

ular Not Jewish. **How would you describe your personal political views:** Very Liberal Liberal Conservative Very Conservative Disinterested. **How would you describe your personal views on Israel:** I believe that Judea and Samaria are an integral part of Israel and should never be surrendered I believe that Israel occupies the West Bank and should get rid of the occupation as soon as possible I believe Israel should, when the time is right, trade land for peace Disinterested. **How often do you go to shul?** Every day or almost every day Usually on Shabbat and/or Yom Tov Occasionally Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur Almost never I'm not Jewish. **How do you receive the Jewish Report?** E-mail Download the entire edition from the Internet Read individual articles on the internet Collect from a synagogue Collect from a shop/supermarket/

south african Jewish Report

■ Volume 21 – Number 35 ■ October 20 2017 ■ 30 Tishrei 5778

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Photo: Jason Crouse

In the name of Hugo

Dov and Nicole Paluch and their youngest child, Poppy, at Hugo's Greenhood dustbin painting event this week. See pages 3 and 4.



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SABC board – the Jewish connection

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

There haven't been too many "itzes" in the surnames of SABC board members in the past. Until now. Newly-appointed member, Michael Markovitz along with colleague John Matisonn, have no small task ahead.

As DA MP Phumzile van Damme put it, new board members will need "nerves of steel". That's as the announcement of the board was delayed for three weeks by President Jacob Zuma, ostensibly, say analysts, for political reasons while the SABC interim board reported losses of over R1,1 billion for the 2016/17 financial year. The broadcaster has, over the past few years, been plagued by corruption, bad management, low staff morale and political interference.

But nerves of steel – and a stockpile of experience – the two Jewish board members Markovitz and Matisonn have.

Markovitz has over 20 years' experience as an executive and consultant in the media, technology and entertainment sectors. He helped draft South Africa's new broadcasting legislation in 1993 and served as the adviser to the Independent Broadcasting Authority and to Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) chairman, Mandla Langa, from 1999 to 2005.

John Matisonn, a veteran journalist who's served as the executive editor of SABC radio news and was one of the first commissioners of ICASA, was blacklisted from the SABC by the apartheid government. Then in the early 90s was again sidelined while preparing to turn what was a government mouthpiece, into an independent institution.

"I was holding some of my colleagues accountable for corruption that I witnessed. My role in trying to stop it was not appreciated."

Now he's back. This time for a five-year term. "I feel very hopeful," he says. "I believe a good



Michael Markovitz



John Matisonn

public broadcaster can do an enormous amount for SA and I'm committed to that."

While on the interim board for six months, Matisonn said he was "very pleased" with the work accomplished. "We massively cut losses and got substantial control of the finances. We are improving the SABC's reputation and have assured journalists of our protection."

This is no longer about what came to be known as His Master's Voice.

As constitutional law expert Pierre de Vos put in recently: "The SABC has for some time operated as a state broadcaster – promoting the interests of the dominant faction within the governing party, instead of as a public broadcaster serving the interest of all South Africans."

Serving ordinary South Africans is a challenge both Markovitz and Matisonn are looking forward to.

"We need to be far bigger financially and far stronger. We need programming that is more diverse and challenging and be creative in looking for avenues for growth," says Matisonn.

What's different this time round, he says, is that parliament is different. "There is tremendous support for the new board. And I would never say that unless I believed it."

Markovitz believes the SABC plays a "unique role" in our constitutional democracy. "It deals

with freedom of expression which is enshrined in our Constitution." He's crucially aware that, despite the need for more efficient managing of resources at the SABC, the public broadcaster is up against a formidable competitor for audience and ad share – Pay TV. As he said in his interview, he's looking forward to "taking the SABC into the next era".

"I'm honoured to have been appointed and look forward to making a contribution to help turn an important institution around. I hope to get to a situation where the SABC occupies a respected position in society again."

For many South Africans, says Markovitz, the SABC is the only source of news, information and entertainment.

As he puts it: "This is a public service, a national service."

• Bongumusa Makhathini has been appointed board chairman and Febe Potgieter-Gqubule, his deputy.

Shabbat Times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:59	18:50	Johannesburg
18:15	19:39	Cape Town
17:51	18:43	Durban
18:09	19:01	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:11	Port Elizabeth
18:07	19:00	East London

Parshat Noach

Give a compliment

Just recently an article was featured in the SA Jewish Report about how oftentimes we have plenty of justified criticism for our community institutions. However, we're not as openhanded with offering compliments. The same could be said of people we interact with daily; our loved ones, colleagues, students, co-workers, employees, etc.

What is the Jewish perspective on compliments? Should we be lavish with our praise or rather withhold flattery?

In the opening of our parsha, Noach is described with flowing praise, unlike almost any other biblical figure. We read "...Noach was a righteous man; he was perfect in his generations, Noach walked with G-d."

What was so special about this deluge-dodging daredevil that earned

him such effusive praise?

Noach didn't have it easy. He faced a corrupt populace who didn't heed his beckonings for teshuva.

To stand strong in the face of such adversity required extraordinary strength. Try to put yourself in Noach's sandals for a moment. How would you overcome the obstacles of trying to behave so radically different than the rest of society? From where did Noach derive the moral courage?

One answer is that G-d's praise of him is what inspired him to act on the compliments heaped upon him. That's what gave him the fortitude to handle his circumstances. It was the very catalyst creating the ability for him to realise his own potential.

As described by the Pygmalion effect, oftentimes people behave according to others' expectations of them. When complimented, we tend to gravitate towards the positive qualities that have been highlighted, even if it's not always our default setting.

So, G-d reminds Noach of the latent qualities he possesses. He is righteous, perfect, walks with G-d. "You are different

than others," he is reminded, and this gives him the courage to carry on despite the challenges. Those encouraging words created the great potential for a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The truth is that we all have unlimited reservoirs of potential deep within us. The trick is to bring them to expression. When we uplift people around us by complimenting and praising their good, we inspire them to realise their true potential. In the words of Mark Twain "I can live for two months on a good compliment."

We are beneficiaries of so much good around us. Sadly, though, much of it is unacknowledged. Some people are experts at pointing out what's wrong with their shul, school or a loved one, while taking for granted what's right. Complimenting people is one of the most beautiful ways to spread happiness around you and will actually increase yours too.

Seize the opportunity now to praise your spouse, compliment your child, say a kind word to a friend or anyone.

Wishing you a praiseworthy Shabbos!

Rabbi
Ari Kievman,
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Subscriptions Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860-525-200
Board of Directors Howard Sackstein (Chairman), Herby Rosenberg, Dina Diamond, Herschel Jawitz, Shaun Matisonn, Benjy Porter.
Advertisements and editorial copy do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and staff. Tel: (011) 430-1980.

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Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za

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Southern Africa's most powerful Christian leader meets Israeli president in Israel

NICOLA MILTZ

The leader of the Zion Christian Church – ZCC – Bishop Dr Barnabas Lekganyane, had a meeting with President Reuven Rivlin of Israel, on Wednesday during this acclaimed Christian leader's first official peace mission to the Holy Land.

Lekganyane and his entourage were scheduled to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, as well as other prominent Israeli leaders.

He also met the South African Ambassador to Israel, Sisa Ngombane.

The ZCC is the largest African-initiated church in southern Africa with more than eight million members. The church's headquarters are at Zion City at Moria in Limpopo Province.

The leadership of the Zion Christian Church have been in Israel since Tuesday on the tour which was organised by the South African Friends of Israel.

Reverend Emmanuel Motollo of the ZCC said: "The ZCC delegation shared with the President the history and growth and values of the church in the last 100 years in South Africa and the common aspirations of peace, progress and unity for all people."

Ben Swartz, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, who was part of the SA delegation, said of the meeting with the president: "It was an incredibly warm reception.

The president shared his family's personal presence in Israel for seven generations and shared his aspirations for co-existence with people in the region."

The delegation had already met with the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, in the Holy City. Said Swartz: "It was really great to have the delegation visit the mayor of Jerusalem. He shared his vision of the city and its celebration of all faiths.

"The delegation felt that there was a lot to be gained by further engagement between South African cities and Israeli cities."

Mark Hyman co-chairman of the South African Friends of Israel, said: "He was delighted with the tour and particularly excited that the Bishop got to pray at the Kotel and insert a personal note in the wall. The personal aide of the Bishop, Shafick Jardine, said: 'I felt drawn to the Wall and didn't want to stop praying.'"

According to the ZCC, the mission is focused on "engaging and nourishing the spiritual life of the church and its Christian heritage."

The ZCC said this week: "Much time will be spent in prayer at holy sites in communion with G-d.

"As is well known among believers, there are many blessings that flow from an immersion with the Holy Land," said Reverend Motollo.

"At this time our own beloved country is in desperate need of many blessings such as rain,



Mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat with ZCC Bishop Dr Barnabas Lekganyane

peace, prosperity and stability. The church will, as part of its mission, pray for the well-being of our country.

"The ZCC will meet with organisations and individuals with knowledge and expertise that Israel is famous for, including the fields of water, sustainable energy, education and agriculture, that can help develop our nation and people."

The Zion Christian Church made the point that its church "is above politics".

"His grace, Bishop Dr Barnabas Lekganyane, spreads the word of peace wherever he goes," Motollo said.

"He will use the opportunity to convey a message of dialogue and continued engagement between Israelis, Arabs and South Africans and continued efforts for peace and stability in the world."

Benji Shulman of the South African Israel Forum, who helped arrange the tour, said: "We have tried very hard to make sure the members of the ZCC delegation have had the opportunity to see Israel for themselves. This way they can gain a perspective on how Israel's involvement can contribute to South Africa and how greater engagement can foster peaceful relations."

The boy whose wisdom and empathy was way beyond his years

NICOLA MILTZ

Yeshiva College schoolboy Hugo Paluch was a giant soul who had a master plan and an extraordinary vision to make the world a better place. He died tragically a few months ago before he could realise his dream.

But this week his memory was brought to life with the launch of his own project, Hugo's Greenhood – a first-of-its-kind pilot project aimed at uplifting the impoverished lives of suburban refuse recyclers. His goal was also to ensure people got waste management education to spread his project to other parts of the country.

"Hugo's Greenhood was all set up before his death, we are all fulfilling his plan and making sure it happens,"

his mother Nicole said.

Hugo envisioned this project from inception and worked tirelessly on it. He died a few days after he was due to have his first corporate sponsorship meeting. All the groundwork had been laid.

On Tuesday, hundreds of Yeshiva College pupils gathered on the same sports field on which his tragic accident happened, to paint dustbins. These colourful, personalised bins will go home with the pupils on Sunday after the official Hugo's Greenhood launch. They will be used to collect plastic for recycling.

The Paluch family and the Yeshiva College community in conjunction with HAWT – Holystic Waste Approach Technology – will

continue the legacy of Hugo's waste management initiative. The recyclers will use the plastic collected by the pupils and will in turn receive money from HAWT. Hugo planned to ensure the recyclers had sustainable jobs that would afford them the dignity they deserve.

Hugo's freak accident on May 26 on the Yeshiva College sports field during break, ripped the community apart. It left his parents Nicole and Dov bereft. Their world was changed forever when the soccer goal posts he was leaning against became dislodged.

But their pain is eased by the community's support of the Hugo Greenwood project – which aims to uplift the lives of at least 26 refuse recyclers – men Hugo befriended and



Hugo Paluch

cared for.

He became interested in their lives last year after seeing them often in his neighbourhood. These are some of the men you see daily lugging impossibly heavy trolleys of waste through the streets of Johannesburg.

It takes them up to a week to collect about 400 kilograms of plastics and other recyclables. For this they receive a meagre amount between R400-R750. Their day starts before sunrise after a night sleeping on pavements in all weather conditions.

From a very early age Hugo was a "fanatical fundraiser" said his mother, and a champion of the poor. If Hugo could help a person in need, he would. If he couldn't, he'd make a plan.

"He was passionate about waste management and about the refuse recyclers in his community," she said.

He became unstoppable in his quest to help improve their lives, setting up innovative fundraising schemes and making sure they

Continued on page 4 >>

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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel – R2.199 Million

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Directions: Jawitz Pointer along Northfield Avenue becomes Avon Rd into Nova place
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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Sandringham – R2.699 Million

New Release! Elizabeth Avenue. 4 Bedrooms, 3 bathrooms (main en-suite). Super-sized home offering lovely entertainment patio onto garden, stunning open plan kitchen. Web Ref: 124337

Directions: George Avenue, into Orange Street, into Elizabeth Avenue
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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

The Gardens – Inviting buyers from R1.999 Million

African Street. Large family home in ideal location. New to the market. This well loved family home offers plenty of accommodation and space. Four bedrooms, three bathrooms, two en-suite. Glorious reception rooms onto gorgeous patio. Detailed garden with pool and peaceful green living. Staff quarters and secure double garage with off street parking. Asking more. Web Ref: 121514

Directions: Along The Avenue, into African Street
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel – Inviting buyers from R1.699 Million

Watson Road. Great value - serious seller! A well loved 3 bedroomed family home - bring your paint brush, move right in. Lovely pool area. 2 Bathrooms (mes), large garden. Awesome potential. Asking more. Web Ref: 122648

Directions: Along Long, Northfield Avenue into Watson
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644

The boy whose wisdom and empathy was way beyond his years

>> Continued from page 3

received a hot meal each Wednesday when they were spotted in his neck of the woods.

“Hugo was about kindness; he wanted everyone to be okay and to be happy; he couldn’t bear to see anyone suffer; he needed to

fix it,” said Nicole.

The recyclers walk dozens of kilometres a day in search of discarded rubbish from suburban homes all over the city.

According to Hugo’s grandmother, Sharon Sklarchik, or “Mam Thandeka” as she is affectionately known to the recyclers, it broke



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Hugo’s heart to hear their stories of struggle.

Sharon played a vital role in Hugo’s life, always encouraging him to question and be aware of those less fortunate. He took her words to heart and to another level.

“He did not see them as poor, faceless, nameless rubble removers. He saw them as people with life stories,” she said. He loved them and he embraced them.

This week a few of the 26-odd recyclers who knew Hugo, spoke to the SA Jewish Report about the impact he had on their lives.

“He was a boy but he was my leader,” said Thomas Mbatha, “He showed me so many things, he opened my eyes. He told us never to give up. Every word that came out of his mouth made sense.”

Mlungisi Mabaso agreed: “He made us have hope, he was very motivating. His dream was to change our lives – and he did.”

Sylvester Khumalo: “He was like a brother to us, like family. For Christmas last year he gave each of us R870; we were so happy. He wrote a card with our name. He wanted us to have good things, a good job, a good life. Hugo was a nice guy, he wanted to know about us, everything about our lives, our struggles.”

Didi Makotsane: “We could not believe Hugo was a boy; to us he was an elder. Hugo united us as a group. Now we stick together and make jokes. There is no fighting.”

Hugo turned 14 the day before he passed away, a year to the day of his barmitzvah, this his mother believes is significant. “Nothing about his death was random,” she said,

His untimely death has had a far-reaching impact. There is even a synagogue in Israel that has since been named after him. Dozens of local and international charity drives and community initiatives, all in his name, have been set up.

Some include Hugo’s Heroes, a first-aid youth empowerment programme on school campuses, Hugo’s Warmth, Hugo’s coat drives, Hugo’s blanket drives, Huggies for Hugo, for poor new mothers in need of supplies, the list is long.

In a moving tribute to the memory of Hugo, Rabbi Leron Bernstein, managing director of Yeshiva College Schools said: “People near and far have been touched and moved – inspired to live lives imbued with more meaning, filled with increased kindness, chesed (charity), tolerance, sensitivity, unity and love – the world Hugo was creating through his actions every day on this earth.”

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein described Hugo as a talented young leader, “an activist for good” who worked on projects to make the world a better place.

Sharon said her grandson was born “with a wide lens on the world.

“He saw things that others didn’t see and he took notice of the unnoticed. A hot lunch was never enough for Hugo; he wanted more. Hugo was a lateral thinker. He threw the box away, never mind thought out of the box,” she said. “The inspiration is Hugo. I thought I was his tutor, but he was my mentor... All we want to do is to ensure we carry out his dream.”

In memory of Hugo, Yeshiva College in collaboration with the Hamaor Centre, published a Torah journal, titled “One Who Walks With Purity” which contains very moving, spiritual messages and articles of kindness and charity written by renowned Torah scholars and rabbonim, both locally and abroad. The book’s aim is to inspire people to continue Hugo’s legacy and fulfil his ultimate message of “seeing every individual and treating them with respect,” says Hugo’s father, Dov.

In it, Bernstein and the rosh (head) of Yeshiva, Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, write: “Hugo walked this world with a humility, hopeful optimism and tenacity that was undefeatable. His face shone with a purity that was always other-worldly and with this strength, he unapologetically cared for others at every opportunity that he found...”

“The next steps he takes in this world are now ours... It is up to us to take those strides to fulfil his unfinished legacy.”



Photo: Nicola Miltz

Recyclers: Thomas Mbatha, Sylvester Khumalo, Didi Makotsane, Mlungisi Mabaso and Katlego Moroka



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The long hard journey of the new shaliach

OWN CORRESPONDENT

He's black, Jewish and Israeli and Adeno Abebe is South Africa's brand-new Habonim and World Zionist Organisation (WZO) shaliach.

On a daily basis, he tells the SA Jewish Report, people try and communicate with him in a vernacular language and find it hard to believe he is not Zulu. "Yes, being in South Africa now could be a little difficult," he says.

But then Abebe, 44, is not one to shy away from tough paths, having made a massive journey at a nine-year-old from Ethiopia to Israel. This journey looms large over his life. It took him from "a small village far from all civilisation without electricity and running water" to the place of his family's dreams.

Adeno Abebe and his children



And having recently arrived in South Africa as a shaliach, is his way of giving back to the country and the people that brought him "home".

"I believe that our obligation is to let our people abroad know that Israel is waiting for them but they are also not less important where they are," he says.

His life's journey to date began in "an olden times village" in Ethiopia where he was a "shepherd boy".

"To describe my village, consider the Book of Genesis. G-d created the heavens and the earth and my village. From then, G-d didn't return to my village... even my village was too far for G-d."

He said while he didn't know anything about Israel back then, his family knew about and dreamt of going to Jerusalem. "My dad does not know how to read or write, but he always prayed in the direction of Jerusalem.

"My parents hardly had anything, but they always had hope, that one day we will get to Jerusalem, and that everything we didn't have

we would have. Like a house, nationality and mostly that we will get to Jerusalem."

Before 1974, Ethiopian Jews were not accepted by Israeli leaders as Jews; that year Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel between 1973 and 1983) declared them to be from the Dan tribe and therefore 100 per cent Jewish. And in 1978, Prime Minister Menachem Begin decided to bring the Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Begin sent agents to Ethiopia to see if the Jews there even wanted to make aliya and, said Abebe, "found that we were all ready to go right away". And so, preparation for Operation Moses began.

Abebe's dad got word about it and started selling the few sheep and cows he owned and emptying their home so they would be ready to leave as soon as they could. "My father didn't tell us anything, he was afraid we would tell our neighbours."

It was a little after midnight on Rosh Hashanah in 1983 when Abebe's father woke him and his three brothers to gather them for their journey to Jerusalem. They gathered with their whole village, horses and donkeys. "I remember the tears and excitement. I clearly remember my father's eyes tearing from excitement in fulfilling a lifelong dream of 'next year in Jerusalem'.

"I didn't have shoes, underwear or new pants. I was a boy who ran barefoot, with a snotty nose and a few clothes on my body. And so, we started our journey to Israel. barefoot, minimal clothing, but with hope.

The journey was long and they were totally ill-prepared. They walked to Sudan as they weren't able to be flown out of Ethiopia because there were no diplomatic ties between Israel and Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Jews landed up walking around 800 kilometres. Many people died en route from illness, being attacked by wild animal, but they wouldn't give up and believed "it was all worth it", said Abebe.

In Sudan, they were put in a tented refugee camp, where they ate porridge, bread and rice every day. "My whole family stayed in one small tent, in the unbearable Sudanese heat. We were left there for one year.

"My mother and brother got sick and people started passing away from malaria and different diseases. The Sudanese didn't allow us to bury the dead, so everyone was forced to bury their dead under trees, behind rocks and behind the mountains in the camp. We unfortunately buried my aunt, who left two little children behind.

Continued on page 13 >>




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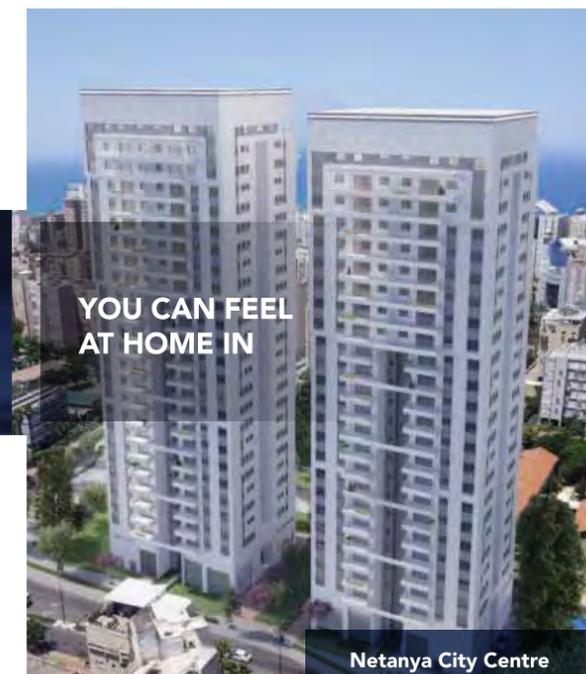
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South African Jewish Report

Let his legacy live on in what we do

When Hugo Paluch was struck down in a tragic accident at his school in June, the community grew strong in protecting the family and praying for this child.

There was much talk about Hugo being such a phenomenal child who did so much chesed and was a leader among his peers. People spoke of him as a true Neshoma – the likes of whom we rarely see. Then he passed away and there was this deathly silence.



When we as somewhat cynical journalists heard this talk, we thought that because this child is now gone, he was being put on a pedestal because that so often happens when people die. We don't generally speak bad of the dead and remember only the good.

But this week I learnt a little more about who Hugo Paluch really was. Now, I know how easily we throw about statements like "only the good die young", "he was larger than life" and "he was sent here with a purpose". There are so many such clichés. But when I say that Hugo was indeed a unique and phenomenal person, I am not giving him the kind of credit he deserves.

Hugo had a huge heart, a great head and he wanted to use these to help those in need. That didn't mean he gave charity or was kind to beggars. Not this kid! He made it his mission to go out and make a difference and ensure that he changed the lives of the people he befriended on the street.

These "friends" are among the many "faceless people" we generally don't see. They are those who go through rubbish and take stuff that they can recycle and earn money by doing so. Working with them and changing their lives led to his life's project.

Hugo has given "faces" to these people in society. And his project will keep growing. Hugo will live on well beyond his years through this work he initiated and believed in.

I don't know many young adults who have achieved as much in their lives as Hugo Paluch achieved in his 14 years.

While his death devastated his family and friends, there surely is a comfort in his life's work living through others.

Each one of us can learn something from this incredible child. For one thing, Hugo lived life to the full and made his days count. He made a difference! From grade 1 when he raised as much as R50 000 in a school raffle for charity, he was making what he did count.

Hugo saw those people who some of us may fear or dismiss or perhaps both, as people with needs, ambitions and as human beings. He gave them much more than the time of day. He gave them friendship, help where he could and he gave them an ear. He SAW them and recognised them not as homeless people or potential criminals, but as people with soul and something to give back.

In doing so, he showed the 26 recyclists he befriended, that there is hope in what sometimes seems like a hopeless world. He showed them that not every one of those people who drive by them every day, will avert their gaze. Not every one of them will ignore them. Not every one will make as if they don't exist because there was this one green-eyed boy who cared.

Such is the legacy that will live on in Yeshiva College. It will live on in Glenhazel. It will grow legs and live on in our community and I hope and pray it will live on around this world.

For this young boy made a difference and why not make it our mission to take what he did and carry it further. And if what Hugo did doesn't quite resonate with you, what does? What can you do to make a difference in other people's lives?

What can we all learn from this phenomenal child who was clearly too good for this world?

Please let's all make that effort to ensure that Hugo Paluch didn't die in vain. Let his death give eternal life to Hugo's Greenhood or your own project that will make a difference.

To the Paluch family, the SA Jewish Report wishes you only blessings and comfort. To all those who take up the cudgels of Hugo's Greenhood, we say Kol Hakavod! Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Dateline: Middle East

If there were elections in the Palestinian territories...

PAULA SLIER

This is not what the polls reflect, but I'm willing to go out on a limb and say that if elections were to be held today in the Palestinian territories, opposing sides would come in. This means that in the West Bank where Fatah is currently in control, rival Palestinian faction, Hamas, would be voted into power; and in Gaza where Hamas rules, Fatah would win.

These Palestinian groups have been at loggerheads for more than a decade, ever since Hamas won parliamentary elections in Gaza and a brutal civil war ensued that saw fierce fighting between the sides.

I was in Gaza at the time and one of the most telling memories I have is of a schoolteacher who supported Fatah but refused to admit it on camera for fear he would lose his job. Now, 11 years on, he's probably more anti Hamas than ever; as are many in Gaza, although they too are unlikely to say it in public. Being in government hasn't proven hugely fruitful for Hamas. The movement has – or at least it used to have before trying its hand at governing – widespread grassroots support across Gaza through its extensive network of food banks, schools and medical clinics.

But a decade of being in power, has left it fatigued and unpopular; those Gaza residents I talk to complain that Hamas leaders are corrupt – even more corrupt than Fatah who ruled before them, they are quick to stress – and that they've imposed astronomically high taxes on the population. There've also been three wars with Israel during the time they've been in power.

Meanwhile, across in the West Bank where Palestinian president and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas governs, he isn't faring much better. An increasingly unpopular figure, polls have consistently shown that most Palestinians want him to resign. Residents of the West Bank would much rather have a Hamas government over what they see as an ineffective and impotent Fatah president, but this is largely because they haven't had first-hand experience of living under the militant group's leadership and so for them Hamas still has a "clean" reputation.

Backtrack to 2007 when fighting between the factions was at its severest and I remember interviewing Hamas supporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah "under cover" – they were afraid to openly say they supported the group. Today these same men, no doubt, are standing tall.

Last week the sides agreed to a framework for reconciliation and without going into its details here, suffice it to say that the agreement offers nothing new aside from Hamas and Fatah agreeing that they need to reconcile. The sticky issues remain sticky: what to do with Hamas' military wing which insists on operating independently of this new unity government, and the roughly 50 000 Hamas officials who in the last 10 years have been employed in its Gaza ministries?

There are tens of thousands of Fatah employees who for the past decade have been waiting to get their jobs back and

it'll prove difficult to keep everyone employed.

Jerusalem isn't exactly doing cartwheels over the "marriage between partners who have long since grown to dislike each other", as one Gaza resident put it to me. The deal allows Hamas, as its newly-elected prime minister Yahya Sinwar has said on various occasions, to now focus on its raison d'être – resistance against Israel – and not be bogged down in the day-to-day running of the Gaza Strip.

Israel, the United States and the European Union, regard Hamas as a terrorist organisation and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists Jerusalem will only hold talks with a reconciled Palestinian government if Hamas disbands its armed wing, recognises the Jewish State and severs all ties with Iran.

But on the flipside, not all Western governments, Moscow among them, regard Hamas as such. Russian leadership has held direct talks with their Hamas counterparts and President Vladimir Putin is pushing hard for the reconciliation agreement to work.

Netanyahu might find himself backed into a corner, knowing he cannot be seen to oppose what the Russians want, as he needs them more than they need him. When it comes to Syria, Russian planes control the skies and if Israel is to continue – as she did again this week – carrying out strikes there, she needs Russian acquiescence.

As for President Abbas, what does he really have to lose? He's presumably banking on the fact that once there's a unified Palestinian front, Netanyahu can no longer use the excuse that there is no Palestinian partner with whom to talk peace. It seems fair to say that Abbas realises chances of negotiations with Israel at the moment are slim; he might as well focus on internal Palestinian unity.

But amid all the analysis of what the reconciliation deal means and its chances of success, there has been one consideration conspicuously absent in recent coverage.

Around two years ago, an offshore natural gas field was discovered near the Egyptian border on the Gaza side – it would be hugely profitable to the Palestinians, the Egyptians (who have been mediating the reconciliation deal and are also pushing hard for it to succeed) and even the Israelis.

Is it not conceivable that this renewed effort towards a unified Palestinian government – especially after so many previous failed attempts – is couched in Egyptian pounds and Israeli shekels?

This gas field is one of the largest in the Mediterranean and will be able to provide Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank with electricity, income and jobs, for years to come. After all is said and done, perhaps this reconciliation deal will work for no other reason than that everyone gets to gain – economically more than politically – from it.

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

Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal gestures as he announces a new policy document in Doha



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Simchat Torah: Memories and meaning

ADINA ROTH

I have strong memories of Simchat Torah as a little girl. I spent it with my grandfather who was a gentle, open-minded Orthodox Jewish educator in Johannesburg. We would walk up the hill to his shul together.

Images abound: I remember drunk men lying in the plants while my grandfather hissed under his breath about their lack of decorum. I remember naughty boys pouring water down the chazzan's tallis, and I remember the lavish spread of food, including mock crayfish salad which the ladies put out for the brocha.

But mostly, I remember it as a time when the women were allowed to descend from upstairs and take part in the frivolities. They didn't dance with the Torah or anything, but for some period of the evening, the women joined the men for the Simchat Torah rumpus.

And then, shul would continue and the women would return upstairs. I even recall the chairman calling loudly one year for a particularly belligerent woman to please return upstairs, and when "she" turned around, it was a man wearing a wig which produced loud guffaws.

But my sister and I, still under batmitzvah, could remain in the safe presence of my grandfather as he davened, so proud of his little granddaughters by his side.

As a post-batmitzvah teen, Simchat Torah took on an altogether different

hue. It became the holiday where I just sat out and in a way, tuned out. I don't remember thinking that it would be nice if the women danced or had a Torah. Such ideas were not even in my consciousness.

It was only as a university student that I woke up to an interest to participate in the festivities and ritual on offer. It wasn't, as some accused me, that I was trying "to be one of the men". It was about connecting to G-d through dancing and singing and prayer; a spiritual embodiment.

Nowhere is this exclusion from spiritual experience felt more painfully than on Simchat Torah in an Orthodox shul. The typical scene of men dancing and singing with the Torah while women sit on the sidelines, does not honour the dignity of our communities and I know many, many women who choose to stay at home for the chag.

In private homes in Johannesburg there have been beautiful, meaningful halachic women's gatherings where women dance with the Torah and do hakafot and leyning. But there remains a split between what happens in Orthodox shuls in Johannesburg, even with halachic solutions available, and this effort outside the synagogue space.

So, I was excited to hear this year of an Orthodox shul in Johannesburg that was going to create a space for women on Simchat Torah. I went with my husband, son and daughter. This shul boasts a warm, down-



to-earth community and a strong commitment to engagement with wider social and political issues in South Africa.

After Ma'ariv, the rabbi stood up and explained that following the halachic ruling of Rabbi Riskin in Efrat, the women would have their own space to celebrate their connection to Torah, to do the hakafot, to dance and to sing.

He explained the halachic validity of his position and he mentioned that there would also be a Torah for the women. After we heard Kiddush as a community, we women went to this "room of our own".

In this room, we found a beautiful tray with wine and whisky glasses, whisky and wine, a set of song sheets in Hebrew and transliteration, and a dignified Aron with a Torah inside waiting for us.

We had a quick le'chaim. And then we started. It was a community of

mixed Jewish backgrounds. But South Africa has strong roots in the Zionist youth movements and everyone knew a set of traditional songs. And so we sang: David Melech Yisrael, Zion Zion Zion, Oseh Shalom. And everyone danced: horahs and stamping, and waving our arms and slow, Chassidic meditative circles.

It was simple and it was rhythmic and it was spirited and it was beautiful. The sounds rippled through the room and floated through the walls, making their way outwards as a gift to the night watchman and the witnessing stars, and winding their way inwards towards our hearts.

For many women, it was incredibly emotional. They had never touched a Torah before, let alone held one. When I was given the Torah to hold, my daughter who had maintained a little circle of horahs around the Torah the whole time, ran up to me and said: "Mommy, I want to hold it

with you". She is seven and so she put her arms on the base of the Torah and I held the body and we moved around in the centre of the circle slowly, looking at the Torah and at each other.

At seven years old, my daughter does not idealise me. She thinks the food I cook is disgusting. She thinks her friend's moms have better fashion sense than me. If she doesn't think something I am doing is "cool", she won't do it.

But that night, she recognised of her own little mind that dancing with the Torah was a very special thing. On Simchat Torah night, surrounded by a throng of 50 women who came to Jewish life in a way that perhaps they never had before, my little girl learned one of the most valuable lessons of all; that her connection with the Torah matters, that it is right and normal.

Indeed, honouring the spiritual longings of our full community is tikkun olam, it is part of the rectification of the world; the restoration of goodness and love and joy. It is the very essence of feminine spirituality, a homecoming of the Shechinah. This will be her memory of Simchat Torah when she is older and she will make sure that it is also the memory for her children one day. Our world is changing.

• Adina Roth is a clinical psychologist in private practice and a Jewish Studies teacher.

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The union that never strikes anything other than tikkun olam

SUZANNE BELLING

The Union of Jewish Women was imbued with the spirit of tikkun olam, Bev Goldman, MC and UJW vice-president, told some 400 people present at the opening of the organisation's 31st national conference at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre on Sunday evening.

She referred to the myriad work carried out by the Union

since its inception 86 years ago, paying tribute to the founder, Toni Saphra, "who understood only too well the need in South Africa, not only for giving food and shelter, but for teaching people to use a fishing rod to enable them to catch their own fish and thereby become self-sustaining.

Lynne Raphaely, outgoing national president, said this was a union where the members never went on strike. She announced that for the first time in the organisation's 86-year history, she would be succeeded by a national president from outside Johannesburg – Myra Goldenbaum from Cape Town.

Myra is the first working president, who is CEO of her own company. She has been a member of the UJW for 43 years, starting her career at age 23 as a commercial artist. She was commissioned to arrange the De Beers centenary celebrations.

Special awards for 50 years of "active and dedicated service" to the UJW were presented to Sylvia Heyman, Phyllis Seligman, Elaine Gavshon and Shirley Ancer.

Guests of honour included the Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan; popular and outspoken former ANC member of parliament Makhosi Khoza and UJW honorary life president, Mina Sable.

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The 'bulldog' talks to the Union of Jewish Women

SUZANNE BELLING

Advocate Gerrie Nel, one of the best-known prosecutors in the country, known as the "bulldog" of South African courtrooms, was upbeat about the possibility of combating corruption in South Africa.

Entering the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre to deliver his keynote address at the Union of Jewish Women's 31st national conference on Sunday evening, Nel was greeted with near popstar acclaim as one of the most celebrated legal personalities in South Africa.

People were clamouring to meet him and obtain an insight to the incisive mind which led to the convictions of former Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi and disgraced blade runner Oscar Pistorius.

Regarding corruption, he listed four requirements to counteract it: "a strong political will, an efficient and corruption-free judiciary, a free press and an independent and active civil society.

"South Africa is fortunate enough to have three of these four points," he said.

Political will was the missing element, which was demonstrated from the President (Jacob Zuma) down.

"What is going on in our courts is brilliant," he said, citing several examples from the Constitutional Court down.

"Is there anyone here today who would have thought 10 years ago that the Nkandla judgment would have been possible?" he asked.

Last week the Supreme Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal against a High Court judgment that set aside the 2009 decision of the National Prosecuting Authority not to proceed with the prosecution of President Jacob Zuma on hundreds of fraud charges. Both courts held that the 2009 decision was irrational and unlawful.

The amount of reporting on corruption indicated a free press. "We had lots of corruption before '94, but we didn't read about it," he said. The wide publicity of the Gupta leaks was just one instance of recent press revelations and investigations.

Civil society was also playing a major part. The Helen Suzman Foundation, AfriForum and others, were in the forefront of action to expose and condemn corruption, often going to court



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

in an attempt to stop it in specific cases.

But there were always at least two parties involved in corrupt activities. The problem was not just corrupt government officials.

He quoted a speech by Public Service and Administration Minister Faith Muthambi, in which she said: "For every corrupt public servant there must be a corrupt businessman."

Many in business condemned corruption, but when they went back to their boardrooms, the situation was no longer so clear.

Before accepting the AfriForum offer, he had set three conditions: "I would be independent; I could pick the cases I believe in; and I would need resources to develop the law."

Ensuring integrity among both public servants and businesspeople was among the requirements for stopping corruption. Individual integrity and honesty played a significant role as well.

Asking people whether they were willing to do anything they could to stop corruption, the response was often, "Yes!"

But the moral issue among private individuals was highlighted by the willingness of some people – including those who proclaimed themselves firm opponents of corruption – to pay several hundred rand to a policeman to avoid a formal fine or prosecution for a traffic offence.

"A R500 bribe to cops is the same corruption as Nkandla or Eskom," Nel said.

Another requirement, covering all four areas, was that "we had to have moral leadership".

According to Nel, "we overcomplicate corruption",

although it was easy to understand.

The essential question with regard to corruption was simply whether a public servant would be enticed by a reward to do something that was beyond his or her normal duty. The law no longer required proof of bribery, because the elements of the offence were often difficult, if not impossible, to prove.

Nel retired from his lifelong career as a litigating prosecutor to move into the relatively unknown field of private prosecutions under the auspices of the NGO AfriForum.

Before accepting the AfriForum offer, he had set three conditions: "I would be independent; I could pick the cases I believe in; and I would need resources to develop the law."

AfriForum accepted the first two and undertook to help provide the relevant resources.

Nel explained how private prosecutions operated. "One can only institute a private prosecution when the National Prosecuting Authority has decided not to prosecute. They are not a parallel stream. We would ask for a nolle prosequi certificate from the NPA", indicating it was not going to prosecute.

"We would tell them we believe there is merit in the prosecution.

"If we then start the prosecution and are doing well, they are obliged to take over from us. We have to guarantee the costs of the defendant, but, if we win, the NPA pays all our costs."

Nel insisted that a political motivation for a private prosecution was "impossible", as it depended solely on the merits of the case.

In addition, "we have to show we have a substantial interest in the prosecution".

Nel was looking forward to developing this area of the law in his new post.

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SUZANNE BELLING

Two Johannesburg Jewish moms, Nikki Munitz and Nicola Barak, are committed to “helping others find recovery from a lonely, dark, non-existent and seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”.

These “humbled addicts in recovery” found their way from the dark place of drug addiction – heroin and prescription drugs. They told their stories to the delegates at the 31st national conference of the Union of Jewish Women on Monday.

Nikki, an achieving former King David pupil, came from a loving home, but lost her father at the age of nine. Her mother battled financially to give her and her three older brothers the best in life and Nikki rewarded her by excelling academically and on the sports field.

“But I could never really find my place and discover who I was,” she said. “I did pretty much as I liked and during my matric holiday, I had my introduction to cocaine and, not long after that, heroin. It was love at first hit!” She felt “euphoric”, she said.

Entering university after the habit had kicked in, the former A student failed every subject. She realised she needed help and was sent to Cape Town for three weeks to undergo rehabilitation. But she was unco-operative and asked to leave “after I broke every rule”.

She earned her keep through waiting tables and moved into a backpackers’ lodge, “where the rats were bigger than me”. She used the next-door YMCA as a base from which to call her mother and was fed by prostitutes sharing the lodge.

“I weighed 37 kilos.” Eventually someone from the “Y” contacted her mother and she was given a one-way ticket to a rehab centre in the Karoo.

Nicola Barak



Her first husband – “I have two beautiful children” – influenced her negatively and she was arrested and imprisoned for fraud. “My son was a year and my daughter four at the time.” This was in addition to a previous possession charge.

She was working in Houghton House, a rehabilitation centre, and it continued to pay her salary during her jail time. She received an eight-year sentence. Although her appeal was turned down, her sentence was reduced. Nikki



ended up serving seven months of her sentence.

“I have to say, in spite of it all, I had the support of the Jewish community. I found my missing piece and took a less demanding job when I could come home at three and be with my family.”

She is remarried and an addiction counsellor at CHANGES Treatment Centre. “I have been in recovery from heroin addiction for almost nine years,” Nikki said.

A Johannesburg resident and recovering street and prescription drug addict, Nicola Barak, is the happily married mother of two girls, a nursery school teacher and addiction counsellor.

“I grew up in a middle-class family, but my father had an addiction [alcohol] and subsequently died. But there was no history of abuse in my family.

“I started the usual way – alcohol, cigarettes and club drugs – out of pure curiosity. By the age of 14, I was addicted to heroin. Taking drugs meant more to me than going to school. I did not have to take responsibility.”

Today, being observant, she says her yetzer hora had taken over.

She lived in Hillbrow, on the streets, and even had a stint in jail. At the age of 19, she decided she had “had enough and the past 14 years has all been about recovery”.

There was, however, a time when she had an operation and became addicted to prescription painkillers, sedatives and sleeping tablets. “I was swallowing boxes of tablets until my head was quiet. They all contained codeine and heroin is a derivative of codeine.

“Prescriptions are given out so freely. Feeling stressed, pop a pill, is thought of as the answer. Even mothers give their daughters tranquilisers.”

Nicola emerged from her setback with the help of her loving family, therapists and rabbis. “Holding hands and standing together gives us the power. But there is always strong gossip instead of standing together.”

Today, attractive and well-adjusted, she says she is committed to fighting for herself and others. “My passion in life is to help grow individuals into all they dream, desire and wish to be.”

Taking care of what teens learn online

SUZANNE BELLING

There is an upsurge in awareness that child sexual abuse does exist in the Jewish community, Luke Lamprecht, a child protection and development specialist, told the 31st national conference of the Union of Jewish Women at the HOD, Orchards, on Monday.

But he says there was also a reluctance to talk about it in the Jewish faith – particularly among the frum. Having worked with the community, he says: “They have not been well-informed and, when typing into the Internet search engines, tend to use words they know like ‘rape’, which gave them the wrong picture and violent and sadistic material.”

How did they go from being so sheltered to what they see online? “The only things they knew about were ‘spilling the seed’, which they had heard of.

“They are youngsters with raging hormones and are searching for dark things, as opposed to the austere sexual practices of their fathers. In religious circles, this was a challenge to normal sexual development.

“They see these on the Internet and think about acting them out.”

Similarly, in a religious school, a girl happened to be in an area where the boys congregated. The boys touched her, with the idea in mind that “women are there to tempt us... It was up to women to stop men. This was the rationalisation for their behaviour.

“They think that when women are around, men cannot control themselves.”

There had been several well-publicised cases involving

doctors and millionaires, “but somewhere there seems to be secrecy surrounding discussing it”.

Lamprecht said the world had defaulted sex information to the Internet. “You can type in the word ‘music’ and unintentionally be exposed to sex and pornography.”

Teenagers had “porridge and sludge” for brains. “It is like driving an unlicensed Ferrari without brakes. By the time children come to see me, they are in trouble.”

Lamprecht said children should only be able to access technology if parents could log into the way their kids were thinking. “In previous days we had diaries and they were private. Now anyone can log into anything.”

Parents should avail themselves of Kidlogger and monitor what their children are doing on the Internet.

Lamprecht is completing an MSc in neurodevelopment at Wits in the departments of paediatrics and pathology within the criminal justice

system. He has worked in the NPO field for 25 years and runs groups for inner-city children, children in conflict with the law, children with autism and psychiatric challenges.

Apart from being a director of Fight with Insight – the Hillbrow Boxing re-Evolution Life Gym at the Children’s Memorial Institute, he convenes the Johannesburg Advocacy Forum; supervises Women and Men Against Child Abuse in the Alexandra Victim Empowerment Programme and is director of the SA Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse. He also consults on abused babies.



Luke Lamprecht

Turning entrepreneurship into an art

SUZANNE BELLING

The achievements of two exceptional entrepreneurs were highlighted at Monday’s session of the Union of Jewish Women’s 31st national conference – that of Thembi Sithole, who started out washing cars and now owns a panel-beating company and Karen Schneid, a successful advocate-turned-confectioner.

Thembi grew up in a household which encouraged industry and industriousness.

“As children, we grew our own vegetables and farmed fresh chickens. Later, at school, I sold peanuts, sweets and fruit to earn money.”

She started her career as a car washer in 1986 at Ventura Motors, eventually working in the motor and panel-beating industry for over 20 years.

She was appreciated by her bosses and soon moved through the ranks to become a receptionist, estimator, buyer, administrator and manageress. She completed a course in office administration.

“I realised I was not going to clean cars forever,” she said. But her love of cars prevailed and “I felt it was time I started my own business”.

Financing was not that easy to raise, “but you have to move mountains”. Thembi persevered and put her provident fund pay out into the business.

She now has 28 employees, two workshops and is often the chosen panel-beating business for insurance companies. “It is a male-dominated

world, but I had to change the mindset.”

Karen Schneid had her second career cut out for her when travelling all over with her family and sampling the different kinds of confectionery on offer.

“In the summer of 1993 in a little village near Aix en Provence, I first tasted a unique confection called Calisson. It was love at first morsel and I became obsessed with learning how to create this extraordinary sweet.”

Throughout her 18 years at the Johannesburg Bar, she dreamed about making the sweets.

Initially, she experimented with different kinds of confectionery and themes from different parts of the world for the birthday parties of her children, Saffron and Scarlett. “My kids became my muses.”

She studied techniques as there were no recipes for the confections made in family businesses, with the secrets handed down over the generations. She took courses designed for her needs at Culinary Institute Lenotre and the Ecole Ritz Escoffier in Paris. “I also studied the history of confectionery and the molecular structure of sugar.”

Starting off her business with only one domestic worker in her home kitchen, she “came out of the confectionery closet”, expanded her premises and her staff. She has won many awards and never stops developing her business.

But there is an added advantage to Karen’s confectionery – it is totally Beth Din kosher.

Photos: Cindy Kree



Karen Schneid



Thembi Sithole



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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Ministers put kibosh on peace talks after Fatah-Hamas unity deal

ALEXANDER FULBRIGHT AND DOV LIEBER

Israel's top-level security Cabinet on Tuesday said the government would no longer hold peace talks with the Palestinian Authority, following the reconciliation agreement it reached with Hamas, unless the terror group renounced terrorism and recognised the Jewish State.

In a statement, the security Cabinet, made up of senior ministers, listed a number of conditions that must be met before Israel would resume peace negotiations with the Palestinians, including the dissolution of Hamas' arsenal; the return of Israeli citizens and the bodies of IDF soldiers being held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip; the restoration of PA security control in Gaza, including at border crossings; continued action by the PA against Hamas' "terror infrastructure" in the West Bank; and the end of Hamas' ties with

Iran.

The ministers said Hamas must forswear terrorism and recognise the Jewish State in accordance with the conditions of the Middle East Quartet, which comprises the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia.

It also said any aid or humanitarian equipment destined for Gaza must pass through the PA and the systems in place meant to thwart smuggling to the terror group.

While the statement said Israel would no longer engage in peace talks until the conditions are met, it did not say Israel would cut ties with the PA or end security co-operation.

Jewish Home party head Naftali Bennett, a senior government minister, welcomed the Cabinet decision, saying in a statement Israel would not engage in peace talks with Abbas over his "association with a terrorist organisation".

Prime Minister Benjamin



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu heads the weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem

Netanyahu has stressed his opposition to the reconciliation deal and said it would make "peace much harder to achieve". He told members of the security Cabinet on Monday that Israel would not cut ties with the PA and that it was in Israel's interest to support the deal to avert a

humanitarian crisis in Gaza, according to the Haaretz daily.

The security Cabinet's decision on Tuesday, came as a senior Hamas spokesman denied a report that the terror group agreed to halt attacks against Israel from the West Bank as part of the reconciliation deal.

"There are no secret clauses in the reconciliation understanding, and what the occupation published on the resistance halting in the West Bank is not true," said senior Hamas spokesman Husam Badran, in an interview with the Palestinian news site Quds Network.

IRAN MILITARY CHIEF WARNS: ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF SYRIA ARE 'UNACCEPTABLE'

TOI STAFF AND AP

Iran's military chief of staff indicated on Wednesday that Tehran would not tolerate violations of Syrian sovereignty by Israel and vowed that the two countries would jointly fight against Syria's enemies.

His comments came after Israel on Monday struck an anti-aircraft battery inside Syria, which followed the firing of a Syrian missile at Israeli planes on reconnaissance flights over Lebanon.

"It is not acceptable for the Zionist regime to violate Syria any time it wants," General Mohammad Bagheri said during a rare visit to Damascus that began on Tuesday evening.

He said he was in the Syrian capital to co-ordinate and co-operate "in order to fight our common enemies – whether they are the Zionists or the terrorists. We discussed ways to strengthen relations in the future and outlined the basic principles of this co-operation," he said.

Bagheri arrived in Damascus with what the Tasnim news agency described as a high-ranking delegation. His comments were made at a joint press conference with Ali Abdullah Ayoub, his counterpart in the Syrian army.

Bagheri was also expected to meet with Syrian leader Bashar Assad.



Mohammad Bagheri, right, salutes the honour guards as he is welcomed by Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Hulusi Akar.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, meanwhile, warned on Wednesday that if US President Donald Trump reneges on the nuclear deal signed in 2015, "Iran will shred it".

He also said he did not have time for the "nonsensical comments by the foul-mouthed president".

He welcomed the support expressed by European leaders for the deal, but said it did not go far enough.

In a move applauded by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump announced last Friday that he would not recertify the 2015 nuclear accord signed by Iran and world powers which curbs Tehran's nuclear programme, in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions.

MOSSAD SEEKS SPONTANEOUS OPTIMIST WITH SENSE OF HUMOUR

STUART WINER

Israel's Mossad spy agency is advertising for a field agent who is optimistic and spontaneous and has a sense of humour.

No joke.

The agency's website recently posted a notification that it is seeking an operations person in an "intelligence-gathering unit" needed for "challenging and dynamic work at the cutting edge of operations".

The list of required skills began with almost cliched abilities for someone working in the shadowy, but exotic world of international espionage: Candidates should enjoy teamwork, be able to deal with stressful situations and uncertainty, have interpersonal skills, and be willing to travel abroad.

All fairly standard spy stuff.

But then the ad detailed the more specialised talents the agency is looking for.

Speaking foreign languages and being techno-savvy were

listed as mere "advantages". Optimism, a sense of humour and spontaneity, however, were deemed "a significant advantage".

The notification provided no hint as to what tomfoolery the Mossad had in mind for candidates.

Meanwhile another ad on the website, also for an operational position, seeks someone who has the ability to think out of the box, is open to learning, is open to working irregular hours, has foreign language skills, can design complex plans and, intriguingly, has "good emotional intelligence".

According to the Hebrew-language Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper, which reported the job offers on Wednesday, the Mossad has in the past placed other puzzling calls for new employees – including a leatherwork craftsman, an accountant for a position that included "unusual field work", and a carpentry specialist.



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'More Israelis satisfied with their democracy than Americans'

Photo: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90, Illustrative



A woman places her vote in a ballot box for the Israeli general elections.

to May 8, 2017. Overall, "a deepening anxiety about the future of democracy around the world has spread over the past few years," the report said.

In Israel, 52 per cent said they are satisfied with the way democracy is working while 47 per cent are not. In the US, less than half (46 per cent) are satisfied and a majority of 51 per cent said they are not.

Britain's figures matched those of Israel while across the Channel in France, 65 per cent said they are not satisfied with their democracy and just 34 per cent said they are.

Canadians were top with 70 per cent satisfied and just 30 per cent unhappy with their democracy. Figures for Western European countries showed on average citizens split half-half on their satisfaction with their systems.

"In all countries, pro-democracy attitudes coexist, to varying degrees, with openness

to nondemocratic forms of governance, including rule by experts, a strong leader or the military," the report said.

A quarter of Israelis back the idea of autocracy with power in the hands of a single ruler, similar to the UK (26 per cent) but more than in the US where only 22 per cent support the idea. In France, only 12 per cent of those surveyed support autocracy.

However, in France, and the US, some 17 per cent said military rule is a good idea, compared to 15 per cent in the UK and just 10 per cent in Israel.

More than half of Israelis (60 per cent) are in favour of citizens voting directly on important national issues instead of leaving the decision in the hands of their democratically elected officials, Pew also found. Significantly more Arab Israelis (83 per cent) support holding referendums than Jewish Israelis (54 per cent) the report noted.

STUART WINER

Israelis are more satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country than are voters in the United States, and less supportive of the notion of military rule than the general public in the US, Britain and France, according to a major survey released on Monday.

The Pew Research Centre survey on global attitudes to government, also found that in general barely half of those polled in 38 countries trust their governments to do the right thing, and that Israelis (51 per cent) and Americans (also 51 per cent) trust their elected officials a little more than the British (49 per cent) and significantly more than the French (just 20 per cent).

Data from 41 953 respondents revealed that most citizens are unhappy with their democratic governments. The survey was conducted from February 16

Israeli business delegation heading to Cuba, with tacit Jerusalem consent

RAPHAEL AHREN

The Israeli government has given tacit approval to a delegation of top Israeli businesspeople that is set to travel to Cuba shortly in a bid to promote trade with various government-owned corporations and the regime itself. Jerusalem and Havana do not have diplomatic relations.

The Cuba mission, scheduled for early December, is the first-ever visit to the island nation organised by the Israel-Latin American Chamber of Commerce, a non-governmental organisation seeking to advance Israeli business interests on the continent.

CEO Gabriel Hayon told The Times of Israel in an interview earlier this month that he was in touch with the Foreign Ministry about the three-day trip and that it has issued "no objections" to the business delegation going to Cuba.

Havana unilaterally cut ties with Jerusalem some 40

years ago and has been a fierce critic of Israeli policies ever since. For decades, Israel was the only country to vote together with the United States against an annual resolution at the United Nations calling for the removal of America's economic embargo against the island nation.

In 2015, then-US president Barack Obama re-established diplomatic relations with Cuba, but his successor, Donald Trump, vehemently criticised the budding Washington-Havana detente and vowed to undo it.

Private Israeli individuals have long conducted business with Cuba, most notably former minister Rafi Eitan.

The Israel-Latin America Chamber of Commerce's upcoming trip to Cuba seeks to turn the country's poor economical situation "into an opportunity" for Israeli businesspeople, according to promotional material.

The Cuban Chamber of Commerce received formal permission from the government in Havana to engage with its Israeli counterpart, Hayon said.

Between 15 and 20 Israeli executives from the fields of agriculture, renewable energy, water, food production, real estate, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, are expected to join the trip, Hayon said.

"As per the Cubans' request, we are inviting Israeli companies that are willing to invest or joint venture with the Cuban government (or government-owned firms), under BOT (Build, Operate & Transfer) or PPP (Public-Private Participation) frameworks," he told The Times of Israel in an e-mail.



The Interior Ministry building with the image of legendary guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the Cuban flag fluttering at half mast at Havana's Revolution Square.



News and views from the Fed

Walking the tightrope – keeping the connection to Israel

GUSTI YEHOSHUA BRAVERMAN: HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR DIASPORA ACTIVITIES IN WZO

"It's easy to be a Jew, it's hard to be a Zionist," a student told me during a meeting in Chile.

"As a university student, I'm not quick to say that I'm Jewish because I'm immediately labelled, not to mention if I say that I support Israel," a student from Australia told me.

Being a Jew who lives in the Diaspora, even in the 21st century, is often a complex task. Leading a meaningful Jewish life in the Diaspora requires an effort that we, native Israelis, are not familiar with and don't always appreciate. However, being an open supporter of Israel is a daunting, and sometimes threatening, task.

I gained those insights during countless meetings I had which were fascinating, difficult and disturbing, but also inspirational and hopeful – with Jews around the world, and primarily with the younger generation, who are the focus and centre of attention of the Department for Diaspora Activities at the World Zionist Organisation.

This past August we marked the 120th anniversary of the date on which Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel and founded the World Zionist Organisation, whose executive I'm proud to be a member of as a representative of the World Reform Movement. At that congress, Herzl first presented the Zionist vision – the establishment of a Jewish state as a solution for anti-Semitism.

In the 69 years of its existence, the State of Israel and the Diaspora, have maintained a complex relationship. "All Jews are responsible for one another" is the thread that ties us and the foundation of our existence as a people... mutual responsibility that has known moments of exaltation and moments of crisis and low points.

In my view, this responsibility and commitment include the responsibility Diaspora Jews have for the security and resilience of Israel and the responsibility the State of Israel has for the well-being of Diaspora Jews.

As head of the Department for Diaspora Activities, I have set three goals for myself and my department: reinforcing Zionist identity; strengthening the identification with Zionist values; and making the State of Israel part of the Jewish identity of Diaspora Jews.

To achieve those goals, we continuously conduct a spirited and challenging discourse with Diaspora Jews, examine the needs, and regularly develop new materials that encourage a dialogue on the subject of Israel-Diaspora relations – and do so using an up-to-date language that raises questions and fosters discussion about the key issues that are of interest to Diaspora Jews with regard to Israel and Zionism.

The Department for Diaspora Activities engages in activity worldwide, in small and large Jewish communities, through the work of dozens of Israeli emissaries and local employees, and in co-operation with the various Zionist Federations and delegations in communities around the world.

My visit to South Africa is a continuation of earlier visits during which solid infrastructure for joint work with the local Jewish community was built. The intention is to hold a number of events, including the screening of the documentary Epilogue, that deals with David Ben-Gurion, our first prime minister, a seminar on Israel-Diaspora relations, and a series of Beit Ha'am workshops that will launch the start of the Zionism Month.

This November we will mark a few major Zionist anniversaries, namely the Balfour Declaration (November 2), the UN approval of the Partition Plan (November 29), Rabin's assassination memorial day (November 4) and a few more.

The year 2017 also marks 120 years since the first Zionist Congress, the first gathering of Jewish representatives from all of Europe, which eventually led to the establishment of the state institutions and later, the state itself.

As we, in the Department for Diaspora Activities, continue to build bridges between the Jewish communities outside of Israel and Israel, I wish to invite all of you to join us in the celebrations of Zionism in South Africa during this very special year of anniversaries.



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Bereaved father gets kidney donation from daughter killed in accident

TOI STAFF

An Israeli man who had been waiting three years for a kidney transplant, finally received it in the most tragic of circumstances – from his daughter who died in a horseback riding accident.

Orit Gur, 44, was laid to rest on Tuesday at the same hour that her father came out of surgery after the transplant of one of her kidneys, the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper reported on Wednesday.

Gur was critically injured last week while on vacation in Georgia after the horse she was riding apparently reared up and she was thrown against a concrete wall.

She was flown back to Israel for treatment, but died of her injuries on Tuesday and her organs were donated to several people, among them her father Moshe Shimoni, 66. He had been waiting for three years for a transplant, after four potential donors had been found unsuitable.

"I'm fulfilling my daughter's wishes," he said before the operation. "People are comforting me by saying she'll be



Illustrative image of surgery

with me forever."

Eulogising her, Orit's husband Lior said: "We promised each other a few years ago that if something happened to one of us, we'd donate our organs. Orit, you did exactly as you'd wanted, giving life to other people."

Prof Eitan Mor, head of the organ transplant department at Beilinson Hospital, said the situation of a father receiving a donation from a dead child was highly unusual.

"In my 35 years doing organ transplants I have never come across such a heart-breaking situation as this one," he told the Israel Hayom daily, adding that "it was a difficult transplant because of Moshe's medical condition, but thanks to the donation, I hope that Moshe will recovery from his illness and be able to go off the dialysis machines."

Orit Gur's heart, second kidney and liver, were transplanted into other patients.

She leaves behind her husband and two children, aged 20 and 16.

BRITISH NEO-NAZI COMES OUT AS GAY AND JEWISH



Kevin Wilshaw (right) is seen in an interview with the UK's Channel 4

TOI STAFF

A British Neo-Nazi said he has decided to quit the far-right group he has long been a member of, after coming out as gay and admitting to having Jewish roots.

Kevin Wilshaw, a member of the UK National Front, opened up about his Jewish heritage in an interview with British Channel 4 aired on Tuesday, and acknowledged the paradox of being a gay and Jewish white supremacist.

The NF has for decades been a marginal party within the UK's far-right, attracting neo-Nazis, fascists and other racists to its ranks.

According to Channel 4, Wilshaw was active within the movement, and spoke at a number of rallies. He later joined the BNP, another radical far-right party, and was active with it as well.

Despite having "Jewish blood" on his mother's side, Wilshaw said he wrote about his hatred of Jews on his application to join the National Front.

"That term 'the Jews' is the global faceless mass of people you can't personalise it, not individuals. That's the generalisation that leads to six million people being deliberately murdered," he said in the interview.

Noting he himself had long gone after both Jews and gays, Wilshaw said he did not realise the problem with his actions until he himself was recently targeted when suspected of being gay.

"It's a terribly selfish thing to say, but it's

true: I saw people being abused, shouted at, spat at in the street. It's not until it's directed at you that you suddenly realise that what you're doing is wrong," he said.

Wilshaw said during his years as a neo-Nazi, he had used violence in self-defence, but never sought out members of minority groups to attack.

"I'd never do that, but I have seen incidents where people were singled out because they were black, by a group of people. It turned my stomach, I rejected that, I pushed it to the back of my mind," he said.

Wilshaw, who continued to participate in far-right circles until earlier this year, said he now feels "appallingly guilty" about his white supremacist past and wants "to do some damage" to his former comrades.

"I feel appallingly guilty as well, I really do feel guilty. Not only that, this is also a barrier to me having a relationship with my own family, and I want to get rid of it, it's too much of a weight," he said.

"I want to do some damage as well, not to ordinary people, but the people who are propagating this kind of rubbish – want to hurt them, show what it's like for those who are living a lie and be on the receiving end of this type of propaganda. I want to hurt them," he added.

Having now repudiated the far-right ideology he long ascribed to, Wilshaw said: "I am going to find it difficult, granted, to fill a void that has occupied my life since childhood."

Poland to partially compensate Jewish private-owned looted property

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

The World Jewish Restitution Organisation cautiously welcomed a Polish official's announcement of plans to pass legislation offering partial compensation for property confiscated from private owners during communism.

Polish Deputy Justice Minister Patryk Jaki announced plans for the legislation last Wednesday, marking a break from the government's previous reliance on individual court rulings to determine restitution rather than through legislation, as has been done in many other European countries.

"I'm ashamed that it has taken Poland until now, 28 years after the fall of communism, to prepare such a bill. This should have been taken care of a long time ago," the PAP news agency quoted Jaki as saying during a press conference in Warsaw last Wednesday.

The law that comes from the envisioned bill would allow for cash payments of up to 20 per cent of the value of privately-owned properties at the time of their "nationalisation", Jaki told the broadcaster TVN24, adding that the bill was "absolutely fair". Countless properties that belonged to Poland's 3.3 million-strong Jewish population before the Holocaust, were seized by the Nazi occupation forces and then nationalised under communism.

Restitution experts estimate that following the Holocaust, Jewish individuals and institutions in Poland, lost property whose combined value exceeds the equivalent of \$1 billion. Poland is the only major country in Europe that has passed neither national legislation for the restitution of property unjustly seized by the Nazis, nor for property nationalised by the Communist regime, according to the World Jewish Restitution Organisation, or WJRO.

"We welcome the recognition today by Poland that national legislation is needed to address the issue of confiscated property," Gideon Taylor,

WJRO's chairman of operations, said in a statement last Thursday. "However, it is essential that restitution or compensation be full and complete and that it be just and fair for all who lost property, including Polish survivors of the Holocaust and their families," the statement read.

WJRO has joined other vocal critics of Poland over its perceived failure, even by Eastern European standards, to offer Jewish victims of property theft during and after the Holocaust and their descendants neither adequate restitution nor procedures to obtain it.

In July, WJRO sharply criticised a Polish court's ruling upholding restitution legislation whose language precluded countless Jewish would-be claimants.



Polish Deputy Justice Minister Patryk Jaki addresses parliament

The law, passed last year, precludes claims in Warsaw for former owners and their families who missed the 1988 communist-era deadline for filing claims, including those who fled abroad to escape communist rule or anti-Semitism.

Poland in 1997 passed a law for restitution on communal-owned properties, but more than 15 years after the claim filing deadline, a majority of more than 5 000 claims for such property has still not been resolved and most of the resolved claims have not led to restitution or compensation, the WJRO said.



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Jewish women share tales of harassment, and rabbi atones for his fellow men

BEN SALES

It has happened in a Jerusalem marketplace. On a flight to Israel. On the way home from an Orthodox Brooklyn wedding. Jewish women are among the hundreds of thousands saying, under the hashtag #metoo and in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal, that

they've been groped, harassed or assaulted by men.

And in response, a male rabbi rewrote a Yom Kippur prayer to confess the ways he has objectified and violated women.

The #metoo hashtag has spread across social media as women have shared their stories of being sexually harassed or assaulted. The campaign began last Sunday night, after actress Alyssa Milano tweeted: "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too.' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."

Since Milano's initial tweet, the hashtag has been used more than 200 000 times, according to the BBC.

Women have also shared their stories of abuse in Jewish settings, and of the institutional inaction that sometimes followed when they reported assault or harassment.

Eliana Fishman, a graduate student in New York City, wrote about being harassed by homeless men that a Jewish summer programme encouraged her to talk to, and added: "I get frustrated every time a male religious leader urges his devotees to chat with people on the street, without acknowledging how street harassment works."

Leah Solomon, who lives in Jerusalem, wrote that, years ago, as a 19-year-old counsellor at a Jewish camp, four of her 14- and 15-year-old campers came to her with

stories of abuse by the same man in their home community. The camp did nothing, she wrote, because the abuse happened off camp grounds.

Debra Nussbaum Cohen, the New York correspondent for Haaretz, wrote that she was assaulted on her first flight to Israel, at age 18.

"I was 18 and on my way to Israel, flying alone for the first time anywhere, and the man next to me groped me repeatedly under the blankets on the overnight flight," she wrote on Facebook.

"At the time I lacked the self-confidence or agency to tell him to stop or call the flight attendant. You can be damn sure I've done all I can so that my daughters don't."

The #metoo posts have also prompted responses from men who acknowledge the enormity of the problem of sexual abuse, and are promising to do more to stop it. Rabbi Andrew Shapiro Katz, who lives in the Israeli city of Beersheva, wrote a Facebook post meant to be a personal confession in the style of a Jewish prayer, declaring the ways in which he has wronged women:

I have objectified. I have disrespected. I have taken advantage. I have harassed. I have violated.

I have sought sexual gratification/conquest with little to no regard for the feelings of the other.

I have touched without certainty of consent.

I have pursued in ways that caused discomfort and possibly fear.

I have uncovered what someone wanted covered.

I have looked when someone expected privacy.

Much of it was as a boy, but not all.

Maybe most of the women do not remember, but assuredly some do.

Maybe what I did was so run-of-the-mill that it isn't what



Women are sharing their tales of sexual harassment and assault by using the hashtag #metoo.

any of the women posting "MeToo" are referring to.

But so what.

I know the culture and I was a participant in it, even as I came to fight against its more egregious manifestations.

I am not shocked by what other men do because I remember my own actions and thoughts and I can extrapolate.

I feel guilt and shame. I feel pain for pain I caused, or that I minimised or ignored.

But I also feel, and know, that I am responsible. I can do better. I can do more.

The post mimics the "Ashamnu" confessional prayer recited on the day of Yom Kippur – a Hebrew acrostic listing the ways people collectively have sinned. It begins, "We have trespassed. We have betrayed. We have stolen."

Katz ends his version of the prayer by taking responsibility for the pain he's caused and pledging to take action to prevent abuse in the future. (JTA)

Arab Israeli indicted for social media posts supporting terror

TOI STAFF

Prosecutors last Sunday accused an Arab-Israeli man of supporting terrorism and incitement in social media posts he made praising terror groups and attacks against Israelis.

According to an indictment filed with the Haifa District Court, Muhammad Khalaf published a number of posts on Facebook and Instagram, praising the Hamas terror organisation and two affiliated groups, and expressed support for terror attacks against Israelis.

Among the offending material cited were a number of posts lauding Hamas leaders, as well as photos from an event organised by the terror group's student wing at An-Najah National University in the West Bank city of Nablus, where Khalaf studied.

Also mentioned were a series of posts written by Khalaf praising a terror attack at the Old City of Jerusalem's Temple Mount in July, in which three Arab Israelis shot dead two policemen.

The indictment said there was a "real possibility" Khalaf himself would carry out a terror attack. Khalaf, a resident of the northern city of Tamra, was charged with supporting a terror group, supporting an outlawed organisation, inciting terror and identifying with a terror group.



Harry Potter star Radcliffe plays Israeli lost in Amazon

SUE SURKES

Actor Daniel Radcliffe of "Harry Potter" fame is tackling the Amazon rain forest in a film hitting theatres this month, based on the true story of Israeli backpacker Yossi Ghinsberg, who was lost in the Bolivian jungle for several weeks in 1981.

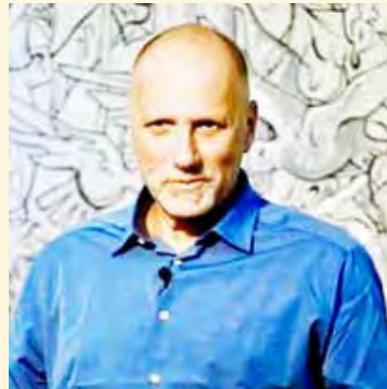
Directed by Australian Greg McLean, "Jungle" follows Ghinsberg's character as he meets three travellers and ventures into the rainforest, only to get lost.

The movie – which sees Radcliffe battling rapids, sinking into mud, enduring snakes, tigers, and armies of ants and cutting a parasitic worm out of his forehead with a knife – is based on the book "Back from Toichi" by Ghinsberg.

Ghinsberg, from the coastal city of Ramat Gan, was lost in the Bolivian Amazon for three weeks 36 years ago. Since then, he has promoted a sustainable lifestyle and gives lectures all over the world.

In 2014, the Ynet news site reported that the book had been translated into 15 languages and still serves as the guide for many Israelis on their post-army trips to South America. (Ynet also reported at the time that Kevin Bacon had been signed for the lead role.)

"Jungle" premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival in August. It was set to show in US theatres on



October 20.

Other than the Harry Potter series, Radcliffe, whose mother is Jewish, has starred in 12 films, including "Kill Your Darlings", where he played Jewish-American poet and Beat Generation icon, Allen Ginsberg.

Yossi Ghinsberg

Halloween retailer pulls Anne Frank costume amid complaints

ASSOCIATED PRESS

An online retailer has pulled a costume from its website that depicted Holocaust victim Anne Frank.

Screenshots of the costume for sale at HalloweenCostumes.com posted to social media, show a smiling girl wearing Second World War-era clothing and a beret.

The costume was quickly criticised on Twitter. Carlos Galindo-Elvira, who leads the Anti-Defamation League's Arizona office, said on Twitter that the costume trivialises Frank's memory.

North Mankato, Minnesota-based Fun.com runs the website. Spokesman Ross Walker Smith tweeted on Sunday that the costume had been pulled from the website. He explained that the company sells costumes for activities other than Halloween, like "school projects and plays". He apologised for any offence caused by the costume.

Anne Frank is known for the diary she wrote while in hiding from the Nazis during the war. She died in Bergen Belsen in March, 1945.



Halloweencostumes.com removed this Halloween costume of Holocaust diarist Anne Frank from its sites

The magic in finding solutions



SIMON APFEL

There was a Heineken advert that aired a few months ago. It arrived in the wake of one of the most bitter and divisive US elections in recent memory, as hatred, split along class, race and gender lines, boiled over across the country.

Titled “Worlds Apart”, the ad features pairs of people – total strangers – who hold opposing views on hot-button social issues like feminism, climate change, and transgender rights. The pairs, who initially aren’t privy to each other’s views, go through a bonding activity before the big reveal. They are then given a choice: to walk away, or “stay and discuss your differences over a beer”. All six choose to hash it out respectfully; one pair even swap numbers.

At the time it was dismissed as cheesy and contrived; well-intentioned and not as tone-deaf as Pepsi’s widely lambasted civil protest ad featuring Kendall Jenner that preceded it, but also utterly unrealistic – the kind of thing that never happens in real life.

But what if it does? Last month, 35 Jews of all stripes, from Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, gathered at the Old MacDaddy retro-caravan resort in the Elgin valley for a leadership retreat that became a real-life Heineken ad.

Over the course of just three days, a group that comprised rabbis and progressive leaders, social activists and captains of industry, creatives and straight-laced finance types – the kind of crowd that would be at each other’s throats on social media, or at best would have nothing to do with each other – found glorious, almost intoxicating, warmth and harmony.

It’s called LaunchPad, and truly there’s nothing like it. Modelled on a highly successful initiative that was pioneered in Australia in 2014, it’s billed as a “Platform for Jewish Community Innovation”; for “thinking boldly and creatively about the changing needs and challenges facing the SA Jewish community, and taking concrete steps to create meaningful change”.

And that’s exactly what the group – who could quite accurately be termed “change-makers” were it not for my own inexplicable presence among them – set out to do.

No topic was taboo: Jewish apathy among youth; marginalisation of certain groups; disaffection with traditional community structures; Israel and national identity; the shifting educational landscape; safety and security challenges; social support structures.

Thorny, highly contentious subjects, certainly. But through exhausting, wall-to-wall discussions in sessions entitled “The Elephants in the Room”, “What’s the Problem?”, and “Working Hub”, and culminating in a real-life “Dragon’s Den” enactment in which ideas were pitched to three of the community’s biggest social investors, we not only hashed out our differences, but put our heads together to map out potential solutions.

The glass auditorium, appropriately resembling a giant hothouse, buzzed with a low electrostatic murmur punctuated by the odd excited outburst, as groups sat on the floor, probing, proposing, drawing up plans.

Discussions throughout were robust, the level of discourse extremely high – but most notable was the almost shockingly respectful manner in which they were conducted. People spoke freely and listened intently. Faced with an audience sincerely receptive to what he had to say, one participant remarked how he suddenly overcame his fear of public speaking.

And, as fascinating and productive as the workshops and scheduled engagements were (a scintillating, TED Talk-ready presentation on the Johannesburg Chevrah Kadisha of all things exploded like a fire-cracker), it was in the casual interactions and “Processing Pods” between sessions where the magic happened.

“I connected with an Orthodox rebbetzin – how the hell did that happen?” wondered one participant. Another marvelled at having discovered “a better version of me”. An architect in his 30s said he felt “nourished”. A young, bustling community activist said she “hadn’t once felt the need to check my phone and didn’t even notice the non-existent WiFi signal”. A Johannesburg-born Chabad rabbi said he felt “totally present, totally engaged, totally switched on”.

Each of us arrived at Old MacDaddy clutching fiercely-held positions and identities, backs arched ready to defend them to the death. Yet almost from the start, all the negativity and “stuff” seemed to magically dissipate. It was immediate and spontaneous, dissolving, much to everyone’s shock, as early as the first ice-breaker session.

Looking back on the experience, I guess we simply let our guard down, opened ourselves up and shared. And shared. And shared some more.

And there, in the rolling green hills of Elgin, amidst all of the brain-storming and conceptual bundu-bashing, we carved out a community. A living, breathing collective with common goals and a concern for the greater good.

Inevitably, though an overactive WhatsApp group and a number of simmering peer-led initiatives have kept the embers alight, this motley crew have gone back to our regular lives, and, very likely to old modes of thinking about, and relating to, the other.

But if nothing else, LaunchPad has been a glimpse of just what’s possible.

“I’m relieved, and I guess grateful,” reflected the suitably warm-and-fuzzy LaunchPad convener, Aron Turest Swartz, as the event drew to a close.

“It’s like we cast this net into the ocean and gathered up a group of diverse exotic fish, brought them together and made fish potjiekos. It’s a mysterious place and a mysterious process and the outcomes are a mystery. But there’s magic that’s taken place here. And everyone has felt it.”



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Not just another book on cancer or illness

GILLIAN KLAWSKY

When most people pick up Lauren Segal's book "Cancer: A Love Story", they are reticent to read it because, as so many have said, they don't really like memoirs or books about sick people.

However, once they start, they are captivated by this searingly honest memoir of four-time cancer survivor.

In her book, Segal strips bare everything she's been through in her harrowing journey. She reveals how she's not only survived, but forged a deeper connection to life and to the people she loves.

Delving into what she terms her "metamorphosis from person to patient", Segal captures the highs, lows, joys and heartaches that come with facing and overcoming four different cancer diagnoses. She takes a topic many shy away from – filled with fear and uncertainty – and weaves a powerful, personal narrative that's sometimes heart-breaking but always underpinned by hope. In so doing, she's created an absorbing, beautifully written memoir that's hard to put down.

Having previously co-authored five non-fiction books – always about other people – Segal turned the spotlight on herself in her memoir, a shift she found liberating albeit somewhat strange in that readers now feel like they know her well.

Putting a very personal experience out for public consumption didn't happen overnight, though. "I was writing it as a journal all through my treatment and it was definitely for myself initially," she says. "Then I started sending it as e-mails to my friends about my experience and a lot wrote back and said what a unique insight I'd provided and they



Lauren Segal

suggested I turn it into a book."

Taking this advice, Segal joined a writing group halfway through her chemo and so her book was born. "I got feverish about writing it and it almost wrote itself after that. It just felt like the story had to be told."

Segal drew strength from other people's writing through her treatment and so wrote the book primarily for other cancer patients. In working to break through the fear most people have of cancer, she also had a wider audience in mind though.

"I've increasingly found, since the book has been published, that it's speaking to people on many different levels, not just about cancer, but about surviving very difficult situations that you're presented with in life. My struggle was about how you find strength, which is something many people confront."

For Segal, writing was an essential

tool in processing her feelings, searching for meaning and coming to terms with her diagnoses and treatments. "It helped me on so many levels. It was a creative outlet when all my creativity was taken away from me through cancer – it removes all your creative choices.

"It was a way of being in touch with my vulnerability and learning how I was feeling. It also helped me to get some measure of control in a world where I had lost so much of that – making order on the page was a way of making order in my life. It also protected my family from a lot of the details of the illness – I didn't need to impose it on them all of the time."

Segal's writing is largely unfiltered. "If you're going to write a memoir, it has to be authentic, true, vulnerable and open," she says. "While I know that that openness is an acquired taste for many, for me, it was the

only way I could be true to what the experience was. It's very important that all of us do learn to discuss our vulnerabilities, because I've seen now how it helps other people."

Segal writes about challenges that arose when her son, the then deputy head boy of a Jewish day school, wore a keffiyeh at the opening of the World Debating Championship, creating uproar in the community... all in the midst of her chemo sessions.

"It wasn't easy to get through – the outside world becomes very challenging when you have to be so inwardly focused through your cancer journey. But I got through it by so many other people standing next to me."

"When you go through cancer, there's a kind of club you enter into, we all help each other in whatever way we can, it's the spirit of being together – a communal relationship we build."

Her ability to see and investigate the opportunities presented by facing her mortality rather than simply focusing on the fear, is what makes Segal's story so inspirational.

"I'm an optimistic person by nature, I always have been," she says. "I was very stymied when I had my third diagnosis but when you have children, a husband and a family, you can't be defeated. My great quality, I'm learning, is my ability to ask for help and I got a lot of it through my journey!"

While there were times she felt her body wouldn't make it through, finishing chemo and radiation were the highest highs along her journey. "I felt like I'd run a marathon and I was able to say I'd reached the finish line."

Married to Discovery Health CEO, Dr Jonny Broomberg, Segal

acknowledges the massive advantages she had in getting the best care available, but ultimately no amount of connections can change a cancer diagnosis.

"You have to bring your partner into that situation as much as you can so they understand what you're going through. Simultaneously, you have to protect them from the full blown experience, because there's a limit to what any person can absorb.

"There needs to be a constant negotiation between letting your partner in and protecting them. What's also important in any marriage, is to communicate your needs all the time." It's also important to look to friends and family for times your partner can't be there.

The overwhelmingly positive response to her book has set Segal on a new course. "It's one I never anticipated and it's mainly a journey to understanding how other women in my position don't enjoy the same resources that I did when I was fighting breast cancer.

"So, I have a strong desire to engage in advocacy work with breast cancer," she says.

"The fact that so many women still die from this disease is an absolute travesty, they're dying from a lack of resources.

"Now that there's publicity around my story, I want to use that as a platform to speak for others who don't have my privilege. We have to break the lingering shame and silence around breast cancer – the more people that get an understanding of what people go through, the better off we'll be."

Reading Segal's book not only provides this understanding, it also changes the way you look at yourself, your life and the people in it.

Don't cry for me, Emma Kingston

PETER FELDMAN

While the British actress playing Eva Perón in the new production of Evita has a real connection to the role, she also happens to be Jewish. Much like Perón, Emma Kingston chose a career as an actress and her mother grew up in Argentina. In fact, her grandfather lived through the Perón era and has quite a few tales to recount.

Kingston told the SA Jewish Report that Judaism played a meaningful role in her life while growing up in London. She was especially imported to play Evita in this West End and Broadway production on now at the Teatro Montecasino.

It also features Jonathan Roxmouth as Che and Robert Finlayson as Juan Perón.

Asked how she was going to make the role her own, seeing there have been so many top actresses who've played this iconic part before, she said: "I think when you take on any iconic role it's important not to compare yourself to any of the other amazing actresses who have come before you.

"I did a lot of text work on this role and a lot of research trying to find her exact intentions. I think as long as you play the role with truth, honesty and authenticity, that is how you make a role your own and avoid people comparing you. My mum is also Argentinean and my grandpa

lived this story, so having him to talk to about what it was like to be in Buenos Aires, has been a wonderful source of research."

Kingston began singing lessons when she was 11. "I went to Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in London and I did a three-year BA degree in Acting/Musical Theatre. It was an incredible three years. In the third year we put on public performances; I had the opportunity to play Clara in 'Light in the Piazza' and worked with the most wonderful creative team. It's an intense three years but I wouldn't have changed it for anything."

Kingston grew up in a Jewish community. She attended Jewish schools growing up and was an integral part of a big Jewish community at home in London. "When I can, I am at home on Friday nights for dinner with my family. We celebrate the holidays. It is a huge part of my identity."

At 16 Kingston got an agent and began auditioning for shows in London. "I realised I was a bit young, so I decided to audition for Drama School to do a degree in acting and musical theatre. A big career highlight was getting to play Vanessa 'In the Heights' and have playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda come and watch our final show. To meet him was a very special moment.

"I also recently did a new production of 'Fiddler on the Roof' at the Chichester Festival Theatre. I was given the opportunity to play Hodel. Getting

to explore my heritage and share it with an audience, was very special."

This is Kingston's first trip to South Africa and she is "absolutely loving it". "Everyone has been so welcoming and friendly. I spent the rehearsal weeks in Cape Town and it did not disappoint. It is absolutely beautiful. Can't wait to take the show back there in December."

Asked how she landed the Evita role, she said: "I was in London and I sent a tape of myself performing the material from the show. After a few weeks my agent called with the news. I cried. I then had the amazing opportunity of meeting director Hal Prince and his associate Dan Kutner in New York to discuss the role and the show."

She's had a challenging career but one "unbelievable" experience was performing in another iconic musical, "Les Misérables".

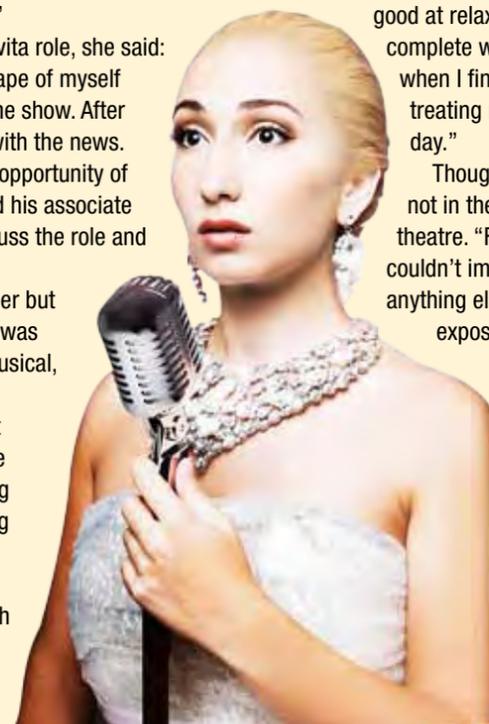
"Since I was four years old it was my dream show. It was the most wonderful two years being in that building with an amazing company. Going on for Eponine was a life highlight, let alone a career highlight. I used to watch Lea Salonga on the Les Mis's 10th anniversary concert at the Albert Hall and dreamt of

being in that show."

Her advice to young actors wanting to enter a competitive business is: Be yourself, work hard, create your own luck, never wait for an opportunity to arise and create your own opportunities."

Kingston admits she is not good at relaxing. "I'm a complete workaholic. But when I find the time, I love treating myself to a spa a day."

Though her family are not in the arts, they all love theatre. "From an early age I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else. My parents exposed me to a lot of theatre, cast albums and a lot of Barbra Streisand. I knew I needed to be an actor."



Emma Kingston

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Discovery's Adrian Gore shares business insights

STEVEN GRUZD

With the simple purpose of “making people healthier”, the Discovery Group, founded in 1992, revolutionised the insurance industry in South Africa and is making serious inroads globally. But this focus on the customer – not doctors or the system – was initially seen by competitors as “infantile”, said Adrian Gore, CEO of the Discovery Group and one of South Africa's most dynamic and decorated businessmen.

Gore was in conversation at a recent breakfast forum with Rabbi Gideon Pogrud, director of the Gordon Institute of Business Science's Ethics and Governance think tank at GIBS' campus in Illovo, Johannesburg.

Reflecting on Discovery's journey, a key moment came in the mid-1990s with the advent of the aspirational Health and Racquet Club brand (today's Virgin Active chain of gyms).

Discovery saw the opportunity to cross-sell its insurance products to this membership base, but, much more importantly, the opportunity to sell gym membership (or make it free) to their clients, to motivate healthy behaviour. Members earned “a health currency” through doing healthy things, which became Discovery Vitality, later integrated with Discovery Life insurance to promote prevention and wellness.

Gore identified three ways Discovery creates shared value: harnessing technology such as through the Discovery app and Apple Watch; having an authentic purpose imbued with values; and recognising that the real insurance risk is behavioural – smoking, eating badly and not exercising.

Gore said Discovery had moved insurance from a grudge purchase to something aspirational and rewarding, and influenced its competitors to put the health of South Africans first.

On South Africa's current political and economic problems, Gore said he is positive but



“not a naïve optimist.

“We should be at war on state capture,” he said, and “leadership needs to be appropriate”. He noted that Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA), on whose board he sits, has resolved to work with civil society and trade unions “to get South Africa onto the right track”.

Through its “Integrity Pledge”, BLSA is taking a tough stance on corruption, Gore said. “You don't need to cut corners to build good businesses, and in a country with the rule of law and ethical leadership, business is generally good. If there is no rule of law, bad businesses do well.”

There should be no compromise, and that is why BLSA had suspended KPMG [and subsequently Transnet and Eskom] due to allegations of impropriety, although he stressed that due process needs to be followed.

Gore said that economic growth and jobs are vital to address poverty in South Africa, as is an ecosystem that stimulates small business. The YES – Youth Employment Scheme – seeks to bring hundreds of thousands of young people into employment, and if it works, it will have a profound knock-on effect.

When asked if his Jewish background influenced his personal values, Gore said that without a doubt it had. He emphasised how his parents had placed the value of a good education above all else.

His father had impressed upon him the importance of honesty when he put his head down at night. Gore said his Jewish heritage was vital grounding, and that religious values codify behaviour, whatever faith one comes from. He said: “I am only intolerant of intolerance” and that we must all celebrate our heritage.

Rabbi Pogrud concluded by saying that ethics in business is not peripheral, but should be central to decision-making, and go beyond mere corporate social investment, corporate charity and compliance.

The long hard journey of the new shaliach

>> Continued from page 5

One third of the Ethiopian Jews who left their homes died in Sudan, but they still believed it was worth it.

“The first white person I saw was in Sudan. I thought he was probably sick, not that I don't think they are sick today. I asked myself how he woke up in the morning and scratched off his skin. The white man was a Mossad agent who was disguised as a doctor. After many years he is still a good friend of mine.”

A year after arriving in Sudan, they were airlifted on Israeli Air Force planes to Israel. “It was my first flight ever and I was in shock. I thought to myself how such a big thing could fly like a bird?”

“After a while we landed at an air force base in Israel. Lots of soldiers came to us with stretchers, some with drips. We were so weak and in need of medical treatment. From there, they took us to a military base in Ashkelon. There for the first time in our lives we saw a fridge, we saw gas to use for cooking. We wondered what we do with this all? We had never used such things, we were in total shock.”

Abebe said although they were given a house with a number of rooms, his father wouldn't let them go into the other rooms because he couldn't imagine living in more than one room. They were then taken to Arad – not Jerusalem – and put in an Absorbition Centre apartment on the sixth floor. That was when the shock set in,

says Abebe.

He and his brother were sent to boarding school, leaving their parents in Arad. “They sent me to a yeshiva. I wasn't successful and after they kicked me out, I was sent to a religious school next to Haifa where I matriculated,” he says.

Abebe started working on the military radio station Galay Tzahal. “From then onwards, I haven't stopped writing,” he says. For the last 15 years, Abebe made a name for himself as a journalist on Yedioth Aharonoth newspaper.

He since married Aviva, an Ethiopian-Jewish nurse who was only six when she did the Operation Moses journey. They have three Israeli children.

“Over the years, we both felt we wanted to give back like the different Israelis gave to us. That is one of the reasons we offered our services as shlichim to South Africa. We believe that giving is also receiving, if we can give a little to the Jewish community in our small way, then that's what we will do.

“We knew from the start it would be hard to be travelling again in another country where there are different people – some good and some not so good, but that is life.”

Abebe has experienced so much and believe he has much to offer in his new position. Besides, he says, he needed a rest from his work as a journalist, telling the stories of the tougher side of Israeli life.



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Demystifying the Dark Tisch

SIMON APFEL

It's 23:00 on a balmy Friday night in Jerusalem, as you join a crowd shuffling into a small cafeteria in Mea Shearim. Inside, as you take your seat at a row of tables, it's dark. Not hazardingly dark – you aren't feeling your way forward or tripping over one other – but all you can really make out are shadows and silhouettes.

The room, now filled with around 200 people, remains largely silent. Where words are being uttered, it's in a hushed whisper, perhaps in awe of the darkness. Then the singing starts.

You don't need to know any words. There are no words. You don't even need to know the melodies. For as you sway to their rhythm, the ancient niggunim sweeping you along, you realise you know them. You always have.

You're becoming weightless. You're transported, carried aloft on a wave of song. You're feeling things you've never felt, expressing things you've never expressed. Cogs start to shift, not in your mind, but in a deeper ineffable part of your being. It's kind of eerie. And it's kind of unforgettable. The darkness, you realise, can be dazzling.

It's called the "Dark Tisch". And on October 27 – the Friday night of the Shabbat Project – it's coming to South Africa.

For Batya Smadja, a Johannesburg-based strategist who has been instrumental in bringing the Dark Tisch to life, it's an opportunity to bring people together in a unique way, and in doing so, help actualise one of the main tenets of the Shabbat Project.

"The Shabbat Project is about uniting our community – bringing together Jews of all backgrounds," she explains. "The darkness can



be a great equaliser. The wonderful thing is that it removes all barriers. You can't properly see who is sitting next to you."

She also makes the point that people feel less inhibited in the dark.

"No one needs to be embarrassed to sing. Someone who wouldn't normally get up in front of a crowd, might feel more inclined to give over a nice idea or tell a personal story. People share more – and more personally – in this setting."

In recent months, with the SA Jewish community rocked by some tragedies, it has taken on an added significance.

"We've experienced a lot of darkness in the community over the past year. There's no answer, no explanation, but sometimes there can be a response. And the Dark Tisch is a potent symbol of what that response might be.

"On a metaphoric level, the Dark Tisch is about bringing light into the darkness, lighting up a dark space. It's about coming together and spreading the light."

And people are responding to the call. Youth

movements are getting involved, SRC leaders are rallying school kids to show up in their numbers, and the Shabbat Project office is inundated with calls from a broad spectrum of community members.

"There's something deeply spiritual and quietly inspiring about the Dark Tisch," says Smadja, "something so self-centring about being in the dark. There's a mystery and intrigue here. I believe this can uplift a Shabbos like it's never been before."

Uplifting indeed. One Capetonian who attended the tisch in Israel reported seeing "fiery Hebrew letters". But whether your experience is mystical or slightly more grounded, one thing is certain – it's going to be an experience.

- *Catch the Dark Tisch at Sandton Shul, Sunny Road Shul and Ohr Somayach Savoy in Johannesburg, and at Marais Road in Cape Town, from 21:30 on Friday October 27. Entrance is free.*

What happens when sins of the past come out of the closet?

A long, dirty thread links the sadistic killers of anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Timol and South African President Jacob Zuma

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



to sex offenders who thought they would get away with it as time passed. But people cannot control how they will be remembered in history.

Over four decades ago, in 1971, Timol died in police custody after jumping or being pushed through the tenth-floor window of (then) John Vorster Square police station. It was so long ago that many young South Africans today don't even know his name.

The policemen who tortured him have since died or are too old to recall the facts, and were never brought to book. Yet, his family, believing he was pushed through the window rather than jumped, pursued the issue tirelessly, demanding a new investigation. It was determined last week that Timol was pushed. His tormentors will be remembered as murderers, not policemen.

Zuma is widely thought to be a criminal using his position to steal from state coffers, today and in the past. He avoids prosecution by manipulating the judiciary with endless stalling tactics, hoping the incidents will fade in the public memory.

But the Supreme Court of Appeal this week leapt back time-wise, declaring he should be charged on 783 fraud and corruption counts, for his actions during the arms deal in 2002.

Charges were dropped in 2009 during his presidential election campaign, after he asserted that the timing of the charges aimed to damage his election prospects – the so-called "spy-tapes" saga.

A similar dirty thread links him to villains of another type – sex pests. His alleged rape of a 31-year-old family friend came to court in 2005. He claimed the act was "consensual", and rallied his supporters to back him. He thought it had faded in peoples' memory and continued with his political ambitions, but it has been resurrected in broadcaster Redi Tlhabi's new book "Khwezi" about his rape accuser Fezekile Kuzwayo (who has since died). Chances are, Zuma will go down in history not only as a corrupt thief, but also a sex offender.

Other villains on that sexual thread include Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, and South African billionaire Sidney Frankel. They also thought the passing of time would make the grisly events fade, and they would get away free.

Weinstein was publicly accused in the last two weeks by women in the Hollywood film world, of sexual molestation over many years, exploiting his powerful position. He had such sway that giving him sex could make or break an actress' career.

His accusers include famous actress Gwyneth Paltrow and others. Weinstein, who has resigned from the company he founded, is learning that despite time passing, old skeletons may come back to haunt.

SA Jewish billionaire Sidney Frankel sexually abused children at the Arcadia Jewish Children's Home and other places in the 1970s and 1980s. In the many years afterwards, he thought life had moved on and he wouldn't be fingered. But last year, eight accusers claiming he assaulted them as children, brought a civil claim against him.

He endured public disgrace, but died earlier this year before being sentenced. His name will go down as a paedophile. His case caused Johannesburg's High Court to declare Section 18 of the Criminal Procedure Act unconstitutional, effectively removing the 20-year prescription bar on sexual offences.

Other well-known sexual predators who have been exposed, include tennis star Bob Hewitt, and television's man of clean "family values", Bill Cosby.

Politics moves on after time with new leaders. But sexual abuse is not reparable: The abuser moves on, but victims remain traumatised.

"What goes around, comes around," says the cliché. Sometimes the wheel does turn, and old skeletons come back to haunt. Will Zuma, in time, pay for his crimes too?

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

Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

SA hosts prestigious WJC Community Directors' Forum

At the time of writing, preparations are being finalised for the World Jewish Congress Community Directors' Forum, to commence this weekend in Cape Town. This is the first time that this prestigious event will be taking place on the African continent, and we are honoured to have been entrusted with organising and hosting it.

The visit of so many high-level leaders from around the Jewish world, provides us with an ideal opportunity of building on existing relationships with local political leaders and opinion-makers.

In this regard, we are happy to report that Western Cape Premier Helen Zille will be hosting the official opening dinner at her residence on Sunday, while we expect a range of ambassadors, parliamentarians and other dignitaries to join us for the following evening's gala dinner.

SAJBD National President Mary Kluk, who represents our community on the World Jewish Congress (WJC) executive committee, will give a message of welcome at the first event while I will be giving the opening remarks at the second.

So far as the conference itself is concerned, a substantial part of the agenda has been devoted to discussing how BDS, the global campaign aimed at boycotting and isolating Israel, is playing out in South Africa and sharing with our international colleagues how our community has gone

about confronting it.

We believe that we have much to contribute to world Jewry's efforts to counter this pernicious phenomenon, not least because it is in our own country that one finds the genesis of the grotesque "Israel=Apartheid" analogy.

Among those presenting, is a former BDS activist who became aware of how much mainstream South Africans are being duped about the true nature of Israel and its relationship with its neighbours after participating in a fact-finding visit to that country. The WJC's Counter-Delegitimisation Unit will also give a presentation.

While in Cape Town, delegates will have the opportunity of learning more about the South African Jewish community, past and present. The Shabbat programme includes a panel discussion on the Jewish role in the overthrow of apartheid, chaired by former trade union leader and MP, Johnny Copelyn and with African Jewish Congress President Ann Harris and former anti-apartheid activist and Constitutional Court judge, Albie Sachs as panellists.

American Jewry in particular, places much emphasis on the importance of tikkun olam, the Jewish imperative to



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

help to heal and repair our troubled world through social welfare action, fighting injustice and other such means.

We look forward to showing how SA Jewry is making this a practical reality through a visit to Afrika Tikun's social upliftment projects in Mfuleni.

Afrika Tikun is not, of course, the only Jewish-headed organisation that works to address the huge socio-economic imbalances

that exist in our country as a result of apartheid. For close on nine decades, the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) has, without fanfare and generally out of the public eye, been doing sterling work in these areas.

On Sunday evening, I was pleased to present a welcome message on behalf of the Board at the 31st UJW national conference and to pay tribute to this fine organisation, not only for what it has done to assist the needy, but for the credit that this has reflected on our own community.

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

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

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DR LEVY CASE: MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

I am not Jewish, but all my friends, businessmen and Dr Levy, is Jewish. Dr Levy has been my children's doctor for over 10 years now and always acted professionally. I know the case (against him) and the contents. I offered him assistance as a private investigator and former law enforcement officer.

Question: If a woman was sexually abused, would she go back for a consultation with her husband the next day? There is no way (it would happen) and why wasn't charges opened up at the South African Police Services immediately?

Then, as per (your) newspaper, I am saddened by the way this was handled. Dr Levy is a professional doctor, but just didn't have the stomach to fight back properly and if an in loco inspection was done, it would have proven that he was innocent. Dr Levy always wore gloves, and (then there are) many contradictions. We all know the law: If they want you guilty, you will be found guilty and an innocent doctor's life is on hold. I told Dr Levy to appeal and fight back. I agree that he should have called every patient in and speak to each one personally, but he did not do so.

"Sabbatical" my backside! Be a man and speak to the many friends – (not) patients – who grew to love Dr Levy. I will stand up in any court and testify that Dr Levy is no "sex offender"; even though the medical board suspended him.

I have seen how cruel the Jewish community can be to just send (out) messages that are not true. Why speak of others and judge (them) if you don't know (all the) facts?

**Polo Dimeo
Johannesburg**

DR STEVEN LEVY: SA JEWISH REPORT DID THE RIGHT THING

Thank you to the SA Jewish Report for publishing an article on Dr Steven Levy and the sexual abuse cases charged against him. To the people who say it's lashon hara: Dr Levy was found guilty of sexual misconduct and ordered to cease (his) practice. We, as his patients and the general community, have a right to know of such things.

I ask you: Would you send your mother, sister, wife or daughter to a doctor found guilty of sexual misconduct?

I ask you: What would you be saying if your mother, sister, wife or daughter was sexually abused?

**Shayne Kaplan
Johannesburg**

EXPOSING DR LEVY DOES A VALUABLE SERVICE

To Peta Krost Maunder and all those brave women: Well done, bravo and mazeltov for exposing (sorry for the word) Dr Steven Levy (found guilty of sexual abuse).

Come to think of it, many years ago I went for a physio session and the physio – also a Jewish man – had his hands all over me. I was too shocked, and in lots of pain, to actually know what was going on at first, but afterwards I screamed at him! What a cheek and I still had to pay him! Had I known what I'd learned by your article on Dr Levy, I would have known what to do about it. Bit late now, but at least if it ever happens again I'll know what to do.

*Also well done on exposing greedy guniff Ronald Bobroff!

**Tracy Korsen
Johannesburg**

SA JEWISH REPORT SHOULD FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE RATHER THAN THE NEGATIVE

For the last few weeks I have read the SA Jewish Report with a sense of despondency. In a time where our political climate serves us an air of uncertainty, we seem to focus more on the mistakes of our own than the abundance of good stories out there. We know they're out there because if you pass the first few pages of your publication you get to them.

I would have been far prouder to have the story on Hacjviah Dayimani wanting a new yarmulke for his birthday rather than a sensational story on a doctor. I would rather not read the sad tales of woe in the financial affairs of the Jewish Board of Deputies as opposed to some of the noteworthy achievements of that week.

We know from rumblings in public gatherings that ammunition like this feed the bellies of our enemies. I am not saying do not have the stories, but I am lobbying for our community newspaper, that is read well beyond our own community, to be a source of pride and showcase the wonderful stories of Jewish people contributing to the betterment of this country and beyond.

Where we need to report on some of the few blemishes, we should do so with a sense of disappointment rather than come across as if we have some hot, juicy exclusive. This is not a tabloid, it is a family friendly newspaper and I hope that we instil that sensitivity to all that contribute to making what has been a wonderful highlight to my week for many years.

We live in hope.

**Darren Bergman
Johannesburg**

The story about Dr Levy was simply written with the barest of fact, without any sensational material. We made a point of that due to the sensitivities. Rav Dovid Cohen, a highly respected international rabbi, believed we had done the right thing. As for only having positive news, we would not be a newspaper if we did that. – Editor

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 SA Jewish Report.

E-mail: editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

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

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Directions: South Road, left into East, left into Nerina

Sandra Luntz 083 679 1247

CALL ON UCT TO BREAK ACADEMIC TIES WITH ISRAEL

The recent call by UCT to break off relations with Israeli institutions, may be well-intended if the reasons for this proposed break were consistent and applied to other countries whose well-documented (bad) human rights records far surpass those that the university and their Palestinian support accuse Israel of.

If it's the occupation that seems to be the main reason for this call by the BDS and Palestinian solidarity groups, surely, they need to apply the proposed sanctions equally among rogue countries such as China who has been occupying Tibet since the early 1950s and has executed 2 700 people this year alone. Israel has only executed one person in its 70-year history.

Then there is the Russian occupation of Ukraine and of course UCT should cut her ties with Turkey for not only occupying parts of Cyprus, but denying Turkey's 25 million Kurdish citizens an independent state.

But UCT and her BDS-sponsored call to break off ties with Israeli institutions, should be more honest. There are a host of countries guilty of genuine genocide, such as Syria and her Russian backers; don't forget it was those Russian jets which raised hospitals and schools in Aleppo not long ago, accounting for the deaths of thousands of children, including many Palestinians.

Why is there no call to cut

academic ties with Russia, China, Syria, or Lebanon, where apartheid practices against the Palestinians far surpass anything that Israel had done under that system? Why are these groups so silent about the almost half a million Rohingya Muslims being forced out of Myanmar – just another human tragedy happening right under their noses – but BDS and Co, being the humanitarians they purport to be, are oblivious to all these tragedies, and more, around the world, as their focus is only on getting rid of Israel (read Jews).

Despite our president's call and support recently at the UN General Assembly for a two-state solution, BDS and its friends will have nothing of that – the total destruction of Israel is all they will settle for – not a negotiated peace, not a two-state solution, not a regime change, no, the total destruction of the Jewish State and one must wonder why.

Would they be accused of anti-Semitism? No, this is denied emphatically and supported by a handful of token Jews supporting their call for Israel's destruction. This unfortunately does not wash with any thinking person.

To target only one country for the sanctions proposed in the face of a host of other human rights abusers, tells a significant story

**Allan Wolman
Johannesburg**



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Sam Hertz – music maestro at age 11

PETER FELDMAN

Samuel Hertz is no ordinary King David Primary School Linksfield learner – he is an exceptional pianist. This 11-year-old will be the only child guest pianist performing in the hit show, 'A Handful of Keys' at Pieter Toerien's Theatre at Montecasino from November to January. He will be alternating with four other adult guest pianists.

Samuel was also selected as one of 50 musicians nationwide to compete in the Hubert van der Spuy Music Competition in Cape Town in September. This national competition has put many a local musician on the international map.

Music is in this little boy's blood and it has already brought him numerous accolades.

In July, young Samuel performed as a piano soloist with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra in the Junior Concerto Festival at the Linder Auditorium. He was recently selected as a semi-finalist in the prestigious Philip Moore Music Competition.

At the recent SA Society of Music Teachers Music Festival, he received five diplomas and two honours. He was also awarded the trophy for Most Promising Pianist 11 years and under, making it the third year in a row he has won in his age group. He also won the trophy for Best Concerto 12 years and under.

Sam will be playing in the National

Atterbury piano competition in Pretoria later in October.

On August 7, Sam performed a 30-minute piano concert in the Gerald Horowitz Lounge for residents of Golden Acres and Sandringham Gardens.

This gifted young musician told the SA Jewish Report that when he was in nursery school, his teachers used to say that he loved listening to music and that it calmed him down. "Just before I went to primary school, one of my teachers asked my mom if she wanted to keep her old piano, as she was moving to a smaller home.

"My mom started teaching me how to play when I was in grade 1, but she didn't really remember a lot and I could soon play better than her. So, when I was in grade 2, I started proper lessons with my amazing teacher, Dr Jean Pierre (JP) Calitz. He has a PhD in piano and is a brilliant performer."

Sam admits that although his parents are "not really musical", his sister Rachel, who is 13, plays the violin really well. "I always listened to her playing (I think she started when she was in grade 1) and I knew I wanted to play an instrument, but not a violin.

"We met my teacher, JP, when he accompanied my sister in her first violin exam.

"My parents love the theatre and especially musicals and I remember one of the first musicals they took me to was Cats – I think I was three

but I had watched the movie lots of times and I knew all the words of all the songs.

"I have also watched piano and violin concerts at Carnegie Hall twice and watched musicals on Broadway and the West End. My favourite music and musical of all time is 'Les Misérables'."

Asked how he balanced school work and piano practice, Sam said: "I don't really get a lot of homework, because I finish most of it at school. But I have good time management. I practise for over an hour every day of the week, and before an eisteddfod, I practise for two hours every day."

Sam's favourite composer is Kabalevsky "because his music is unpredictable and he always brings something new to the pieces" and he also likes rap music and 60s rock music. "My favourite group is The Beatles."

"My mom started teaching me how to play when I was in grade 1, but she didn't really remember a lot and I could soon play better than her."

Asked how he relaxed and what other interests he had, Sam responded: "I do a lot of public speaking and debating at school. I



Sam Hertz

also love drama and acting. I have been in about seven professional productions, mainly at the National Children's Theatre.

"My favourites were playing 'Oliver' in 'The Adventures of Oliver Twist' – this was nominated for a Naledi Award.

"I also played James in 'James and the Giant Peach' and George in 'George's Marvellous Medicine' at the National Children's Theatre. I haven't done any shows this year because I have been concentrating on my piano."

He said he also likes to read (mainly fiction) and to watch TV. He loves Harry Potter, the Divergent series and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.

At such a young age, Sam has

managed to cram a great deal into his life and has enjoyed an incredible musical run. A highlight so far, he said, was definitely playing a concerto with the full Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra. "I also love winning trophies."

Sam will finish his schooling and then decide whether to make music his career. But, whatever he chooses to do, this bright young man is bound to be a success.

Before finding out that he was going to be performing in "A Handful of Keys", he told the SA Jewish Report that he dreams of one day being able to do a show in a big theatre like the Teatro at Montecasino. Well, he is just one theatre away from his dream coming true.

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KEEPING IT TOGETHER

Neilah in the dark – at Great Park

RABBI DOVID HAZDAN

It was late Yom Kippur afternoon at Great Park. Smelling salts were being passed around to revitalise the congregants who had spent the day fasting in prayer. The Mincha service was almost concluded and seats were rapidly filling in anticipation of Neilah. And then the unthinkable happened. The shul was plunged into darkness and the air conditioners gasped their last breath.

And then a flurry of activity began. Was it local? Was it a short load shedding? And how would a shul brimming to capacity, deal with the final moments of Yom Kippur in the dark?

Many hands, driven into action by the urgency of the hour, set up chairs outside the main entrance to the shul, then platforms for the choir and chazzan. Meanwhile the sermon in the shul continued with the rabbi leaving the congregation more and more in the dark.

And then the rapid redeployment of the entire community into the confined space outside the shul, which was holding on to the remaining minutes of daylight. The mechitza was set up and a Torah was placed prominently at the front. Some sat, most were standing in a huddle. The adrenalin had spurred the community way beyond the effects of smelling salts!

Sunday (October 22)

- Ongoing Nechama – Growth From Grief Support Group, meets at the Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Men and women welcome. Time: Tea from 09:30, group starts promptly at 10:00 - 11:30. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.
- JHGC hosts acclaimed writer and former head of the BBC History programme, Laurence Rees, on "The Holocaust: Meeting People Who Were There". Time: 18:00. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP essential to shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100.

Wednesday (October 25)

- Second Innings hosts an outing and guided tour of The West Rand Historical Museum. Bus departs from Golden Acres parking at 09:00 sharp. Cost: R170 (incl bus and tour). Enquiries/Bookings: Betty Kowal 072-316-4394 and Fanny Baumann 083-470-2644.

Thursday (October 26)

- Hebrew speakers meet at 11:00 till 12:00 at Beyachad, 2nd floor.

Friday (October 27)

- Shalom Seniors Club welcomes everyone who would like to make new friends and have some light-hearted fun on the last Friday of each month. Time: 14:30 for 15:00. Tea will be served, and there will be a selection of board games to play, cards etc. Maurice Reznik will talk on "Yesterday's Centre Page versus Tomorrow's Headlines". Contact: Esther (011) 485-5619 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday mornings.



Yeshiva pupil tops Accounting Olympiad

Yeshiva College matric pupil Adam Melnick was bowled over when he heard he had come in the top four out of 7 069 who entered the National Accounting Olympiad.

He as the very first person from his school to excel in the Olympiad, not least of all because it was the first time they entered.

"I was so surprised, but very proud," he told the SA Jewish Report. "After meeting all the wonderful people at the SAIPA Gala Dinner, I am sure it will stand me in good stead in my future career."

Adam is clear he would love to be



involved in the financial world, "making a difference to the lives of as many people as possible". However, next year he will be focusing on more spiritual studies as he heads for a yeshiva in Israel. Thereafter he will be back to further his studies.

He said he found the tests challenging, but "felt it was a wonderful opportunity to compete against schools from all over the country".

Of his success in the Olympiad, he said: "The school was very excited and my accountancy teacher, Mr Van Den Berg, was very proud to see my hard work and dedication paying off."

Great Park Spa Day nurturing inner strength

GOLDIE SIMPSON

The morning following the holiest day in the Jewish calendar – Sunday, October 1 – brought women together for a pampering of mind, body and soul at the Great Park Mikvah.

The programme began with spa body treatments and a gourmet breakfast, followed by an array of speakers in the packed-to-capacity Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre auditorium.

Leah Sasson opened with impassioned words about women being a source of warmth and light. She thanked those who helped arrange the event and who are leaders and key-players in regular community events.

Specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Trudy Smith in conversation with Dr Andy da Costa, answered personal and current questions on women's health. This was

followed by a video message from Sarah Newstead about her experience with the hereditary BRCA gene (that increases the risk for breast and ovarian cancers) and the need for all women to look after their health.

Sarah Hoffman of The Digital Law Company spoke about the affects of the digital age and offered practical suggestions regarding screen time for kids.

Gaby Sutton shared a personal story, highlighting the need to connect to Hashem in challenging times and to speak to others about one's pain, opening oneself up to the love and support of the community.

Many prizes were won, and every woman walked away with a copy of the recently published "You Have Power" book.

This powerful women's event was one way of nurturing inner strengths and taking the inspiration of the High Holiday season into the rest of the year.



Christians and Jews unite to save lives'

DA MP Michael Bagraim co-hosted a Bike Run on October 1 to culminate months of hard work to raise funds for a Magen David Adom Medicycle to be used in the streets of Jerusalem.

Bagraim hosted it with Patrick Rolleston from "Israel on our Minds", and Pastor Russel van Wyk of the Desire of all Nations Church in Ottery Cape Town.

The theme of their fundraising campaign was "Time Saves Lives", which describes the purpose of the Medicycle which is fully equipped with all medical equipment used by qualified and trained medical personnel to easily navigate the narrow streets

of Jerusalem to reach the scene of accidents, terror attacks, and other emergency incidents. The idea is to shorten the waiting period for medical assistance.

In partnership with Mark Hyman from Magen David Adom, SA, "Israel on our Minds" embarked upon this campaign to fulfil their biblical mandate to love and support the Jewish nation. The purchase of the Medicycle demonstrates that love and support.

Jewish bikers from Free Chapter Cape Town and Christian bikers from Chariots of Fire Biking Ministry, rode from Cape Town to Aquilla Private

Game Reserve in Touwsriver, where they were hosted by Searl Derman to lunch and a "Save the Rhino" tour.

Everyone was unanimous in their praise of the wonderful experience of joining together, Jews and gentiles, to support Israel.



Colin Schulman and Julie Berman sitting pillion, hitting the highway



Passing through a tunnel towards Worcester

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CLOSING DATE: 31st October 2017

A Curriculum Vitae, with letter of motivation and references should be delivered or e-mailed to:

The Principal
King David Ariel Primary School

E-mail address: urdangb@sabje.co.za
Tel: 011 446 7877

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The candidate must also be an experienced teacher who is dynamic and driven by the desire for educational excellence and have previous leadership experience.

The applicant would ideally begin on 15 January 2018.
CLOSING DATE: 27th October 2017

A Curriculum Vitae, with letter of motivation and references should be delivered or e-mailed to:

The Principal
King David High School, Linksfield

E-mail address: rosenfeldd@sabje.co.za
Tel: 011 480-4557

The school reserves the right not to make an appointment.
Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Celebrating Sukkot at Crossroads

ELANA FINE

Walking down the stairs into Crossroads School over Sukkot, you couldn't miss the sukkah. This is clearly not what you expect to see at a non-denominational private remedial school.

It was there for all to see, appreciate, use and learn from.

As most Jewish Crossroads parents will attest, it isn't easy for parents to take their children out of Jewish schools when they need remedial help. There is always a concern that they won't get enough Yiddishkeit. But Crossroads principal, Val Witt, totally understands that.

"The idea is to build tolerance and respect for all religions," she says.

Rabbi Ari Kievman, who has a son in grade 3, arranged the building of the sukkah through Chabad House, and a collection of parents then organised for the Schach leaves to be cut and delivered for the roof.

The Jewish pupils were asked to create a picture of religious significance as decoration for the sukkah and to then to explain it to their peers.

The Jewish parents and families were thrilled with this gesture. With words such as "impressive, awesome and fantastic" being used to describe the structure and the gratitude that they feel.

The children are proud and excited to be able to share their culture with their friends. As a parent, I beam with pride knowing my son has a sense of Jewish pride in a school community that teaches him so much, but in turn also allows him to teach others.



KDVP pupils resonate with the importance of giving

NIRVANA ROGERS

The senior group in King David Victory Park Pre-Primary School collected food supplies, stationery, toys and clothing for pupils from Ditshego House of Happiness in Centurion.

This amazing act of kindness was the brainchild of Robyn Merkel, who organised the event. Forty pupils from Ditshego were invited to King David Victory Park campus on Wednesday September 27 to spend a morning of interactive play and learning with children from the senior group.

The children enjoyed a healthy breakfast before relishing the fun jumping on the inflatables provided for their enjoyment.

The morning ended with each child of Ditshego receiving a packed goodie bag from the children of King David. While the children from Ditshego received this gift with much warmth, the notable lesson for the little ones from King David was the importance of sharing.

KDVP Pre-Primary and Ditshego House of Happiness pupils enjoy a morning together.



Giving thanks in a gratitude campaign

Children from Torah Academy Primary and Nursery Schools held a "gratitude campaign" to give thanks for all the things for which they are grateful.

Rabbi Motti Hadar, principal of Torah Academy Primary School, said: "This is what Yiddishkeit is all about. The first words we say every day are "Modeh Ani" - we acknowledge, we say thank you, we are appreciative of even the small blessings in life which we don't want to take for granted."

Holding their "gratitude jars" which contain notes of things for which the children are grateful are: Soshi Wagner; Menucha Woznica; Oriya Rannels; and Yael Hurwitz. Front: Devorah Leah Lampert; and Tehilla Katz.

Some examples of what the children gave thanks for included: "My mom giving me medicine for my stomach ache"; "The people who care about me"; "Being able to touch, talk, eat, walk, see and smell"; "Going to school with two arms and legs"; "A good education"; "Being free to practise our religion"; "My first big tooth"; "The piece of Hashem inside me" and "The Rebbe".



KD Linksfield holds Cancer Awareness Day

KAYLA BUCHALTER AND JONATHAN KIER, STUDENT LEADERS AT KDHL

More than 50 King David Linksfield boys shaved their heads and 19 girls cut off 25 cm of their hair in support of cancer awareness on September 26.

In addition, over R5 000 was raised in honour of Hannah Katz, who is a King Davidian. The efforts will go to helping Hannah receive treatment.

"We had an initial idea of raising R18 000 towards Hannah's treatment costs. In the merit of a speedy recovery for Jodi Brozin (Yehudit Chana bat Pessa). We achieved our goal in less than 24 hours and since then, we have raised in excess of R300 000!"

Awareness about cancer is an important component of showing support for those fighting the disease. A visible reminder of this is showing your support by shaving your hair in solidarity.

By cutting our hair we convey to the world that our unity, our love and our support, takes preference over our appearance, our reputation and our ratings. Only by giving to others, are we able to receive even more in

life and this is the optimum example of a true mitzvah.

In conjunction with cutting our hair, the school sold hair extensions in numerous colours and painted pink finger nails, to visibly display the love and hope we hold within us. All of these activities took place at both breaks and the outcome was immeasurable.



Boys having their heads shaved

Perfect puppy party for Sydenham Pre-primary

The children and staff of Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary were recently treated to a Woodrock Animal Rescue puppy party. The children waited patiently in the garden for their turn to play with the puppies.

Animals offer children much more than companionship. They help them develop lifetime character traits such as responsibility, compassion, empathy, accountability, resourcefulness and the ability to love unconditionally.

Teaching children to have compassion and empathy for their furry, feathered and finned friends, is vital for preventing cruelty to animals as well as raising them to respect and treat those who are different from them with kindness. In the spirit of tzedakah, the parents at the school donated cash and goodies which were very well received by Woodrock.



Ecstatic to be playing with the puppies, is Levi Riback



KD Primary's yearly blessing ceremony a treasured institution

The blessing of the children before Yom Kippur has become a treasured and special tradition at the King David Primary Schools.

The emotion is palpable as parents place their hands on their precious children's heads to give them a blessing before the holiest day of the year. The formal blessing is followed by heartfelt personal blessings and warm hugs.

Jake Sundelson and Judah Marx being blessed by their fathers in a joint King David Linksfield Junior and Senior Primary School blessing ceremony.

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Another remarkable first for Dorfman clan

JACK MILNER

Just when you think a member of the Dorfman family cannot do any more in the world of karate, they raise the bar yet another notch.

Malcolm Dorfman, fit as ever at the age of 70, has achieved something that has not existed before in his karate organisation – a ninth Dan. “In our world organisation, the KWF world body, eighth Dan is actually considered to be the limit,” explains Malcolm.

“However, there are two positions. One is the Deputy Grand Master and the other is the Grand Master. The legendary Mikio Yahara is the Grand Master of the KWF world body.

“In order to get a ninth Dan, there are two things you need. Firstly, you need to be appointed Deputy Grand Master and the other thing is you have to pass the examination that then incorporates the rank of ninth Dan.

“In other organisations, ninth Dan is merely an award, but in our organisation we do not accept awards. We have to go on the mat and present a physical demonstration of our prowess.”

So, Malcolm went before a Saiko Shihan (supreme master) panel, made up of the seventh and eighth Dans of the organisation. This took place at the end of September in Japan. “In order to be considered for a ninth Dan, you obviously first have to be an eighth Dan, you have to be an A-class examiner, an A-class referee and an A-class instructor.

“You also have to have held your eighth Dan for several years – I have held mine for 17,” said Malcolm.

Every two years the KWF have a world conference where the international gradings are held. “For the first time ever, a ninth Dan grading was held. I was also the first-ever Westerner to be graded ninth Dan by a legitimate Japan-based mainline Shotokan organisation,” he added.

He is also the organisation’s Deputy Grand Master. Getting this title came about because the Japanese headquarters revamped their regulations and rules, changing the name of Chief Instructor, to Grand Master and Assistant Chief Instructor to Deputy Grand Master.

“They felt that in a prestigious organisation, its leaders should have a title that reflects their status.”

That means the Grand Master would be a 10th Dan but at this stage the Grand Master has still to undergo his examination before he can officially claim that honour.



Malcolm Dorfman at his ninth Dan grading with his son, Shane, in Malta last month

“I cannot imagine that Yahara Sensei, with his legendary status and ability as probably the most exciting karate instructors in the world, failing the examination.”

When Malcolm went through his examination, his son Shane, who has also set records in the sport, assisted him. “Shane has made me very proud,” admits Malcolm of his 42-year-old son.

Malcolm also reflected on his life and how much the sport has done for him. “I have had 58 years of martial arts training of which a bit more than 50 has been in karate.

“I have given my heart to karate. Success comes from hard work, it doesn’t come from magic. And if you’re fortunate to have some talent as well, then you have a pro. If I had my life all over again I would virtually do the same thing, minus some of the mistakes I’ve made along the way.

“I had my ups and downs. There were many obstacles in my karate life, but I fought to overcome them. In principle, I would not change my lifestyle for any other. I wake up every morning and I’m very grateful, for who I am, what I am and what

“I have given my heart to karate. Success comes from hard work, it doesn’t come from magic. And if you’re fortunate to have some talent as well, then you have a pro.”

I’ve remained.”

Malcolm puts that all down to three factors – good genes, training methodically, scientifically, monitoring his training to ensure there was a minimum of abuse on his body and finally, being fortunate never to have been inflicted with any dread disease.

He also looks back and in many ways is sad to see what karate has become. “The modern karate is very sport-orientated. It’s about winning tournaments, winning medals, which is totally opposite of what karate originally was.

“Mikio Yahara is a descendant of the samurai, so he wants to keep alive the total

essence of the real karate. He likes my attitude because I think the same way as him. We are probably the most, what we call ‘budo orientated’ karate organisation in the world.”

That is karate as a true martial art and not as a martial art done as sport. “Things like the Olympics destroy it because then it becomes commercial. There are millions of dollars attached to it. It’s about standing on the rostrum and getting a medal.

“We still have a tournament, but you are only allowed to score one point, and that has to be a killing blow.

“It’s very much like two samurai facing one another. You look for that one opportunity to spot the weakness in your opponent and then you deliver that killing blow – controlled, of course.

“Sport karate becomes like a game of football where you are just trying to score goals.

“It is the art of karate that we are keeping alive in the world. The only difference between the karate of old and what we do, is that today we have a better idea of training methods because of the modern excise regimes.

“But the core remains the same.”

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