their identity”.

Entwine runs service work programmes with local partners, creating opportunities for volunteer work in Jewish communities in India, Argentina, Turkey, Hungary, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Israel and elsewhere.

The initiative got off the ground in 2012, after a JDC survey of Jewish young adults showed “volunteerism and the opportunity to have a direct impact” as their top interest, Eisenman said.

Through Entwine, “we can create this opportunity, and step back and get out of the way”, she added.

It’s a familiar mantra by now, and the Paris-based European Council on Jewish Communities has been repeating it, too. After a 2014 conference in London, the council urged “giving them (young people) greater power and independence in creating programmes which reflect their particular concerns and way of life”. (JTA)



Alisa Poplavskaya's workshop on mindfulness was one of the offerings at the recent Junction conference on “transitions”, which drew more than 160 young Jewish adults to the German capital.

BS"ד

נס"ד

Exciting news!

We are proud to announce that "The International Daily Inspiration" is coming to South Africa!

With the help of G-d we are honored to welcome

Rabbi **Eliyahu Rabi** from Israel

He is the son of the great Torah sage, Rabbi Chaim Rabi, rabbi of the organization, "The International Daily Inspiration."

Rabbi Rabi will be in the country from Sunday June 18, 2017 until Wednesday June 21, 2017, (24th of Sivan- 27th of Sivan).

For inquiries regarding the locations of the Rabbi's lectures during his visit, or to organize lectures, talks or house groups (free of charge) please call:

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# Matches made in youth movements

## TALI FEINBERG

Across the generations, Jewish youth movements have been a place where many have met their mate for life. Be it Habonim, Bnei Akiva, Betar or Netzer Maginim, they were all conducive to finding your first (and in many cases, your lasting) love.

Some of the many matches-made-on-machaneh share their stories:



### ASHER AND FELICITY KLAWANSKY:

**Asher:** We met at Habonim machaneh and “clicked” straightaway. At first it was a long-distance relationship as I was from Krugersdorp and Felicity was a Durbanite.

Later on I had made aliyah and she was on Shnat Hachsharah (year-long leadership programme) and the romance developed from there. Our Habonim background gave us shared values, but more importantly she was beautiful.

We lived on Kibbutz Nir Eliyahu for 16 years and had four kids and returned to South Africa in 1990. We have just celebrated our 42nd anniversary. We are now proud grandparents of five delightful grandchildren.

To this day we have many very close friends who were with us in Habonim and who have similar stories to ours.

### KELLI AND BENJAMIN LUNSKY:

**Kelli:** We met at a Habonim National Seminar in 2000, and our romance began in December 2002 on the hallowed turf of Onrus.

For us, getting married on the campsite was a “no-brainer”. It is the soil where our roots are buried and from where we have grown, and the paths and trails of this beautiful place are imprinted on us.

There were so many things that made our campsite wedding extraordinary. How many people get to stand under the chuppah in their most precious, sacred place with all of their loved ones surrounding them? Our



ceremony was hand-crafted and officiated by a dear friend and fellow member of the movement. It was our most meaningful peulah (activity) on the campsite to date!

We’ve been happily married for the last eight years and, in that time, we have built a home, welcomed two gorgeous Yorkie dogs into our lives and fell in love all over again when our two beautiful children entered our world.

A youth movement develops members

with a common culture, tradition and deep-rooted values. Choosing to spend our lives together was the easiest decision we ever made. Our union made so much sense. We already had a shared foundation, religion and compatibility that is hard to find elsewhere.

We spent the best months of our youth at Habonim Dror machaneh and we can’t wait to help our children pack and decorate their “trommels”. It thrills us to know they still have such a magical journey ahead of them! It’s Onrus or bust!



### IAN AND CARLA ROZOWSKY:

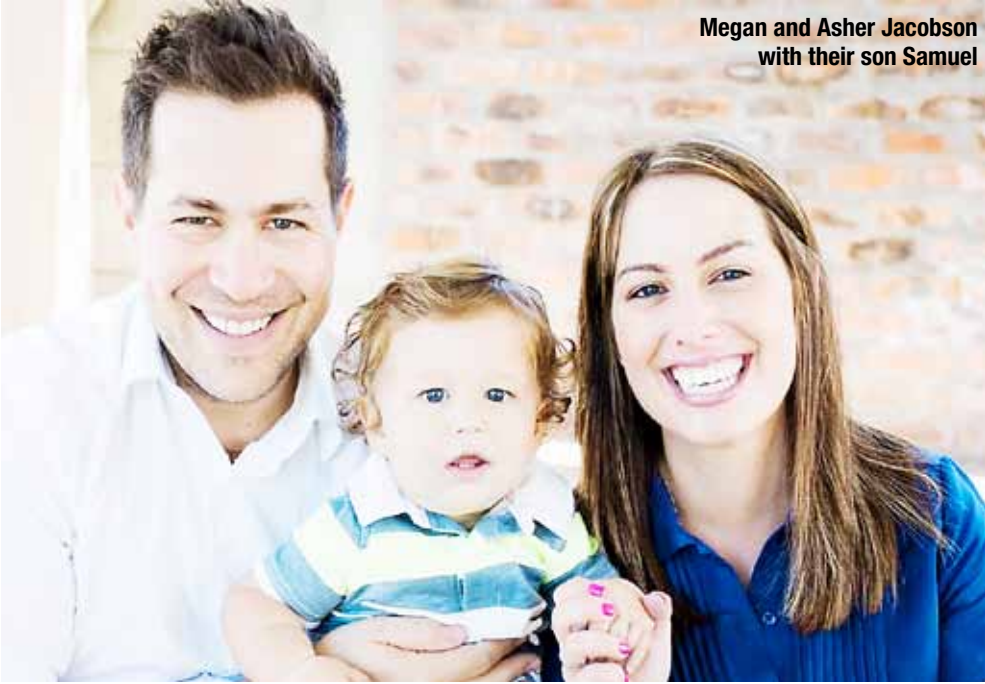
**Ian:** Carla and I met on a dusty path at Onrus in Sollelim at Habonim Machaneh Tuval (1981). Carla was 14, and I was 15. We have been married for the past 25 years. Our children Shea and Reede have subsequently attended several machanot.

Wanting to give something back to the movement that brought us together, we returned to Onrus 30 years after meeting as volunteers at three machanot - the best Decembers of our adult lives. We emigrated to Australia in 2014, which brought our involvement to a sad end.

### MEGAN AND ASHER JACOBSON:

**Megan:** We met at Betar in 1998. It was Asher’s fifth year at camp (he was in standard 8) and my first year at camp (I was in standard 6.)

We were in different age groups, started out as friends and saw each other once



or twice the year after camp. We only reconnected seven years later in 2005. We dated for almost seven years and got married in 2012. So, we’ve known each other for almost 20 years!

We are both from Johannesburg and studied at the University of Johannesburg. Asher did a BA Marketing and I studied optometry. We decided to move to Cape Town in 2010.

Asher now works as programme director at Lobster Ink. Megan is an optometrist at Tygerberg Hospital and has a master’s degree in clinical epidemiology from Stellenbosch University. We were blessed with a beautiful little boy in 2015, named Samuel.

We will give our child the option to choose if he would like to go to a youth movement and if so, then encourage it. It’s a great way to socialise and meet new people. Maybe even your “one day” spouse!

Our relationship advice is to acknowledge that time together is a blessing, not to be taken for granted.

### CASEY AND DARREN SLOT:

**Casey:** Darren and I both went to Bnei Akiva camp and met on the bus on the way to camp in 2006. He was 15 and I was 14.

It was an instant romance; we were inseparable the whole of camp from the day we met on the bus. We started dating a few days into camp.

We both went through Herzlia High School together. We got married on December 11, last year, exactly 10 years after Darren asked me out at camp in 2006, and we can’t wait to continue our journey together.

Being part of a youth movement, you’re able to find someone who has similar values and beliefs to you, and you share common



ground. Camp is always the best years of your life, and even more amazing being able to spend it with the one you love.

We will definitely send our kids to Bnei - it will always have a special place in our hearts for obvious reasons.

### ERIC AND MEL BESWICK:

**Eric:** We met at Netzer Maginim (now Netzer South Africa) in 1989 when we were in the same shichvah together. We only became a couple much later when we were on shnat in 1992.

I moved to Cape Town from Johannesburg in 1993 to be with Mel. She studied teaching and I completed a marketing degree. Mel has since taught at a government school in Plumstead and now teaches at Reddam. I worked in marketing and sales until I was offered the job of Temple Israel Cape Town executive director in 2008, where I still am today. Mel also works at Temple Israel as cheder principal and marketing co-ordinator.

Both our children, Daniella (13) and Nathan (11) have been to Netzer. While Mel would be okay if they went elsewhere, I am adamant that Netzer is the only option!



### LEE-ANN AND GREG GELB:

**Lee-Ann:** We only really met in our later Bnei Akiva days, once we were both madrichim. It took a good few years for me to come to my senses; let’s just say that Greg was persistent!

**Greg:** I knew from the get-go we were meant to be more than just friends. When I had that “eureka-moment” I remember messaging Lee-Ann to let her know this discovery... let’s just say I knew I had my work cut out for me from then on!

**Lee-Ann:** I was involved as a madricha through university and was on camp two months before our wedding. We actually dropped in at the campsite recently. Now I work in the digital department of an advertising agency.



**Greg:** I’ve been fortunate to remain within the Jewish community and I currently am the executive director of Cape Town Torah High School.

**Lee-Ann:** In terms of challenges, Greg stopped coming to camp the older we got, so it was a month apart each year. Bnei was a springboard into other hadracha roles in the community, and we simply slotted Bnei events, Shabbatons and camps into our schedules. It was just part of what we did and we loved it.

**Greg:** It was hard for me to say goodbye to Lee whenever she went to camp, but as they say, “absence makes the heart grow fonder”. I knew she was doing great work for the South African community and the lessons we both learned from Bnei Akiva have really helped us reach great heights in our Jewish community as well as our personal lives.

**Lee-Ann:** I’d certainly encourage my children to get involved with Bnei - I’d want them to have the same magical experiences we had, so I would 100 per cent encourage them to be involved in a youth movement.

We met at Habonim and were a couple ever since. We had a long-distance romance between Cape Town and Johannesburg for eight years and maintained contact through weekly love letters and calls made from the “tickey box”... to continue his studies in psychology. I had already obtained my B Arch degree.

So, we returned and he read for his masters and we were married in December 1978 in Cape Town and returned to Port Elizabeth for Ian to complete his masters. We settled in PE, Ian in private practice and me working as an architect.

In 2008 I organised the first international Habonim reunion at the Onrus machaneh site - a great success with chaverim coming from all over the globe.



Sandi and Stephen Kaye with their children David, Sasha (graduate) and Mia.

**SANDI AND STEPHEN KAYE**

**Sandi:** We met at Habonim and were a couple ever since. We had a long-distance romance between Cape Town and Johannesburg for eight years and maintained contact through weekly love letters and calls made from the “tickey box” on the corner; we thrived and always felt very lucky to have “made it”!

I moved to Johannesburg and we got married in January 1985 in Cape Town (10 years after meeting). We moved to Canada, six months after our wedding. The first four years were spent in relative isolation on the prairies which only strengthened our bond. We moved to Vancouver in 1989 and have been here ever since.

We felt that it was important for our children to have a Jewish education, a Jewish camp experience similar to the one we had at Habonim, and an Israel experience. These, in addition to maintaining a Jewish home, have shown to be the most important factors contributing to children valuing their Jewish identity and hopefully choosing a Jewish life partner.

**HILARY AND IAN MEYER:**

**Hilary:** We met at a Zionist conference in Johannesburg in September 1972 as Habonim delegates and started going out together at Habonim machaneh at the end of that year (72/73) at which we were both madrichim.

We worked well together as madrichim, running seminars and machanot. We then lived on the kibbutz until Ian decided to further his studies and was not accepted at university in Israel as his Hebrew was not of a high enough standard. He was encouraged to come back to South Africa



Hilary and Ian Meyer



Taken January 2017: Three couples who met at Habonim machaneh and have been best of friends since the 1970s. Back: Ronni (Hellman) Kahn; Ian Meyer; Asher Klawansky; Alan Browde; and Barry Isaacs. Front: Suzie Browde; Hilary (Cohen) Meyer; Cookie Isaacs (was not in Habonim but her two sons were); and Felicity (Green) Klawansky.

Have you submitted your nominations for the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2017 yet? Send all the details to [nominations@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:nominations@sajewishreport.co.za)



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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

## Knysna fire relief

Generally speaking, engaging in humanitarian initiatives on behalf of the wider society, is not part of the core mandate of the Board. Within our community, there already exist a range of organisations that work in these areas.

That being said, it sometimes happens that a major crisis occurs, where we feel that it is necessary for us, on behalf of the Jewish community, to become involved. This was the case last week in the wake of the runaway fires that devastated Knysna and its surrounding areas.

The Board issued an appeal to the community to assist those effected by the disaster. The response was very encouraging, enabling us within a couple of days to send down the first consignment of clothing and other much needed items to the relevant welfare bodies.

Jewish contributions to relief initiatives are being co-ordinated by the SAJBD Cape Council, which is in constant communication with the Garden Route Jewish Association, headed by Myron Robinson.

Myron, in addition to the prominent role he plays in local Jewish affairs, has a long record of public service in the George-Knysna area, and is very involved in efforts to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region.

I thank all those who have responded so generously to our appeal. For those still wishing to do so, the deposit details are: SA Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council) Standard Bank Current Account: 070703329 Branch: 020909 Ref: Victim Relief. All contributions will be forwarded to the relevant relief and disaster management bodies.

**Public Services and the maintenance of Jewish tradition**

Currently, a strike by mortuary workers is being undertaken throughout Gauteng, resulting in autopsies and burials being held up and causing widespread distress among bereaved families across all sectors of our society.

In view of the requirements of Jewish law that the body be interred as soon as possible after death, it is having an additional negative impact on our community.

The Board is currently working with the Gauteng health authorities and the Chevrah Kadisha to resolve these problems, and are hopeful that a suitable accommodation will soon be made.

This is not the first time that we have involved ourselves in problems relating to Jewish burials. In previous years,

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

we have worked with the Chevrah Kadisha and relevant government departments in resolving such issues as the timeous release of death certificates and questions relating to how autopsies are conducted.

Fortunately, these efforts have to date always been successful.

The SAJBD is the interface between the Jewish community and the authorities when it comes to addressing issues of this nature. Through this, we are able to carry out our mandate to ensure that our community continues to be able to observe Jewish practice and tradition in their everyday lives.

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



**Above Board**  
**Jeff Katz**  
National Chairman

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

## Only death and taxes



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

It has often been said that death and taxes are the only real certainties in life. While I can't tell you too much about taxes, I do have something to share on the other topic.

Most people consider financial planning to be responsible adult behaviour, yet not everyone includes the costs of funerals in their arrangements, although these are all too real.

The plot, coffin, tachrichim (shrouds), staff, transport, maintenance of the grounds, official Government documentation and Council fees, must all be taken into account. Later there are the costs of the permit and tombstone

to be considered too. While West Park cemetery runs on a shoestring budget, all of these expenses must somehow be met.

There are two qualities I'd like to highlight that make our Chevrah Kadisha exceptional: one is that we always cover the costs of burial for people who have no family or means.

The second is that it is a mark of distinction that we carry out all funerals before asking for a cent. We do not demand payment upfront as is the case in other Jewish cemeteries across the globe, and is certainly the case in other religions.

Burial costs at their basic level are pretty similar when comparing Jewish and non-Jewish funerals. The difference is that we provide only one standard coffin and every burial is exactly the same, regardless of whether the family are princes or paupers.

We do not offer the option of more expensive coffins, fancy flowers or extended services. Jewish law is explicit in its standardisation of burial procedures. Dignity is our directive. Simplicity and equality is the Jewish way.

What is sometimes misunderstood is that donations from family and friends at the cemetery do not accumulate towards the funeral account; paying for the funeral should take precedence over buying a tombstone and while Chevrah Kadisha membership entitles the deceased to a discount, it does not cancel the charges.

In its service to the community, and as an act of good faith, we carry out the holy work of burial before submitting an account. But that doesn't mean that the expenses are imaginary or that the account need not be paid.

As with everything the Chev does, those who are unable to pay, or who need to make payment plans, are accommodated. For everyone else there remains a moral imperative to cover the costs of a family member's funeral before the responsibility to subsidise it falls upon our community.

It's worth considering, while talking to your financial adviser about your taxes, to discuss life's other inevitability and plan accordingly.

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

*This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha*

A column of WIZO South Africa

## Youth Day: WIZO salutes SA and Israeli youth

Youth Day in South Africa on June 16, is a public holiday dedicated to the courage and sacrifices made by the youths involved in the Soweto Uprising in 1976. It is also a celebration of the hopes and aspirations of all young people.

WIZO supports this day and recognises the vital role young people in South Africa play as equal contributors in shaping a just society.

Ever mindful of the importance of having strong and committed young people in Israeli society, WIZO plays an important role in providing the most vulnerable young people with education, counselling, youth activities, specialised career programmes and safe havens.

In this way, young people develop dignity, self-worth and confidence, which in turn enables them to contribute to society in the best way possible.

The deluge of technological advancements in the past decade, has given the youth a platform on which to become involved in politics worldwide as was evident in both the US and UK elections.

At the forefront of this emerging trend, WIZO has been helping and encouraging young people for decades to assume leadership roles in Israeli society.

Last month we were filled with hope and pride as we



**WIZO South Africa**  
**Moonyeen Castle**  
President

celebrated a historic milestone ... 50 years since the reunification of Jerusalem, with amazing Yom Yerushalayim festivities nationwide and indeed worldwide.

This was, quite literally, a modern-day miracle and I was privileged enough to be in Israel for the celebrations and to witness a young nation, beset with enemies and difficulties, stand tall and proud and hopeful that there will be peace for the youth of tomorrow.

The upcoming Maccabi Games are now the focus of all sport-minded people. It is a "Proudly Jewish" event, bringing thousands of young competitors to Israel from all over the world to excel and connect with their Jewish identity.

We wish them luck and success as they put their vitality, determination and strength to the ultimate test.

Since the very beginning, WIZO federations around the world and in Israel, have always looked to their next generation of chaverot to bring new ideas to the table, to provide fresh solutions and to engage women of their own age to volunteer in the WIZO movement, a movement that must march ever-forward hand-in-hand with the State of Israel.

*This column paid for by WIZO SA*

Sunday (June 18)	of Physiology at Wits, on "The First World War and Grandma's Lace". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 10:00. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.	of Cultural History. Time: Bus departs from Golden Acres parking area at 09:00 sharp. Cost: R190 (incl the bus, entrance, tour and tea). Booking: Ivy Grushkin and Fleurette Jankelow, (011) 532-9701.
• Nechama - Growth From Grief Support Group. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Time: Tea from 09:30, group starts promptly at 10:00 - 11:30. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011)-532-9701.	Tuesday (June 20)	
• Second Innings hosts Linda Clarke, on "Mindfulness, and the Effects of Mindlessness". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Venue, Sandringham. Time: 10:00am. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.	• WIZO Women Inspired hosts a "Challenge, Choice, Change" with Dorianne Weil, Dr D, in conversation with musician Bryan Schimmel. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R150. Booking and venue details: Jenny (011) 645-2515; Joceline 082-441-4375; Lesley 083-456-3911 or Merlene 082-410-4976.	
Monday (June 19)	Wednesday (June 21)	
• UJW hosts Prof Richard Brooksbank of the School	• Second Innings hosts a guided tour of Paul Kruger House in Pretoria and a visit to The National Museum	

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# Yeshiva College tots learn about veggies

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Yeshiva College grade Rs went to visit the Dis-Chem Foundation’s Food Garden in Johannesburg recently.

They dug holes for planting and picking vegetables. Thereafter, happy, energised children returned to school full of news and information, having learnt about vegetable gardens, the process involved in planting vegetables and the concept of sustainable farming.



Photo supplied

# Understanding the benefits of random acts of kindness

DALYA ERSTER

Children from Torah Academy pre-grade and primary school participated in a “Random Acts of Kindness” campaign over the past two weeks. Each child received a bag of cards which they were encouraged to fill in once they had done their daily act of kindness.

They brought their cards back to school to share with their teachers and friends. Their beautiful

personal stories were shared every morning in the primary school.

The programme rounded off in an assembly where children related more stories of kindness experienced over the past few weeks. The gathering culminated with a riveting countdown, whereby each child released a balloon, with one of their cards attached, as a message for sending kindness into the world.



Photo supplied

# Sydenham Pre-Primary learns about SA



JENNY MILLER

Jarren Rosenthal, Jesse Roff, Kara Bass, and Shyla Streaton showing off their colourful taxi creations.

The children at Sydenham Pre-Primary School are learning about South Africa. They have learnt about, among other facts, the national flag, national anthem, currency, food and the 11 official languages .

# Crawford College gears up for Maccabi 2017

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Eleven Jewish learners at Crawford College Sandton have qualified for this year’s Maccabiah. The school is extremely proud of them and wish them well at this prestigious event.

They are, back: Julia-Rose Platt (swimming); Dylan Ephron (cricket); Aiden Swartzberg (cricket); Jordan Swartzberg (cricket); and Alona Bahat (swimming). Front: Sean Terespolsky (soccer); Benjamin Hack (swimming); Daniel Hack (swimming); and Ethan Lewis (swimming). Missing for the photograph were Itai Melnik (swimming) and Savanna Hodes (netball).



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# Jacob Miltz: combination of great talent and hard work

JACK MILNER

Over the years I have watched a host of junior players who are planning to play at the highest level of their respective sports. Very few succeed, but occasionally you see someone who is not only talented, but also prepared to work hard in order to achieve his or her goal. They are the ones who have the best chance of making it.

Jacob Miltz fits into this category. Jacob, who has only recently turned 17, has been named in the 15-man South Africa under-19 cricket squad to take on 2016 ICC under-19 World Cup winners, the West Indies, in a five-match One-Day International (ODI) series from July 9 to 19 in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

“Jacob has made a lot of sacrifices to get to the level he is now,” says Jono Leaf-Wright, who has coached the youngster since he was six years old.

“I have come across lots of guys and many with talent, but there are those who are prepared to put in the work and Jacob is one of those. At the age of 13 he was overlooked in favour of some other players who were more progressive at the time. He wasn’t selected to the under-13 side and at under-15 he made the B side.

“But Jacob kept working hard. He realised fitness was an issue, especially as he is a wicketkeeper/batsman. He started to put in the hours, making the sacrifices and the gap started to close.

“Six or seven months ago he crossed the line and now he has left behind many of those who were ahead of him at an earlier age. He is very mature and that’s what separated him from so many of the others,” said Leaf-Wright.

Last December, still 16 years old at the time, Jacob represented Gauteng at the Under-17 Provincial Cricket Week. He was one of the star performers and was then selected to play in the Under-19 Lions Cub team and at Cubs Week in Stellenbosch.

The tournament comprised teams from all the provincial franchises and Jacob emphatically left his mark there. Although he was only the fourth highest scorer, he did have the highest average - an outstanding 100,5.

That was good enough to get him selected

to play in the Under-23 Lions Academy team. His efforts within his own age group saw him named as the Under-17 Gauteng Player Of The Year last month.

Jacob, a grade 11 pupil at St David’s Marist Inanda, says he always wanted to play the sport. “When I was young I always enjoyed watching and playing. I had a talent for ball skills. From a young age I would throw the ball and catch and as I got to high school the passion grew.”

He admits to being a team player. “Even though cricket is really a team sport played by individuals, I enjoy being part of the team and will do whatever the team needs me to do.”

When he was selected to play in the Gauteng under-15 B team, it proved a motivating factor for Jacob. “I don’t think making the B team is necessarily a bad thing,” said Leaf-Wright. There are two options: one, you give up, or two, you work harder to succeed and then overtake the guys who beat you. That’s exactly what Jacob did.”

At the moment Jacob opens the batting and keeps wicket, but there is a strong school of thought that this is not ideal. There’s the case of AB de Villiers who was dropped down the batting order to accommodate his wicketkeeping and that could be the case with

There are many formats in cricket these days and many cricketers prefer one over the other, but Jacob believes one needs to be flexible.

“I still think to play test cricket is everybody’s dream, but one needs to be open to all formats. You’ve got to be able to adapt.”



Jacob Miltz

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