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Photo: Ian Ossendwyer

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Anthony Kaplan helps his son
Eli load his trunk for Habonim camp.
See page 13.

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Mass prayer against the SA embassy downgrade

JORDAN MOSHE

This coming weekend has been declared a “Weekend of Prayer” by the South African Friends of Israel to pray for South Africa, Israel and for the South African embassy in Israel.

This is in response to the ANC’s proposal to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel. The South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) is calling on churches around South Africa to pray for Israel in opposition to the proposed downgrade.

This “Weekend of Prayer” will see tens of thousands of members of various churches come together to pray.

“The proposed downgrade will ensure that South Africa loses its connection with the Holy Land and effectively cuts off trade with Israel, the apple of G-d’s eye,” says Gavi Sacks, executive director of SAFI.

“South Africa should not be removed from the blessings just because our politicians want to remove religion from its rightful place in our country.”

SAFI has made available the specific prayer they are asking people to recite in English, Zulu and Xhosa on their website.

Stressing the importance of this event, Sacks adds: “We need to stand together in prayer to prevent this travesty based on lies and false accusations brought against the

only homeland of the Jewish people that have had a presence there for over 4 000 years.”



He quotes a verse from Genesis 12 to reiterate the importance of this prayer weekend: “I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you.”

The prayer can be found on: <http://www.safisa.co.za/media/blog/prayer-state-israel/> Meanwhile numerous local Christian

groups this week voiced their support of Israel and the importance of positive international relations between South Africa and Israel.

Inkosi Bishop Phakama, of the Nazarene Baptist Shembe Church, said: “I regard the modern State of Israel as being a miracle... we wholeheartedly support and identify with Israel and continually pray for its safety and wellbeing...”

“For South Africa to prosper, we firmly believe that it must stand in support of Israel, not against it. We must look to strengthen and extend our country’s ties with the Israeli state.”

He said downgrading the South African embassy in Tel Aviv, would be a “disastrous mistake” and would do nothing to bring about peace in the Middle East.

“No resolution of the current conflict can be achieved, however, without all parties recognising the legitimacy of the Israeli state and the right of the Jewish people to live there...”

“Our duty as South Africans is not to choose the path of boycott and disengagement, but to assist in whatever way we can to make this ideal a reality.”

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:33	19:27	Johannesburg
19:30	20:28	Cape Town
18:30	19:25	Durban
18:47	19:42	Bloemfontein
19:02	19:59	Port Elizabeth
18:50	19:47	East London

Parshat Vayeishev

What on earth was Jacob thinking?

Jacob was not only a father, he was a forefather, a patriarch, a giant. Yet, the verses point out how he openly showed his affection towards Joseph and the problematic consequences thereof:

“And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons for he was the son of his old age, and he made him a striped coat. And the brothers saw that their father loved him more than his brothers and so they rejected him and were unable to speak to him peaceably” (Genesis 37:3).

The Talmud spells out the lesson for us: A person should not make a distinction between one child and his other children, for as a result of the two coins worth of fine wool that Jacob gave to Joseph more than his other sons, Joseph’s brothers became jealous, the matter evolved, and our fathers went down to Egypt (Shabbat 10b).

Sounds like Jacob really messed up. But this is hard to swallow. Our giant patriarch Jacob?! Surely not. But the verses say so. And so does the Talmud. So, what are we supposed to do about that?

The answer is startlingly simple. We are supposed to do what the brothers failed to do: to ask the question of Jacob: “Why did you do this?” If the brothers had asked this question, they would have obtained a most beautiful answer. They would have

heard that Jacob chose to do so, not from a place of smallness, but from one of greatness.

The Talmud’s statement that says “A person should not make a distinction between one child and his other children” only applies when all his children are still in their childhood. But if one of them has matured into an adult, then there is very good reason to single out the adult - for he will become the model for the rest of his siblings to follow. Joseph was that child who had become an adult. And Jacob wanted the rest of his children to be like Joseph. To grow up.

Children see preferential treatment as infuriating; adults see it as an opportunity to inquire about people’s unique talents and responsibilities. Joseph’s brothers rejected Joseph for his differences. Joseph was able to admire them for theirs.

Jacob gave Joseph his special love because he knew that Joseph both deserved it and needed it. He deserved it because he had got his father’s message of embracing adulthood, and he needed it because Jacob commissioned him to teach this message to his brothers, to help them grow up. And that was not going to be easy.

All Joseph’s brothers had to do was to grow up sufficiently to ask: “Why is Dad treating Joseph differently?” and they would have been told: “Because a father wants his children to grow up.”

Eventually the brothers got their father Jacob’s message right. They left the world of childhood and went down to Egypt as fathers themselves.

May we get our forefather’s message right as well.



Rabbi Dr David Nossel

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SH – December 2016



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Trump recognises Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, starts embassy move

AP and TOI STAFF
WASHINGTON

Defying dire, worldwide warnings, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday broke with decades of US and international policy by recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

Despite urgent appeals from Arab and European leaders and the risk of anti-American protests and violence, Trump declared that he was ending an approach that for decades has failed to advance the prospects for peace. He also for the first time personally endorsed the concept of a “two-state solution” for Israel and the Palestinians, provided both sides agree to it.

“I have determined that it is time to officially recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel,” he said in a White House address, calling it “overdue” and in the best interests of the United States. He said recognition

acknowledged the “obvious” that Jerusalem is the seat of Israel’s government despite the disputed status that is one of the key elements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“This is nothing more or less than the recognition of reality,” he said.

Trump also directed that the State Department begin the process of moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as required by US law. Officials said, however, that the move would take years to complete.

Trump maintained that his decision would not compromise the city’s



US President Donald Trump declares Jerusalem capital of Israel on Wednesday

geographic and political borders, which will still be determined by Israel and the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Trump, saying Israel was “profoundly grateful”.

“This is a historic day,” Netanyahu said in a video message. “We’re profoundly grateful for the president for his courageous and just decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to prepare for the opening of the US embassy here.”

Netanyahu said the move reflects Trump’s “commitment to an ancient but enduring truth, to fulfilling his promises and to advancing peace”.

Ahead of Trump’s speech, Arab and Muslim leaders spoke about the potential for violence. In Gaza, hundreds of Palestinian protesters burned American and Israeli flags. They also waved Palestinian flags and banners proclaiming Jerusalem as their “eternal capital”, language that Israelis similarly use for their nation.

Even America’s closest allies in Europe questioned the wisdom of Trump’s radical departure from the past US position, which was studiously neutral over the sovereignty of the city.

Jerusalem includes the holiest ground in Judaism. It’s also home to Islam’s third-holiest shrine and major Christian sites, and any perceived harm to Muslim claims to the city has triggered protests in the past, in the Holy Land and beyond.

America’s consulate in Jerusalem has ordered US personnel and their families to avoid visiting Jerusalem’s Old City or the West Bank, and urged American citizens in general to avoid places with increased police or military presence.

SA reacts to Trump’s declaration

NICOLA MILTZ

The South African Jewish community – much like world Jewry – is bracing itself for a potential backlash in response to US President Donald Trump recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on Wednesday night.

Trump also announced plans to relocate the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move that many believe will inflame tensions in the region, unsettling any peace process.

ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe said it was a “very ill-considered decision which goes against all UN resolutions. We believe that a two-state solution is still a better option and President Trump seems to deny the existence of the people of Palestine.”

However, the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) welcomed the move. SAZF Chairman Ben Swartz said: “We firmly believe that this does not detract in any way from the position that a two-state solution for two peoples (being the Jews and the Palestinians) remains the only viable solution to the conflict in the Holy Land.

“With that in mind, we implore all parties to the conflict to engage in constructive and direct negotiations as soon as possible.”

Wendy Kahn, national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), said on hearing the news: “The SAJBD notes the statement by President Trump and continues to appeal to all stakeholders to persistently encourage Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate towards a peaceful solution to their tragic conflict.

“Our plea to world leaders, including our own government, is to actively engage to assist in the achievement of two states for two peoples,” she said.

“We believe that the South African government has a unique role to play in bringing about peace. Peace-building is not an easy process, and we encourage our government to continue to engage with the Palestinians and Israelis to find a solution.”

Steven Gruz, political analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs, said this was potentially an explosive issue.

“Look what happened a few months ago with tensions around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem when Israel installed checkpoints. It had to backtrack after an international outcry,” he said.

While Israel considers Jerusalem its “eternal capital”, most countries do not,

Continued on page 4 >>

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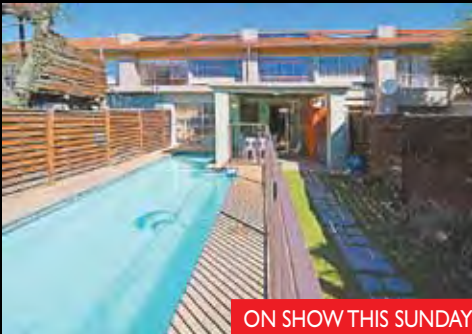
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4 SA JEWISH REPORT

8 December 2017 – 19 January 2018

Israeli chief calls on ‘silent majority’ to help stop downgrade

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Gideon Behar, chief director for Africa in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is calling on “the silent majority of South Africans” which supports Israel, to make their voices heard.

Behar - who was in South Africa this week - specifically to discuss the current Israel-South Africa relationship, the initiative to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel and to improve his understanding of the relationship between the two countries.

He met with the Department of International Relations and Co-operation in this regard, as well as with the Jewish community and Christian religious leaders.

He made it clear that Israel’s vision was to strengthen co-operation with the South African government, with increased trade ties between the two countries.

Far from downgrading the embassy in the Jewish State, it wants to see initiatives to upgrade it, says Behar.

“Let us hope that it will not happen,” he says of the potential downgrade. “I have discovered that there is lots of public sympathy here towards Israel and much interest in strengthening the relationship between the two countries.

“I hope that the friends of Israel in South Africa, who wish to see a stronger relationship and better co-operation between the two sides, will not let it happen.”

And do these friends include members of the South African government? “From what I’ve seen, I do believe so,” he replies.

Acknowledging the strong anti-Israel lobby in South Africa, he repeats that “the silent majority, which is an overwhelming majority, has love and sympathy for Israel and I think that these people, especially religious leaders, should be more expressive in the way that they want to see the relationship developing between the two countries”. Should this happen, he is confident that the politicians will listen.

Behar warns that should the resolution to downgrade the embassy be ratified at the ANC’s elective conference in mid-December, it could affect trade as well as visa requirements - at present South Africans do not require visas to travel to Israel.

“We do not want to face these issues - on the contrary, we want to see initiatives that upgrade the relationship. But of course we are concerned - we are concerned because the Jewish community here is very concerned. Many of the negative ramifications would be for them.”

As to Israel’s ability to prevent the development, Behar says it is “first and foremost” a South African issue. “I think that people in this country such as Christian leaders, the business community et cetera, should understand that this (downgrade) is in contrast to the spirit of modern South Africa which is a spirit of democracy, of dialogue, of co-

operation and not a spirit of disengagement. “We hope that these people will understand that such an initiative is against the interests of South Africa.”

Behar cannot recall such a development having taken place elsewhere. “In fact we are improving our diplomatic status in the world.” As an example, Israel re-established

diplomatic ties last year with Guinea-Conakry, an African Muslim country.

While agreeing that South Africa is a hotbed of sophisticated BDS activity, Behar feels that one has to look beyond this level of engagement and move forward with building the relationship. “There is so much from which both countries can benefit - trade, tourism and the sharing of technology,” he says.

“As an example, here in South Africa you suffer a lot from water shortages, especially in the Western Cape region and Cape Town. Israel has excellent technologies which are free to be

used, that can help alleviate these shortages and prevent problems.

“We are the number one country in the world in terms of treating sewerage water. Do you know that agriculture in Israel survives only because we use treated and purified water from households and industry?” Desalinated seawater is used in towns and cities and it is this that is later treated.

As for rising anti-Semitism in this country, he feels that it can be linked to anti-Israel sentiment. “I think it is related to BDS which sees Jews as supporters of Israel - for them weakening the status of Israel is achieved by weakening and downgrading the position of the Jewish community in South Africa.

“This is how they operate everywhere. I do not know any BDS website or movement in the world that is not anti-Semitic,” he states.

Relations between Israel and African countries are improving, Behar says, mentioning Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s attendance last week at the inauguration of Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta, where he held several meetings with African leaders.

“We see a very strong desire in Africa for co-operation with Israel, for aid from Israel and usually this is concentrated around the major challenges of Africa, which are food production, agriculture and water.

“The problems of Africa are Israel’s problems - we are its most immediate neighbour, the only country in the world to share a territorial border with it. Everything that happens in Africa affects us directly and we want to be part of the solution of its challenges.”

The World Bank is in full agreement and support of this stance, he says of his talks with the institution in Washington last month. “They are very enthusiastic and very thrilled about co-operation with Israel in the fields of water and agriculture.”

Gideon Behar and Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan

South Africa reacts to Trump’s declaration

>> Continued from page 3

and house their embassies in Tel Aviv, according to Gruzd. “Under the 1947 UN partition plan, the city was meant to belong to neither side. When Israel captured East Jerusalem 50 years ago in the Six Day War, it annexed these areas soon after. But the international community did not recognise this, and the Palestinians insist that East Jerusalem should be the capital of their future state,” he said.

“South Africa is likely to vehemently oppose this move. And one wonders what effect it may have on the proposal to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel, set to be debated at the ANC elective conference starting on December 16.”

Meanwhile, CSO Gauteng Director of Operations Jevon Greenblatt said on Wednesday they recognised that the announcement by the US president could lead to a backlash, both locally and globally. “We are already seeing heightened aggression on social media in response to this announcement,” he said.

“We have no specific information of a direct threat to our community. However, as a precaution, we are raising the threat level and are urging our community to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity or concerns to the CSO control room

immediately on 086 18000 18.

“At times like these, where tensions are high, it is imperative to take every security precaution to ensure the safety of your installation and your family members,” he said.

“There is always radical extremism out there and the Jewish community is one of the main targets. Robust security measures are in place, threats are real and relevant and present here and in the rest of the world.”

Social media was abuzz with reactions.

Radio personality and journalist Redi Thlabi tweeted: “World leaders, except Netanyahu said “Don’t do it”...he did it. They LOVE each other, these two.”

South African novelist Tom Eaton tweeted: “Just spitballing here but if I were the president of world’s 2nd-biggest producer of oil and I wanted to ensure high prices for my buddies, I might decide to deliberately stoke tensions in the Middle East. Hypothetically. #Jerusalem”.

Evita Bezuidenhout, the alter ego of comedian Pieter-Dirk Uys, had the last tweet: “After claiming #Jerusalem as the capital of #Israel, what is Donald going to do next? Build the #TRUMP Temple on the Mount?”

Just which way is the ANC electoral conference going to go?

RICHARD POPLAK

I could quote you a line from the Torah. I could offer some wisdom from the Talmud. Instead, I'll cull a nifty little piece of dialogue from the trailer for the latest Star Wars instalment, The Last Jedi. Picture it: an aged Luke Skywalker, sweat beading his brow, lies on the ground and growls, "This is not going to go the way you think."

Was Luke referring to some epic galactic battle including cutesy merchandisable space creatures? Or was he referring to the looming African National Congress National Electoral Conference, which is set to take place here on Earth on December 16, and will drag on for five (maybe more?) interminable, time-defying days.

As per Mr Skywalker, the conference is not going to go the way you think. Regardless of the algorithm or game theory or bone-rolling session applied to the problem, predictions are not just useless, but unnecessary. While the conference is official presided over by Secretary General Gwede Mantashe, it is spiritually overseen by Jacob Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, the single most predictably unpredictable politician in the galaxy.

Here's what we sort of know: 5 240 delegates from nine provinces and three leagues will descend on Gauteng's brutalist Nasrec Centre, a compound so miserably pokey that there could be no more perfect a location for a dying party's last emphysemic gasp.

While their branches have officially nominated prospective candidates for the big six positions (example: Limpopo came out 391 in favour of Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, and 104 in favour of Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma), and while Ramaphosa is the nominal frontrunner at this stage, such information is only tangentially



Presidential hopefuls: Cyril Ramaphosa and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

meaningful.

The furious lobbying, vote-buying and changes-of-heart that occur between the branches logging their preferences and the actual vote for leadership are so considerable that Hillary Clinton could feasibly fulfil her presidential aspirations in Gauteng.

Is it anyone's race? Not quite. But even if one of the main contenders takes the party, this is still not going to the way you think. The State Security Agency is obsessed with Russian butt-kicking tactics, and there are rumours that they are prepared to engineer disruptions – sewerage leaks, electricity blackouts, ninja invasions.

Passions will be inflamed: we're talking about members of a patronage syndicate fighting not only for their livelihoods, but in some cases for their lives. Security will be tight, but it cannot be tight enough.

No organisation should ever be allowed to grow as large or as powerful as the African National Congress, but humans are obsessed with mass and scale. So, the biggest, richest and most venerable liberation/political party in Africa is divided directly down the middle, and some form of compromise must be reached in order to avoid splitting the atom.

One such endeavour could see an expansion of the top six to a top nine, with the losing presidential candidate automatically installed as a second deputy president, while a second deputy general secretary will ostensibly further bridge the factional divide.

This, of course, is an absurd solution to an absurd problem, but it's what the ANC does best: extend its own half-life while the rest of us are irradiated into oblivion.

The momentum is currently with

Ramaphosa's campaign, but like a sprinter breaking for the finish-line too soon, the billionaire buffalo wrangler is far too exposed, something that is advisable to avoid in the ANC.

And there remains the problem of what to do when Zuma goes: how to deal with a man and a syndicate that will do anything – anything – to stay out of jail and in the money?

These are gangster problems. That said, not everyone in the ANC is a criminal. Indeed, the vast majority of the party's supporters comprised average folks trying to make it through their day. Not enough consideration has been given to the ideological difference between the Zuma/Ramaphosa factions, largely because no one trusts the Zuma faction, and Ramaphosa is an ideological vacuum filled with money.

But radical economic transformation and its attendant constitutional tweaks – land for everyone; banks for everyone; mines for everyone – becomes more pressing every day, because the shadow of apartheid lies darkly over this place.

Inside Nasrec's dank halls, while the factional battles rage, a very real face off over the future of the country will take place out of sight, and therefore out of mind. Regardless of who wins, the immediate aftermath of the conference will plunge the country further into crisis. How can South Africa be fixed? Is the Constitution an inviolable document that serves as a lodestar for all of the decisions we make going forward? Or is it a piece of paper that begs to be scribbled over?

The ANC will only be partly responsible for answering these questions, because when the conference wraps up, if it takes place at all, the ANC will be dead. The splits have already begun. For the ANC, regardless of who wins their dreadful, dreaded conference, the future is not going to go the way it thinks.



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South African
Jewish Report

Looking back on 2017

As we slow down to let holiday fever set in, it is difficult not to worry about what the ANC elective conference will bring. How will the outcome impact on us? What happens if Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma gets in and not Cyril Ramaphosa? (Read Richard Poplak’s piece on page 5.)

We have the added concern over whether the ANC decides to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel. And then there is US President Donald Trump’s announcement around recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, which has left us uneasy about how it will impact (see page 3 and Times of Israel).

As expert worriers, we cannot help ourselves. Looking back over 2017 – which seems like a good idea for our last edition of the year – we sure have had our fair share to worry about and quite a bit to celebrate too.

We started the year getting acquainted with a US under celebrity businessman Donald Trump. His impact over Israel is also now hitting home.

Around the world, we have witnessed a clear political swing to the right, which inevitably meant a rise in racism and, therefore, anti-Semitism. This was evident in the violent Charlottesville white supremacist protest and other such uprisings in Europe.

There has also been an upsurge of lone wolf terror attacks across the globe, when one or a handful of independents who have an allegiance to Islamic State – although they may not be card-carrying members – let loose their anger on the world by killing innocents by driving into or opening fire on crowds.

In terms of Israel, there has been rising discontent over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for various so-called dishonest reasons, including – yes, would you believe – claims of corruption. Last Saturday, tens of thousands took part in an anti-corruption demonstration in Tel Aviv. Sound very familiar, doesn’t it? That is democracy, something we can be proud of having both here and in Israel.

An incredibly divisive shift in Israel occurred when Natan Sharansky – Israeli politician, human rights activist, former Russian refusenik and the head of the Jewish Agency – took on the Israeli government in June for reneging on assigning a special section of the Kotel to egalitarian prayer. This has created a deep division between the predominantly Progressive American Jews and the leadership of Israel. I sure hope that – in the name of inclusivity and shalom bayit within the Jewish world – we can sort this out soon.

Then the anti-Israel Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) lobby gained much traction when around 1 500 Palestinian prisoners were on a 40-day hunger strike over prison conditions. A number of top ANC leaders went on a sympathy fast. The strike’s credibility was scuppered when Israelis caught the Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti eating cookies in his prison cell while in the middle of the strike.

On a more positive note, Gal Gadot officially became Israel’s greatest export when she became a box office hit with her role as Wonder Woman. Author David Grossman became the first Israeli to win the international Man Booker Prize for his book, “A Horse Walks into a Bar”.

Gadot’s rise to fame as the female defender of good in the world, was heightened as she took a stand in the #Metoo campaign that put sexual abuse on the international map. Women around the world – and in our own backyard – spoke out about being abused and naming and shaming their abusers. On this newspaper, we have taken a stand against abuse and have committed to doing what we can to stamp it out in our own community.

In South Africa this year, the #Zumamustfall campaign stepped up many notches and our own chief rabbi became a political activist as he spoke out against the corrupt government and leadership of the country at national anti-Zuma rallies.

These rallies followed Zuma firing then Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and his deputy Mcebisi Jonas, which resulted in our credit rating being downgraded by S&P Global and Fitch, to junk status.

As the corruption from the top has been exposed, so the community has cringed every time a handful of Jewish names keep cropping up in the news in connection with it.

At the same time, we could be proud of the Frankel 8 –a group of mostly Jewish people who were sexually abused as children by the late businessman Sidney Frankel – who managed to change the law affecting child victims. They enabled child victims to prosecute their abuser without the previous 20-year limit.

We could also be proud of the many people who stepped up to the plate in helping those who lost everything in the devastating fire in Knysna and Plettenberg Bay in June.

This was also the year of Hugo Greenwood. Earlier this year we lost an amazing young Yeshiva College schoolboy, Hugo Paluch, in a horrible accident. He had been doing incredible work with homeless and poverty-stricken people. After he died, his school, family and friends took up the cudgels of what he was doing and turned it into a campaign of help and goodness.

This year, we faced the anti-Semitic tweets of Black First Land First leader Andile Mngxitama, who unrepentant for his revolting reminders of “Jewish soap” and lamps made of Jewish skin. The SA Jewish Board of Deputies has taken the matter to the Equality Court.

In the same year, the Equality Court found Cosatu’s Bongani Masuku guilty of hate speech for anti-Semitic statements he made back in 2009. He was ordered to apologise and still refuses.

We also found out that international rap star Drake is Jewish and has a number of close South African relatives and we discovered that Jacob Zuma’s son Dumisani has a Jewish lovechild.

As our Cape Town community continues to feel the horrendous impact of the drought, Israel continues to offer to help. So far, this hasn’t been taken up.

So much has happened in this year that I unfortunately cannot mention everything.

Suffice to say: we are sure living in interesting times.

I will be taking up the call from Friends of Israel to pray for peace in South Africa and Israel and that the ANC makes the right decisions at the elective conference. Join me.

I wish you all a wonderful, restful, safe and peaceful holiday! Good Shabbos, chag sameach and see you in 2018!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Dateline: Middle East

The Russians trumping the Middle East game of chess



PAULA SLIER

If politics is a game of chess and the board is the Middle East, then Russian president Vladimir Putin has undoubtedly checkmated his opponents – none of whom is as important to him as the United States.

Not since the early 1970s – when Moscow was already a diminishing force – has Russia been as significant a diplomatic player in the region as she is now. And as her power grows, so America’s wanes, particularly against the backdrop of a largely incoherent US foreign policy.

The path to the Kremlin is becoming increasingly well-trodden.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has visited no less than four times in the last 18 months. In October, the Saudi king went knocking – a first for a sitting Saudi monarch; and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is full of gushing accolades for his friend Putin.

What is significant is that these are leaders of countries traditionally allied with Washington, but who are increasingly now hedging their bets with Moscow.

Two years ago, it seemed as if Russia and Turkey – and by extension Nato (The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), of which member state Turkey has the second largest army after the United States – were on the brink of war.

Ankara (Turkey’s capital) shot down a Russian plane, claiming it had crossed into its airspace. Words of fury then passed between the two countries. Fast-forward to today and Turkey is now set to buy Russian S400 air defence systems (much to the chagrin of Nato).

In a remarkable turnaround, Ankara has also sided with Moscow in the Syrian conflict. For years Ankara insisted that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who the Russians support, must go. Now Turkish leader, Erdogan, is seemingly okay if Assad stays (so long as he doesn’t support the Kurds who make up nearly 20 per cent of the Turkish population).

It takes a special kind of diplomatic genius to achieve this and it is all kudos to Putin and his team. They also have to be credited with turning the Syrian conflict on its head.

At the end of September 2015, Assad was clearly losing the war. Enter Moscow and her deadly airstrikes, which forever changed the face of that conflict and ensured the regime’s survival.

At the time, no country mentioned Russia when discussing a resolution, whereas today it is inconceivable that there can be any Syrian peace treaty without the direct involvement of Putin.

Recent talks in the Russian city of Sochi saw the Europeans and Americans sidelined as a Russian-Iranian-Turkey-Syrian alliance took centre stage in hammering out a peace deal.

Moscow emerged from the Syrian crisis with its diplomatic hand strengthened. In many ways it outplayed the Obama administration that had focused on building and arming a coherent Syrian opposition against Assad, but which collapsed numerous times. Moscow similarly ran rings round President Trump’s team.

And what of Saudi Arabia? Russia is an ally of Iran, the Gulf State’s number one nemesis. And yet, the Saudis have signed a three billion dollar arms deal with the Russians and are even co-operating with Moscow in Syria, where here too, they were against Assad and supporting

his opponents. They’ve also seemingly done a complete turnaround. It takes some very sophisticated chess moves to be able to pull this off.

And yet, while Russia seems to be playing all sides in the Middle East – and playing countries off against each other – it’s a very tricky path to follow and ultimately not everyone can, or will, be satisfied.

The Israelis are not thrilled – to say the least – about Iranian encroachments in Syria that the Russians allow; while at the same time the Iranians are not happy when Russia turns a blind eye to Israeli airstrikes against Hezbollah – the latest occurring on Monday night when Israel reportedly attacked a Syrian military site outside Damascus.

And yet, there’s no denying that as America increasingly withdraws from the Middle East, Russia is stepping up to the mark. Her reputation was boosted after the Arab Spring when countries like Egypt felt that Washington had betrayed her by supporting the overthrow of then President Hosni Mubarak, who the United States has previously backed.

By comparison, Moscow has remained truthful to the Assad regime in Syria – even when the global community was against him – and is seen as a reliable and consistent partner by most Middle Eastern countries. Her military forces have shown their ability to mount, and win, a complex



operation. What’s more, Syria provided the perfect “shop-window” for Russia to demonstrate her most modern weapons systems.

And so, the Middle East is changing. But it’s not Moscow’s intention to be the major leader in the region – her post-Soviet states are much more important to her. Instead, by becoming a force to be reckoned with here, she is lining up bargaining chips for elsewhere.

Her isolation after her annexation of Crimea and operations in Ukraine, both of which were heavily criticised by the West, left her vulnerable and strapped for cash. She can now ask for something in Europe by promising something in the Middle East.

But whether this policy is sustainable, though, is questionable. Moscow’s current alliances with Damascus, Ankara, Tehran and others, may fall apart in the future as different long-term goals come to the fore. Russia is under pressure from the Israelis to curb Iran’s influence in Syria and her plans for the future of that country are also unclear. It’s far from obvious whether Russia can win the peace there.

In the ever-changing sands of the Middle East, new alliances are forming and priorities are shifting. Still, for now at least, it seems backing the Russians is a good move.

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

PARTNERSHIP2GETHER

Deepening Israeli Connections



The Jewish Agency's P2G Peoplehood Platform, enriches Jewish continuity and identity with Israel at its heart. South African Jewry is proud to partner with the warm and hospitable community of Beit Shemesh-Match Yehuda.

Some of our flagship projects from 2017...

Journey to Poland 23-30 July 2017

10 South Africans, from Cape Town and Johannesburg joined 10 Israelis from the P2G region, in the second annual Journey to Poland.

The group learned about the history of the Jews of Poland and the horrors of the Holocaust in the Concentration Camps. This journey allows South Africans and Israelis to share this moving experience together. They also experienced being in the Jewish State and the P2G region.

"Being in Poland definitely makes one more aware of how vulnerable we all are. It's about remembering the past and making sure that it never happens again, but also about going forward to make this world a better place".

The Israel Centre – through the Jewish Agency's Partnership2gether Peoplehood Platform, held the first Youth Movement Seminar, to foster co-operation between South African and Israeli youth movements. The Seminar was held in our Partnership Region of Beit Shemesh/Match Yehuda. Eighty-five participants from Habonim Dror and Bnei Akiva in South Africa and Bnei Akiva, Tzofim, Betar, Ezra and Diller in Israel, met for this inaugural Inter-Youth Movement Gap Year Seminar.

Youth Movement Seminar 29-30 October 2017



"Having now completed the seminar, I can proudly say that this has potential to transform the manner in which South African and Israeli youth movements interact with each other, both within their respective communities and across countries".



P2G School Twinning Delegation Johannesburg & Cape Town 10-17 August 2017

27 Vibrant and enthusiastic Israeli educators visited Cape Town and Johannesburg, where they spent the week engaging with their twinning partners in both their own paired schools and the Jewish Communities

The P2G School Twinning Joint

Teachers Seminar

took place in South Africa this year.



Tanach-Tashach Marathon 14-15 September 2017

A group of 4 dynamic South Africans led by Rabbi Ramon Widmont, joined 4 Israeli's from the Partnership region to run a 24 hour relay marathon of 200km in the beautiful scenery, surrounding the area of Match Yehuda.



cyCalive 6-13 August 2017

Grade 11 students from Torah Academy and Moletsane High in Soweto, were joined by 4 boys from the P2G region, to cycle the challenging distance from Johannesburg to Durban, in the spirit of ubuntu. Great connections and many life lessons were learned.



For more information, please contact:

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HILARY JOFFE

Joe Kennedy, father of JFK, famously sold out of the stock market ahead of the great crash of 1929 when he started to get stock tips from his shoeshine boy.

And describing the scene before the crash, the great American financier and philanthropist Bernard Baruch told of how: “Taxi drivers told you what to buy. The shoeshine boy could give you a summary of the day’s financial news as he worked with rag and polish.”

So, when your personal trainer at the gym has started mining and marketing bitcoin, is that a sign that the market has got way ahead of itself?

That was the question one Johannesburg socialite was asking last week as the price of one bitcoin topped \$11 000 for the first time in rollercoaster trading.

Bitcoin is a “cryptocurrency” or virtual currency – a currency which is generated by its users, and is not backed by any central bank. It is one of several cryptocurrencies which have sprung up since 2008, when bitcoin was launched. They include Ethereum, which is bitcoin’s largest competitor and has also seen sharp price increases up and down.

Underlying them all is a technology called Blockchain, which is a giant, global, decentralised transparent database or ledger, which enables the digital transfer of money between two parties without an intermediary such as a bank.

And even if you could ignore bitcoin, says Sasfin’s David Shapiro, you have to take the underlying blockchain technology seriously. “Blockchain technology could change our lives,” he says. “A lot of products will be dominated and dictated by the technology, which could upset so many industries including the financial industry.”

The industry and its regulators are certainly starting to be upset by bitcoin’s wild ride. The currency’s value has increased almost 12-fold from about \$1 000 at the beginning of this year to as high as \$11 800 on Monday, though the price has fluctuated wildly. It’s been so volatile that some large global online trading platforms have imposed controls or higher fees on trading.

The surge has been driven in part by bitcoin becoming much more mainstream: it’s being traded on some of the world’s largest trading platforms and some traditional market players have launched futures contracts that enable investors to bet on bitcoin, even when they don’t own any. Understandably, many investors don’t want to miss out on the ride – and that’s fuelling demand for bitcoin even further.

It is, however, raising concern among regulators who fear the volatility could pose risks to financial stability – not to mention to investors who could lose their capital.

It’s being eyed warily too by authorities who are concerned about crimes such as money laundering or trafficking or hard pornography – the anonymity of cryptocurrencies make them

the perfect payment system for the darker side of the web.

At the same time, however, it provides a safe haven for people around the world who don’t trust their governments, Bloomberg reported recently as the price of bitcoin in Zimbabwe spiked to double the international rate.

“It’s becoming the preferred way for residents of failing economies to transfer money without dealing with banks, protecting their savings from political turmoil and avoiding the local currency when its value declines due to inflation,” wrote Bloomberg reporter Rob Urban.

It has also provided a new way in which innovative tech companies can raise finance: the initial coin offering (ICO), as opposed to the initial public offering, which enables companies to raise capital from investors online using cryptocurrencies, and that has further fuelled the boom. For example, Israeli startup Bancor’s \$153m ICO earlier this year, was one of the top 10 ICO’s globally.

In countries such as South Africa with strong well-regulated banks, robust capital markets and sound financial systems, however, are investors in bitcoin taking the risk that this is just another Ponzi scheme?

Says Shapiro: “It’s being talked up with no fundamental anchor. I have got nothing to value it against – other than that it’s going up.”

In his years of being a stockbroker, he has constantly been amazed at how gullible people are. And Shapiro is hardly alone in warning that this might be another bubble that could easily burst. Some of the world’s leading bankers have done so, with JP Morgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon threatening in September to fire any trader foolish enough to bet on bitcoin and UBS Group CEO Axel Weber saying bitcoin had no intrinsic value because nothing backed it.

But ultimately nothing backs gold either, except the value investors place on it. “The value of any currency is largely a matter of faith,” Allan Gray equity analyst Jacques Plaut wrote in the fund manager’s recent quarterly commentary.

Plaut raises questions, however, about the speculation in bitcoin, which he describes as “electronic monopoly money”, is the making of a bubble, pointing out that the usual ways to value currencies – such as their price history or the quality and track record of the issuing central bank – can’t easily be applied to bitcoin. Bitcoin is currently the topic on which Allan Gray receives the most queries from clients.

Regulations do not allow most of its funds to hold bitcoin, Plaut writes. “But regulations aside, we are always looking for good ways to preserve capital and earn returns for clients. We do not think bitcoin is an instrument which will enable us to do this. Indeed, we see material risk of capital loss.”

None of that should necessarily prevent adventurous investors from taking a punt on bitcoin – but the health warning should be, as always, don’t bet the grocery money.

Louis Washkansky – the man with the miracle heart



Ann and Louis Washkansky at their son Michael's barmitzvah

TALI FEINBERG

It was 50 years ago this week that Dr Christiaan Barnard performed the world’s first successful human heart transplant. But who was his patient? Overshadowed by the surgeon and this milestone in medical history, Louis Washkansky was a South African Jew, whose life ended just 18 days after the transplant, but he left a remarkable legacy.

“It was extremely brave of him to go ahead with the transplant,” says Barry Washkansky, whose father was Louis’ second cousin. Barry grew up hearing about how his famous relative was always optimistic before and after the operation. “It was groundbreaking... there is only ever one first,” says Barry.

“He loved life. He knew he was dying but he still had an incredible sense of humour,” adds Amanda Washkansky, Louis’ daughter-in-law. She was married to his adopted son Michael, who himself has faced challenges throughout his life.

Louis Washkansky died on December 21, 18 days after the transplant. He was buried at Pinelands Cemetery by Rabbi Israel Abrahams the next day. “His headstone is one of the tallest in the cemetery,” recalls Cammerman.

Michael was only a teenager when his dad died. For Ann Washkansky and Michael, it was a very painful loss.

Amanda’s son Dale (Louis’ grandson), says that the transplant wasn’t discussed much as he was growing up, possibly because the loss was still painful for Ann and Michael to mention. “He put his life in Barnard’s hands and had such courage in the face of uncertain odds,” adds Dale.

In this context, Amanda feels that Louis’ role in the medical drama has largely been forgotten. “At the celebrations on Saturday night at Groote Schuur, his name wasn’t mentioned once,” she says.

She thinks that perhaps it is time for him to be remembered in his own right, as a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania (he came to this country from Kovno at the age of nine with his family). He was a sportsman

who loved swimming, soccer and wrestling and was a soldier who served during the Second World War in North Africa and Italy.

He was also a loving husband to Ann (née Sklar) and father to Michael. “Michael had a very good, close bond with his dad,” adds Amanda.

Washkansky’s active lifestyle came to an abrupt end with the first of three heart attacks in December 1960, and he became diabetic. He was admitted to Groote Schuur a number of times, including on September 14, 1967, which was Rosh Hashanah. By then, only one third of his heart was still functioning. He went into a diabetic coma, but regained consciousness.

By late 1967, Washkansky’s condition had deteriorated to the point where he was near death. Barnard determined that he was a good candidate to be the first human to undergo the procedure, and when the idea was proposed to Washkansky, he accepted immediately. As the press wrote at the time, “the courage of Louis Washkansky made medical history”.

Another largely unknown hero in this story is the donor – 25-year-old Denise Darvall. She and her mother Myrtle had been struck by a drunk driver while crossing a busy street on a Saturday afternoon. A doctor, Louis Ehrlich, who had just been to a barmitzvah, was at the scene and confirmed that Denise had suffered a compound skull fracture but she was still alive.

Myrtle died at the scene. Denise was taken to Groote Schuur, where her brain had no sign of electrical activity. A blood transfusion and respirator maintained the beat of her heart.

Doctors approached Denise’s father Edward Darvall and asked for permission to use her heart for a possible transplant, explaining to him that there was a man in the hospital who was desperately ill. Darvall took just four minutes to reach his decision – he told the doctors that if they could not save his daughter, they must try to save this man.

And so, the five-hour transplant operation, carried out by a team of 30 led by Barnard, began at one o’ clock in the morning of December 3. Despite the odds, all went well, and five hours later, Barnard applied an electrical current to the transplanted heart and it began to beat within Washkansky’s body.

“We were the first in the world to know,”

recalls Lily Cammerman, who was a close friend of the family and had stayed at the hospital all night with Ann and Michael. She was with them at their home when they got the call at 06:05 that the heart was beating.

“There couldn’t have been a better person to have the transplant,” she adds, explaining that Louis took the media attention completely in his stride, cracking jokes and staying positive the entire time. Whenever Cammerman visited, the media would beg her to take a photograph, saying they would pay her whatever she wanted.

Washkansky reacted well initially, and he was in good spirits. But he soon began to decline when his doctors made the fatal mistake of believing that Washkansky’s body had rejected his new heart.

They pumped him full of anti-rejection medication – failing to realise that Washkansky had developed an unrelated case of pneumonia, which he then could no longer fight because of the new medication.

Louis Washkansky died on December 21, 18 days after the transplant. He was buried at Pinelands Cemetery by Rabbi Israel Abrahams the next day. “His headstone is one of the tallest in the cemetery,” recalls Cammerman.

“It should be known that the first



Dale and Lorne Washkansky at the Groote Schuur celebrations this week

successful heart transplant patient was Jewish,” she adds. “He was a wonderful and generous man who helped many people. I’m honoured that I knew him.”

“He is a person who we as the Jewish community can be proud of,” adds Amanda Washkansky. “He’s part of our history. If it wasn’t for Louis, things could have turned out very differently. Let’s not forget him.”



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MOIRA SCHNEIDER

The days of Jewish women not being able to remarry because their husbands refuse to give them a get, may well be numbered because a halachically compliant prenuptial contract is in the pipeline.

This will hopefully bring to an end the problem of “agunot” (chained women), whose husbands have refused to give them a Jewish bill of divorce or get and is therefore prevented from remarrying according to Jewish law.

“A man also cannot remarry according to Jewish law until he has given a get, but a lot of the time he doesn’t really care about remarrying if he’s the one who’s angry. A lot of the time they use it as a weapon to get money or the kids and it’s a terrible thing for these women,” says Rabbi Yoel Smith.

“A lot of the time a husband just goes missing – he dresses up as someone else,” he adds.

Rabbi Smith, head of the Cape Beth Din, also serves on the Johannesburg Beth Din. He is in addition spiritual leader of the Sha’arei Chaim Congregation in Johannesburg.

“It’s the same story every time - they’re going at each other, they’re fighting civilly, there are lawyers acting against both sides - basically it’s a nightmare for all of them and the kids are seeing this until the get comes and there’s finality,” he says of the problem.

Things sometimes go the other way when a woman refuses to receive a get, possibly because she wants money from the husband or to prevent him from remarrying.

The prenuptial contract - one entered into before marriage - goes back in Jewish law to the 1600s but fell

Prenuptial contract may solve most painful ‘get’ issues

away by disuse. The agunot story is a new one, only having emerged in the last 30 - 40 years, Rabbi Smith says.

“It never used to be that the man used it as a weapon. They all lived in ‘shtetlach’.” In these close-knit communities, peer pressure rendered enforcement largely unnecessary, he explains.

In some cases, force was employed “but nowadays, because of the environment that we are living in, we can’t. There are rabbis in jail who have tried to use physical force.”

All these factors have resulted in the change in approach. In this regard, South Africa is following a worldwide trend, tailoring the “prenup” to local conditions.

In the 1980s the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) developed such a contract that is endorsed in Israel. In 2016, the RCA, the largest organisation of Orthodox rabbis, adopted a resolution requiring its 1 000 member rabbis to require couples to sign a prenuptial agreement before getting married.

The London Beth Din also makes provision for such an agreement.

The idea is that the “prenup” will be incorporated into the regular antenuptial contract (ANC) and will be enforced accordingly. The finer details have yet to be ironed out and the matter is in the hands of lawyers at this stage to ensure that it meets South African legal standards.

The idea behind it: “Basically, the man has to pay a certain amount every day until he sorts out his Jewish get,” says Rabbi Smith. “I’m not speaking about a personality disorder,” he adds, conceding that there is very little one can do in such a case.

“There are people in jail in Israel who wouldn’t give a get - they would rather rot there, they’re not rational.”

Problems arise when couples who are separated, decide to concentrate on the civil divorce first and thereafter to deal

with the get. The civil process can take a year or two and it is during this time that things get messy, for instance with regard to custody of the children, he says.

Because of the increase in anger levels, a man may then refuse to give a get.

“So, what this ‘prenup’ does is it requires the man, after they have separated, to pay a certain amount (maintenance) every day until he sorts out the get’. So, if this is going on for a year, he could be spending R120 000, just because he’s decided to fight the custody of the kids, or something like that.

“This makes him think: ‘Why am I paying extra - let me sort this out first and then I’ll sort out the other issue.’ It makes the risk of not wanting to give a get a lot less.”

Before marriage, couples don’t entertain the possibility that things could go wrong, he states; besides, they cannot be forced to sign. “It is voluntary, but if it’s encouraged and it’s done a lot, I think it will be a major thing.”

The general idea is that the ANC would be made an order of court and enforcement would be by the civil authorities through the attachment of assets.

An amendment to South African law initiated some 20 years ago by the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, also tackled this situation in that a civil divorce could be withheld by the courts until a religious divorce was finalised. “That’s only if the woman claims it,” states Rabbi Smith.

“If a woman doesn’t claim it - a lot of times that’s the issue - then that is a problem.”



Rabbi Yoel Smith, head of the Cape Beth Din, who also serves on the Johannesburg Beth Din

Abuse is a solvable problem

ROZANNE SACK AND WENDY HENDLER

It’s time to stop bemoaning the prevalence of abuse in our community. What is needed is action and prevention. But the question is... are we, as a community, ready to take action to keep our community safe from abuse?

Last week, we attended the Tahel conference in Jerusalem, a gathering bringing together experts from 15 countries, presenting strategies to deal with sexual abuse and violence against adults and

children. It is clear that Jewish communities, the world over, are struggling against an increasing amount of domestic violence and abuse cases.

The Torah commandment of “Al taamad al dam re’echa (Do not stand idly by your brother’s blood)” opposes apathy, and inaction in the face of another’s suffering.

Sexual assault and violence, cause more than just physical damage - they destroy a person’s trust, sense of dignity, and shatter their self-worth. No one can in good conscience stand by and watch this happen, and as a community we need to adopt a

zero-tolerance approach policy.

Still, there is a sense of apathy that allows sex offenders and child predators to avoid prosecution. Judith Herman, professor of clinical psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, explains in her book Trauma and Recovery: “All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander does nothing.” And indeed, many people say to themselves: “This isn’t my problem, why get involved?”

But how do we understand this unwillingness to act? Anne Munch, one of the key presenters at the conference, pointed to the “Unnamed Conspirator”,

when we tell ourselves that we don’t have all the information, that someone’s private life isn’t our business, or that the victim in some way provokes their situation.

Another common dismissal is the fact that someone else must have already reported the case, so why should get I involved?

Often the perpetrator is someone we know and respect, and we cannot imagine such a person committing such acts. This leads to cognitive dissonance. In order to try and make sense of this shocking information, we come up with explanations for the allegations. These could include thinking such as: “The child misunderstood the action”, “he/she has an overactive imagination” and “the person is just very friendly and affectionate”.

In the case of physical violence against a child by a teacher, the thinking might be: “The teacher knows best how to discipline my child”, “my child’s behaviour must have warranted the teacher’s violent act” or “the teacher is closer to G-d and is mandated to discipline him”.

Yet, we cannot afford to think this way. The truth is, that were our own loved ones in the shoes of the victim, we would certainly act.

If we want our communities to be safe for our families, one of the first steps is for us to realise that this is not just the task of community organisations alone. Each individual is needed to make a difference.

As Debbie Gross, director of Tahel, states: “Every mother, every father, every sister, every brother, must step forward and become an integral part of the necessary battle to prevent and stop violence and abuse in communities.”

The consensus worldwide is that what is needed is for comprehensive policies to be implemented to prevent and deal with cases of abuse when they occur.

Every single shul, school and community organisation, needs to formulate and implement such a policy. These policies need to be living, breathing documents which will change every aspect of the running of the community, bringing it in line with international protocols for the prevention of abuse.

Continued on page 19 >>

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Saving sharks, stung by bluebottles

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

It was meant to be a world record-breaking 100 kilometre swim in a day among five species of shark, but the Great Shark Swim ended up being aborted by a school of bluebottles.

Last weekend four Israeli open water swimmers joined forces with Madswimmer, a South African non-profit that undertakes daring open water swims to benefit children’s charities. It has raised in excess of R5 million in the past seven years.

The idea of this swim-for-a-cause mission was to raise awareness of the depletion in the world’s shark population of which 100 million are killed annually - mostly for the food industry. The aim was to change negative public opinion about this sea creature.

The swimmers also hoped to draw attention to the rapid decline in this country’s great white shark population of which only 350 - 500 remain.

Rising at 02:00, they were transported 20 kilometres out to sea off the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, but the attempt was called off nine hours and 28 kilometres in. “We were all stung one by one by the bluebottle jellyfish,” open water swimmer Oded Rahav recalls.

“They were all over us, so we had to abort the swim.”

What about the fear of going into the predators’ territory with nothing but swimsuits and goggles? “I was a bit frightened because people try to frighten you,” he admits. “But then I’ve

learned so much about sharks from people who swam with them and didn’t just sit on the shore and watch movies,” he says, referring to the 1975 Steven Spielberg thriller, Jaws.

“Therefore I decided to see for myself and take the risk. Sharks are great predators but they have nothing to do with us.”

Rahav said that while out there on the weekend, there were no sharks. “The funny thing is what chased us out was a small jellyfish the size of your hand.”

The 21-member team comprised four Israelis, 16 South Africans and a Spaniard. The Israelis belong to a six-strong Cyprus Israel Swim Team and this was its third swim with Madswimmer South Africa, led by Jean Craven.

“We became very good friends after the Dead Sea Swim in November 2016 when I invited them to take part,” Rahav relates. That swim was undertaken to raise awareness of falling levels of the Dead Sea.

“Ever since, we became this group - we share the same values and passion. We know that swimming is a vehicle through which we can express our deepest concerns at the atrocities done to the seas, the oceans, the flora and the fauna by human beings.

“Since we are brave enough and bold enough to go out there to see all the grace, the power, the beauty, we can come back to land and tell the story: ‘Listen, sharks are fish, we should be humble, we should take care of the ocean because without it and without the sharks we will not survive.’”

Eat your heart out, JK Rowling, Ari Barak has arrived!



SUZANNE BELLING

Watch out JK Rowling! Hot on the heels of your Harry Potter series, Shaul Behr has written a religious sci-fi novel called “Ari Barak and the Free-Will Paradox”. And boy are there interesting similarities...

The book is set in the fictitious Yeshivas Nekudas Habechira (the Yeshiva of the Point of Free Will) near Ramat Beit Shemesh in Israel. The hero is Ari, an American and his chavruta (study partner) is a South African, Howard Segal. Then there is the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Tuvia White, driver Igor, a superhuman mute, and genius technical professor, Avi Naresh.

The setting is not static in time or place. It moves to Gan Eden, the time of slavery in Goshen and wherever the time traveller takes the characters.

We meet up with many biblical characters en route, including Eve, Cain, a squat pharaoh and Yocheved and Miriam.

“I’m a science fiction/fantasy fan. I loved the Harry Potter series, as well as Artemis Fowl, Bartimaeus and other such books,” Behr tells the SA Jewish Report. “One day I turned to my wife and said: ‘I feel really bad about reading this stuff; it’s so escapist and unreal. If it were food, it would be empty calories. But I enjoy it, and there’s just nothing in this genre in the Jewish world! So, she looks at me and says: ‘Nu? Do it!’ So, I took up the challenge and wrote this book.”

Ari Barak brings out Behr’s expertise as an Orthodox rabbi, software professional, running enthusiast and knowledge of Israel, where he has lived since 2002.

The yeshiva in the book is far removed from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but whatever the bochurim do is based on an innate knowledge of Chumash, Gemara, Torah, engineering, Judaism and science.

The writer, known in South Africa as Saul, was born and raised in Johannesburg. He attended King David Linksfield, where he won the National Mathematics Olympiad in 1990.

He obtained a degree in electrical engineering from the University of the Witwatersrand and attended the Yeshivah Gedolah in Johannesburg under Rabbi Azriel Goldfein.

He received his smicha in Israel from Rabbi Daniel Channen earlier this year.

Living with his wife Andy (née Lewus) and five children in Ramat Beit Shemesh, he practises as a software architect, teaches a daily mishna class and is the founder and operator of the popular Johannesburg Jewish Community Forum (JJCF). He runs “the occasional half marathon” and writes “for fun in my spare time, of which I have none”.

The book will attract readers across the board - from young to old, from religious to secular (all the Hebrew and scholarly terms are comprehensively explained) and is humorous, absorbing and in the escapism genre of Alice in Wonderland - with Rabbi White (note the play on words) wearing tzitzit.

The book can be obtained in South Africa by phoning 082-871-4878. It is also available from freebook.shaulbehr.com or Amazon - Paperback: <http://bit.ly/ari-barak-amazon> and Kindle: <http://bit.ly/ari-barak-kindle>.

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The Israeli team that took part in the Great Shark Swim off the Kwazulu-Natal coast last weekend: Luc Chetboun; Doron Amosi; Oded Rahav; and Ben Enosh.

Ababa, Ethiopia, where his father served as an Israeli diplomat. The family returned to Israel when he was four.

The social and environmental activist was named one of the world’s 50 most adventurous open water men in 2017 by the World Open Water Swimming Association.

He has been involved in this pursuit for about 15 years and plans to carry on “forever”. Unbelievably, he says he was not born a swimmer.

“I hurt my leg when I was 35 - I injured my muscle - and the doctor said I must rest. I said: ‘I can’t rest, I must do something,’” he remembers.

“He didn’t know what to tell me so he said: ‘Well, maybe swim.’ That was the first time I swam and I fell in love with water, with the sensation it gives you.”

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CHIEF RABBI DR WARREN GOLDSTEIN

The struggle continues. In the old South Africa it was a struggle against the evils of racism and apartheid and oppression. It was a struggle for freedom and democracy, a struggle for equality and dignity.

In the new South Africa there is a new struggle. It is the struggle against corruption. It is a struggle for transparency and accountability, a struggle for ethics and leadership, a struggle to save state resources from being plundered by a gang of thieves. Corruption is evil because it destroys the

lives of millions of South Africans by taking what is rightfully theirs and placing it in the hands of a few. It destroys the economy, service delivery and the basic ability of government to function effectively.

In many ways the struggle against corruption is facilitated by our having at our disposal all the tools of democracy. We have free speech, freedom of association, an independent judiciary, a vibrant and free media, constitutional structures and a completely free democratic society. Those who trample on the interests of the South African citizenry, will have to face their victims in a general election in 2019.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein at the Anti-Zuma march in Pretoria on April 9

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It's so inspiring to see how our entire society is fighting back against the President and those who seek to steal the country from us all. There is a fight-back in the media, in the courts, on the streets and throughout society.

Because we have the blessing of living in a free country, it means that this struggle will ultimately be won. The road ahead may take twists and turns, but in the end no-one can defeat a free society that stands up for itself. South Africans have a tenacious spirit and will not be bullied. We can chart a way back to a path of blessing and success.

The South African Jewish community must be fully engaged in this struggle. Let us learn from the brave people who stood up during the struggle against apartheid. We need to learn from the past and make our voices heard and be part of the struggle for freedom from corruption.

This means on an individual level that we cannot be part of corruption in any way, shape or form. We can have no part of it whatsoever. Our communal institutions have to be beacons of accountability and transparency, beacons of ethics and decency, led by men and women of the highest integrity, of outstanding reputations.

Those who trample on the interests of the South African citizenry will have to face their victims in a general election in 2019.

One of the crucial values of our Torah is ethical conduct in business, and in all our interactions with other people. In fact, according to the Talmud, one of the very first questions that a person will be asked in the next world before the Heavenly Court is: Did you deal faithfully and honestly in your business and other interactions with people?

We must live as individuals and as a community at the highest levels of ethics and be an example to the country and spread the light of Torah values, of ethics, decency and uprightness in everything that we do.

We must join hands with our fellow South Africans in the struggle against corruption, so that all the good people of this country – who are by far in the majority – can liberate us all from the tyranny of state capture, so that the forces of blessing and prosperity can be unleashed for all decent people in this great country.

In the end the forces of morality and decency will triumph because we live in a free society. Freedom is the blessing which will ensure that goodness and accountability will reign supreme and then the South African dream of a better life for all can finally be realised.

Bev Butkow saying goodbye to Adam Garton and Levi Parsons



Photo: Lilly Harmse

Woohoo, it's off to camp we go!

JORDAN MOSHE

December holidays are not only about being free of the demands of school, but also escaping the clutches of parents, the annoyance of siblings and the confines of home. Just ask the schoolkids going on camp and you'll understand just how liberating this time of year really is.

Channichim of both Habonim and Bnei Akiva, geared up this week for the long-awaited opportunity to pack their trunks and head for their respective campsites, and their excitement was infectious.

In anticipation of their departure next week, Habonim channichim dropped their trunks off in the Oxford Shul parking lot on Tuesday for loading and transport to Hermanus. The pouring rain made the process particularly trying, with people taking shelter beneath two

small canopies. The organisers and campers contended with water, wind and weighty luggage and, it was clear, that not even the wet weather could put a damper on their spirits.

"I can't wait to get away from home. I'm not worried about anything, except maybe the sharks," said Devon Edelstein, 13, who was dropping off his trunk to go on camp for the first time. Sharing his enthusiasm is his 16-year-old sister Montana, who, despite having been twice before, is thrilled to be joining friends who she says feel just like family to her.

Dani Niv (14), Jemma Meintjies (16) and Jesse Bloch (15) recall their first camp and how their initial anxieties about making friends, were quickly allayed, and now they look forward to forging new friendships.

Seventeen-year-old Benji Levine is heading for Habonim camp for the last time as a channich, but he so loves the experience that

he is considering returning as a madrich in 2018. "Both my parents went to Habonim camp, and I think it would be great to give back to the movement as a maddie next year."

Despite the water restrictions imposed in Cape Town and Hermanus, campers say they are willing to do whatever it takes to make the most of their experiences. Some are even willing to "turn and wear their underwear inside out" if the need arose, says Habo Debbie Illouze, as she turns to assist a camper with his baggage.

The same excitement was palpable at OR Tambo International on Wednesday morning among Bnei Akiva channichim, as they prepared to board their flights to George. Sorted into four punctiliously arranged groups, students eagerly awaited their boarding passes while whispering excitedly to their friends about their plans for camp.

A number of tearful farewells were said as children said goodbye to their parents, but faces were dry and bright as the groups moved towards the boarding gates.

Concerning themselves with the well-being

of others, cousins Sarah (10) and Shira (11) Kahanowitz explained how they make an effort to cheer up anyone who seems to be missing home during their short stay as junior Gurim channichim. "It's way too short, but it's a chance to sleep in tents and have fun, so everyone must enjoy it."

Others were a little more anxious, and had some reservations about leaving home. Going on camp for the first time, Noah Levin (13) spoke of how he is not looking forward to long bus rides or walking some distance across the campsite to shower. However, at the mention of the "raucous camp ruach" by his classmates Jesse Feigenbaum, Noah Leibowitz, Jonathan Hazi and Yoni Porter, he appeared to calm down substantially.

In a show of this ruach, Moshe Lurie (11) announced he felt "pumped" just to be at the airport, and was joined by his friends Shalom Josselson and two first-time campers, Yoni Hurwitz and Adir Lurie. "There is a tap that gives us all the juice we want, and the cereal they give us for breakfast is awesome. There are no screaming mothers anywhere. Who could ask for anything else?" asked Lurie.

If the enthusiasm felt and the sentiments expressed are any indication, channichim of both movements are in for experiences they will all remember for years to come.

Netzer was not included in this article because they only leave next week.

After matric, Rage Rage against the dying night...



GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Right now, thousands of matriculants around the country have gathered at the KwaZulu-Natal and Plett Rage festivals to celebrate their freedom. It's a week of partying, music, drinking and enjoying the sun, sand and sea.

This massively popular post-matric music festival phenomenon was founded by two young Jewish guys 18 years ago. It has become increasingly popular over the years. Now a big business, also attracting international visitors, Rage prides itself on its hi-tech organisation, safety and security and massive musical acts and parties.

"It's a celebration and coming of age for many students who have gone through school and are about to enter a new life," says Plett Rage spokesperson Ronen Klugman. This year, Plett Rage is hosting up to 7 000 students, while KZN Rage in Durban, Umhlanga and

Ballito, has between 12 000 and 15 000. Generally, Johannesburg matriculants go to KZN and Cape Town matriculants go to Plett.

"It's become an expected rite of passage for all matrics," says King David High School Linksfield Principal Lorraine Srage. "While some choose not to, the majority of our kids go." Srage says that the school has no official stance on the festival. "We have no jurisdiction over our learners once they finish matric. Having heard a show about Rage on the radio, I think it's evolved and become a safer place than it used to be. It's a big party and maybe that's the way it's supposed to be."

Herzlia High School Principal Marc Falconer, whose own daughter is currently on Rage, agrees. "It does mark a break between school and the rest of their lives and I suppose in some ways it's appropriate, provided it's done responsibly and thoughtfully.

Continued on page 14>>

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Winning the corruption race

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

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Executive Director of Corruption Watch, David Lewis may have his work cut out for him, but he’s neither panicked nor pessimistic. On the contrary, he’s surprisingly reassuring. “We’re well placed in South Africa to deal with corruption,” he says.

While the average citizen may despair at recent news stories including the contents of the Guptaleaks, or shocking testimony linking graft to government ministers during recent parliamentary committee reviews, Lewis’ worry barometer remains steady. He says the situation is nowhere near “desperate”.

“As long as the public doesn’t believe nothing can be done, we are okay,” he says. “Corruption may be widespread in South Africa, but we’re winning the hearts and minds of people. The public refuses to accept it. Our media continue to freely report on corruption and the courts are independent. If you look at Russia, Nigeria or India, you’ll find there are far more hostile environments in which to fight this scourge.” He likens South Africa’s battle against

corruption to a race. “We’ve run 95 of the 100 metres. It’s just that the last five are the most difficult,” says Lewis. “We’re almost there, but we don’t dare slow down now.” Lewis, a former general secretary of the General Workers Union and national organiser of the Transport and General Workers Union, has been at the helm of Corruption Watch since its inception in 2012. An “advocacy organisation more than an investigative agency”, much of Corruption Watch’s work focuses on legislative work, public education, campaigns and raising the public’s awareness of corruption.

Before that, he chaired the Competition Tribunal from 1999 to 2009, which became the subject of his book, Thieves at the Dinner Table. He loves politics, though, he says, he was never a party political person – “I prefer independent NGO work.”

An activist at UCT and Wits where he trained in economics, Lewis’ social conscience was shaped by parents who were “generally liberal people who believed in justice”. “My friends’ parents were of the ‘don’t-get-involved-in-politics’ variety – ‘keep your head down, the fact that you’re Jewish will reverberate badly on the community’, they’d say – but mine were supportive and proud.”

Today, Lewis believes the Jewish community should studiously avoid keeping their heads down. “We should all examine our everyday lives and decide where a contribution can be made. “Jewish business people have a huge and powerful presence. We are a community of professionals. We must represent the good guys. We must not keep our heads low in case businesses will be negatively impacted on. Where people have influence and authority,

they have a duty to stand up and be counted.” The community must call out the conspicuous presence of Jewish names in the Gupta story, he says. “We are all guilty by association.” “We are also all members of a community whether it’s a synagogue or a sports club. We always have an opportunity to take a stand over whether this or that action is appropriate. Each of us can make a difference.” As he said in his Corruption Watch launch speech, “It’s time that we struck back at those who would destroy what so many fought for.” It’s time, he says, to “create a culture of accountability”. “It’s about whether we shoot a red robot or pay a bribe. We need to think about our impact on others in our day to day activities.”

In a recent speech, Lewis said the best way to know whether conduct was unethical, was this: “If you would prefer not to have your conduct reported in the Sunday papers, then it’s best not to engage in it.” Lewis also believes it’s time for citizens to drop the idea that this is a natural part of what happens when a black government takes power. He also says while the government has been “captured by a corrupt bunch”, it’s not monolithic. “We work fruitfully with many departments who are sympathetic to our cause.” One of the factors that might have contributed to a corrupt landscape was, says Lewis, the fact that civil and community organisations that fought the apartheid government were disbanded when that regime was brought down. “We weren’t vigilant enough and civil society was demobilised – but it has revived. The main lesson we’ve learnt is that there’s always a need to watch corruption. You can never imagine you have a government which is safe from the temptation to abuse



David Lewis

power.” But even Lewis is not perfect, he says, “I’m famously impatient. My wife Terry Kurgan and daughter Jessie, hold me to account.” Lewis says he doesn’t see himself as a “do-gooder”. “I love engaging with the public. It’s a big part of our model.” Do-gooder or not, Lewis loves his work. “I’ll carry on doing what I’m doing until they carry me out of here.”

Ways to tackle corruption

- Donate money – see the Corruption Watch website for details.
- Refuse to bribe or take bribes
- Report any attempt to bribe you.
- Know your rights.
- Be squeaky clean in your own dealings.
- Corruption Watch Call Centre No: 0800 023 456

Being a part of Voices Down Under

JORDAN MOSHE

“Every musical journey begins with a dream. And when this dream converges into reality, the results can be breath-taking.”. Such is the story of Voices, a cross-cultural musical performance that showcased some of South Africa’s finest talents in a musical tour across Australia from November 12 to 21. Although nine years have passed since it last took to Australian stages, “Voices – From Africa to Israel and Beyond”, was received with enthusiasm and warmth by the Jewish communities Down Under. Conceived, created and led by former Sydenham chazan and singer Oshy Tugendhaft, Voices presented a diverse array of melodies and songs from across the globe. It offered Australians a unique opportunity to connect with South African musicality and invited South African expats to reconnect with their homeland through the nostalgia only music can provide. Being a chorister with the Waverley Shul choir, I was invited to participate in this unique event as one of 12 Celebration Singers led by choir master Joel Sacher. From the moment we came into contact with the members of the Australian Jewish community, I realised just what this event meant to them. That is, Australian-born and expats alike. The tour afforded the Australian community a chance to be a part of a musical experience of such calibre and professionalism that its like has been known in few other places around the world. We were accompanied by the musical talents of an ensemble comprising local musicians under the consummate musician Bryan Schimmel, and were joined by key soloists and chazonim Ezra Sher and Ivor Joffe. We took audiences through a programme that frequently shifted gears, moving from the sentimental to the stirring, with fluidity and flare. Voices presented a diverse array of melodies and songs from across the globe, from the Carlebach classic “M’Kimi”, to Israeli songs of hope borne out of the conflicts of the 1960s like “Lo Teda Milchama”, and even the Italian operatic “Mi

Mancherai”. The inclusion of boy group Black Yoghurt (Donovan Yards, Itu Tshabane and Sean McGrath) in our performance further enhanced the magic of this musical spectacular. It’s talented artists danced and sang their way into Australian audiences’ hearts with the nostalgia of the African lullaby “Thula Baba”, the energy of the pop hit “Halo”, Queen’s unforgettable “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”, Broadway hits, opera favourites and more. Working under the direction of Schimmel, as well as the creative influences of choreographer and manager of Black Yoghurt, Owen Lonzar, was exhilarating and enormously demanding. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me, in what was invested in us as choristers. This included everything from evening rehearsals, to crash-courses in natural rhythm and basic dance moves (who knew Jewish boys were so capable?) and lessons in wrapping our tongues around Zulu vernacular. In spite of the effects of jet-lag, the frustration of repeated soundchecks and the fact that I found myself lost in Perth with a dead cell-phone (rescued eventually by a local in a bakkie who took me to the doorstep of my destination), this tour was an experience of which few can boast. The local community made such an effort to accommodate us in Perth and Melbourne. They showed us such warmth in hosting us over Shabbat in Sydney. We also got the opportunity to perform unique arrangements and renditions of popular songs that instilled in us a passion that was visible to our audiences. The proceeds raised were directed towards worthwhile causes from across the states of Australia, including the Friendship Circle, Australian Friends of the Hebrew University, the Caulfield Shul and the United Israel Appeal. The multiple benefits of this tour were enjoyed by many. If the enthusiastic reception of Australian audiences was any indication of the show’s success, it won’t be long before the members of the South African community will get the opportunity to enjoy Voices as much as I did.

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Exploring the Judaism of Morocco

HUGH RAICHLIN

Just the mention of the names “Casablanca”, “Marrakesh” and “Fez” and you conjure up images of bustling market places in these ancient cities with Arabs and Berbers in traditional dress, selling their wares.

You think of heavily-laden donkeys being led through the narrow, winding streets of the medina, filled with the aromas of typical Middle-Eastern spices. You think of buckets of black and green olives and brightly coloured fabrics strung across the walls of the marketplace.

Further afield, kasbahs (mud castles built on good vantage points, in varying shapes and sizes made of local sand and stone) blend in perfectly with the red and brown hues of the surrounding desert sands. The contours of the kasbahs are breached by the tall green date-bearing palms.

These are the images that give Morocco the allure that draws millions of tourists each year to its shores from Europe and other parts of the world.

All this and more came to life for 10 days at the end of October into November this year when I, as the scholar in residence for Eddies Kosher Travels (www.koshertravelers.com), toured the country with a group of about 30 Jewish people from South Africa, Israel, Canada and the United States.

We were intent on learning more about Morocco and, in particular, the ancient Jewish heritage of this unique Muslim country that is bound by two different oceans on the north-east corner of the African continent.

The Jewish presence in Morocco dates back over 2 500 years, to the time of the Carthaginian state, centuries before the founding of Islam in the seventh century. When the first Jews arrived in Morocco, they settled among the Berbers and adopted their languages.

After the Roman conquest of Judaea in the sixth century, more Jewish settlers arrived in Morocco and engaged in agriculture, cattle raising and various trades.

The city of Fez was founded in the year 808 of the Common Era, and attracted a diverse population. Among the newcomers were Jews who contributed to the commercial capabilities of the new developed economy.

They settled in the Medina of Fez and formed a stable community which was an integral part of city life. The golden age of the Jewish community of Fez lasted for almost 300 years from the ninth to the 11th centuries.

Fez’s yeshivot attracted brilliant scholars, poets and grammarians. The famous Maimonides lived for about eight years in Fez, dressing as one of the local population in order not to bring attention to his presence in the city.

Our group was privileged to visit his former home, situated in a small alley off the main marketplace in the Medina of Fez. Today his home has become the site of the “Rambam Restaurant” which regrettably is not kosher.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, and from Portugal in 1496, brought a large influx of Jewish refugees into Morocco.

The Ibn Danan family from Spain built their own synagogue in Fez. It is in excellent condition, with beautiful woodwork and Moroccan lamps providing light.

We also visited the grave of the famous Sol Hachuel who, when she was 17, was falsely accused of apostacy (abandonment of religious or political belief) by a Muslim

neighbour (whose advances were rejected by her). He claimed that she had converted back to Judaism after having converted to Islam, a capital crime.

Despite many pleas to her – by the rabbis and others in the community – to rather convert to Islam than be put to death, Hachuel chose to die a martyr’s death rather than forgo her Jewish faith.

To this day, Jews refer to this young heroine as “Sol ha-Tzaddikah” (The righteous Sol), and the Arabs continue to refer to her as “Lalla Suleika” (the holy lady Suleika). Her grave, which is in the cemetery in Fez, remains a place of pilgrimage for both Jews and Muslims alike.



Shabbos Project in Marrakesh. Hugh Raichlin, Rabbi Jackie Kadosh and David Walles

They are in awe of her tremendous courage in remaining true to her faith.

In 1940, the Nazi-controlled Vichy government issued anti-Semitic decrees, excluding Jews from public functions. It will always remain to the credit of the king of Morocco of that time, Sultan Mohammed V, that he refused to apply these racist laws. He is quoted as saying: “We have no Jews in our country, only Moroccans.”

In 1948, approximately 265 000 Jews lived in Morocco. Today there are only approximately 3 000 Jews in the entire country, mostly in Casablanca, but also in Fez, and other cities.

We were extremely privileged to have met with the only Jewish adviser to the present king of Morocco, Mohammed VI. His name is Andre Azoulay. Azoulay advised us that he holds a record in the Guinness Book of Records as being the longest serving adviser to two kings in Morocco – 27 years. He served King Hassan II for 10 years and King Mohammed VI for 17 years.

He told us that he was a proud Jew, and simultaneously, a proud Moroccan. He has made it his life’s mission to show that it is possible to bring Muslim and Jewish culture together. This is shown in an annual music festival which takes place in the ancient city of Essaouira, formerly known as Mogador, where Jews and Muslims create harmony through the universal language of music.

Our group brought the “Shabbos Project” to Marrakesh for the first time in history.

We spent a wonderful Shabbat with Rabbi Jackie Kadosh, and his rebbetzen Frederica, who have led the community for many years. It was truly a unique and unforgettable experience to contemplate that we were in a Muslim

country and were able to experience Shabbat in the city with such acceptance and tolerance of the locals.

In Casablanca, we visited a religious Jewish day school where all the children wear kippot in a beautiful school with modern facilities. There are approximately 130 children in the school.

In Rabat, we visited the ancient synagogue in the mellah (Jewish quarters). Two sisters, Rachael and Sarah who now live in Israel, had returned to visit the synagogue in which they had grown up.

They left Morocco in the early 1960s in the middle of the night, with only a small suitcase each. They were on the 12th voyage of the boat known as the “Egoz” which tragically sank on its 13th voyage ferrying Jews out of Morocco.

Rabbi Chaim ibn Atar (known as the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh) born in Meknes, Morocco, is one of the most famous commentaries on the Chumash. Rabbi Isaac Alfasi Ha-Cohen, (1013-1103) a Talmudist also known by his Hebrew acronym (Rif) who spent the majority of his career in Fez (hence his name “Alfasi” meaning “of Fez” in Arabic).

Rabbi Israel Abuhatzzeira, also known as the “Baba Sali” a miracle maker, has become legendary to Moroccan Jews and made aliya from Morocco in the middle of the 20th century.

My enduring memory of Morocco will always be the experience of walking through the streets of Marrakesh on erev Shabbat, and Shabbat day, dressed in our Sabbath best and donning kippot, feeling warmly welcomed by the local Arab and Berber population with whom we interacted.

It is what I imagine the world will experience in the times of the Messiah!

One day of Christmas for those Santa usually forgets

NICOLA MILTZ

For one day of the year, life is “Christmas” for hundreds of forsaken Soweto shack children who don’t have money for the next loaf of bread.

On this day, the food is plentiful, the smiles are abundant and the merriment is never-ending.

This year’s annual Christmas party arranged by non-profit organisations, Boikanyo – The Dion Herson Foundation and the Angel Network, was a shindig like never before for them.

The Sediba Thuto High Primary School in Soweto, was turned into a mini wonderland as over 1 500 poverty-stricken children – with life stories beyond your vilest imagination – had the time of their lives.

Every child got to take home a Santa Shoebox – a personalised pamper treasure-trove filled to the brim with the kind of stuff that kids’ smiles are made of. From fidget spinners for boys and nail polish for girls, the jam-packed boxes are their very own passport out of the hell that awaits them when they leave.

“To see the face of a child – who has

never had anything brand new given to him in his life – opening his box is something that you will never forget,” said Marilyn Herson who heads up Boikanyo – an organisation which works with impoverished children in informal township communities in Gauteng.

Herson together with social workers from the Soweto Parent and Child Counselling Centre offer help and care to children throughout the year.

For the Christmas party, volunteers connected to the Angel Network produced in excess of 1 200 boxes. According to Angel Network founder, Glynne Wolman, the recipients all experience “dire living conditions”.

Take the Mosoltwa siblings who live in a place that has no name – a filthy squatter camp, in a tiny garage with no windows and a tap around the corner somewhere. Their diabetic mother lies in a septic state awaiting a leg amputation. “There is not one cent to rub together,” said Herson, “The only meal they have is the one given to them at school – their one reason for attending. In December when the schools close, they starve.

“This family gets double and triple of

everything in their Santa boxes and their gratitude is overwhelming,” said Herson.

A 22-year-old woman brought her three siblings, all of whom are orphans from Lesotho. She has been raped multiple times by gangs of boys during the night, and has two tiny children to prove it.

These are just some of the forsaken children of the rainbow nation.

But last week they had their moment in the sun thanks to an army of goodwill suburban angels who worked tirelessly to bring Santa to Soweto. It took hours and months of planning for the event to take shape with countless shoebox makers banding together to create an unforgettable day.

On Thursday, November 30, at 09:00, the gates to the Soweto school opened. At least 100 volunteers, including members of the CSO, and mothers and fathers from several Jewish day schools, gave up their day to make sure everything ran according to plan.

A final count of 1 900 boxes were delivered. Each box is modelled on the Santa Shoebox Project, which asks for a facecloth, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste,



Christmas party at the Sediba Thuto High Primary School

Photo: Kyle Wink

stationery, new clothes and a toy.

Extras like sanitary towels, maths sets, jewellery, tennis balls and earphones, hair combs, body lotion, soap and fluffy toys, are thrown in.

There were giant-size waterslides with foam pits, beauty queens, bracelet making, volley ball, fozz ball, table tennis, hairstylists, magic shows, soccer and other ball games, boxing demonstrations, a DJ and dance competitions.

There were two ice cream trucks, 50 watermelons, 1 200 boerewors rolls, and 60 birthday cakes to list a few things on offer.

Gayle Landau of Boikanyo said: “There are few words to describe the joy that a simple shoebox brings to a child.”

It’s anyone’s guess what happens to the children once the party is over, but one thing is certain they will have a micro bank of positive memories to keep them going for a little while.



THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Hailing Trump, Jerusalem projects US flag onto Old City walls

STUART WINER and AGENCIES

The Jerusalem municipality on Wednesday projected the US and Israeli flags onto the walls of the Old City in a show of appreciation over US President Donald Trump’s expected recognition of the city as the capital of Israel.

From 19:00, the red, white, and blue American banner was projected next to the blue and white of the Israeli flag, celebrating the expected announcement – which did materialise a bit later. The flags were screened on the 16th century walls from Jaffa Gate in the direction of Mount Zion.

Trump made the controversial announcement recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and his plan to move the US Embassy there from Tel Aviv at around 20:00 Israel time, shifting decades of US policy.

The move will address Israel’s long-standing claim to the city as its undivided capital, but leaders around the world have warned it could harm peace efforts and spark violence.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat said earlier on that Trump’s expected announcement “is a historic declaration that sends a clear message to the entire world that the

US stands with the Jewish people, the State of Israel and Jerusalem.

“As a gesture and expression of the courageous friendship between the American people and the people of Israel, we decided to project the American and Israeli flags onto the walls of Jerusalem’s Old City, the ultimate symbol of the strength of the Jewish people’s connection to Jerusalem for over 3 000 years,” Barkat said in the statement.

In addition, the Bridge of Strings that carries the light rail train over the entrance to Jerusalem was illuminated in red, white and blue.

Trump’s announcement, making good on an election campaign promise, marked a major milestone for Israel’s efforts to gain international legitimacy for its claims to Jerusalem. Israel calls Jerusalem its undivided capital, but the international community has refrained from recognising it as such, pending final status negotiations with the Palestinians, who seek the eastern



half of the city as their own seat of power in a future state.

Israel’s government rejects the partition of the city.

Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital could be viewed as America discarding its longstanding neutrality and siding with Israel at a time that his son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, has been trying to midwife a

new peace process into existence. Trump, too, has spoken of his desire for a “deal of the century” that would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians, backed by diplomats and governments around the world, have warned that a US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, could provoke a furious response that would unsettle the region.

LEADERS SOUND ALARM OVER US JERUSALEM RECOGNITION

TOI STAFF AND AGENCIES

Just prior to US President Donald Trump’s Wednesday announcement that the US recognises Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, many world leaders warned that it could lead to an “escalation” of tensions in the region, as well as “turmoil, chaos and clashes”.

Muslim governments in the Middle East were loudest in excoriating the expected move.

Iran’s top leader called it an expression of “despair”, and vowed that the “Palestinian nation will achieve victory” over the “Zionist regime”.

“It is out of despair & debility that they want to declare #AlQuds as capital of the Zionist regime. On issue of #Palestine



their hands are tied & they can’t achieve their goals. Victory belongs to Islamic Ummah. Palestine will be free, Palestinian nation will achieve victory,” Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a tweet.

He added: “Today, the enemies and others have lined up against the Islamic Ummah and the Prophet of Islam’s path: US, global arrogance, Zionist regime, as well as reactionaries and hedonistic figures among the Islamic Ummah.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called a summit of the main pan-Islamic body in Istanbul on December 13 to discuss the expected US move, his spokesman said on Wednesday.

“In the face of developments that arouse sensitivity over the status of Jerusalem, Mr President is calling a leaders’ summit of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) in order to display joint action among Islamic countries,” presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin told reporters in Ankara, giving the date for the meeting as December 13. Turkey currently holds the chairmanship of the OIC.

Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, listens to IRGC commander Mohammad Ali Jafari during a graduation ceremony of officers in Tehran.

AHEAD OF TRUMP’S JERUSALEM SPEECH, FATAH SAYS PROTESTS SHOULD BE PEACEFUL

DOV LIEBER

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah party on Wednesday called for nonviolent protests and diplomatic action at the UN in the face of US President Donald Trump’s announcement recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and plan to move the US Embassy there from Tel Aviv. Any protests expressing Palestinian anger over the measure should be done “in a peaceful and an unarmed, sustainable way, so that would lead to serving the Palestinian national cause in this regard”, Fatah spokesman Nasser al-Kidwa told reporters in Ramallah.

Fatah has yet to organise protests at the national level. In a statement released on Monday, Fatah told its cadres to be prepared for updates following Trump’s speech.

Al-Kidwa also said Palestinian efforts would focus on the international arena. “There should be a complaint filed to the Security Council on the dangerous violations committed by the United States in terms of Security Council resolutions,” he said.

He called for a resolution that would reject the change in the status quo of

the city, demand the US walk back the announcement, and require the US to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions.

The US can veto any Security Council resolutions.

“Any position that would recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, any position that would move an embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, whether immediately or in a while because of logistical consideration – any position of this kind is absolutely unacceptable,” he added, referencing statements by White House officials that Trump might sign a waiver delaying the immediate transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem for logistical and security reasons. The US president did just that on Wednesday evening.

The Palestinians have said that should the US go through with moving the embassy or declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel, then contacts with Washington in the context of the peace process would be terminated.

Abbas is slated to give a televised speech just after Trump speech and to respond to the US president’s statements, the official PA news site Wafa reported.

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AFF AND TOI STAFF
TEHRAN

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday condemned signs that some Muslim countries have been improving their ties with Israel in order to curb his country’s growing influence.

“Some Islamic countries have shamelessly revealed their closeness to the Zionist regime,” Rouhani said in televised speech.

“If some of these countries in the previous years were engaged in negotiations, interaction and co-operation in secret with the enemies of Islam in the region, at least they would deny it in public. Such relations were considered ugly, detestable, sinister and indecent,” he said.

“I have no doubt that the Muslims of the world will not let this sinister plot bear fruit,” Rouhani added.

Iran’s regime leaders routinely call for and threaten Israel’s destruction.

The IDF chief of staff said last month that his country and Saudi

Rouhani pans ties between Muslim states and Israel

Arabia were in “total agreement” that Iran was the greatest threat to the Middle East.

Lieutenant General Gadi Eisenkot added that the Jewish State was “ready to exchange experience with the moderate Arab countries and exchange intelligence information to face Iran.”

The Saudis have not publicly responded to the reports, and analysts say there is still little chance of formal diplomatic recognition between the two countries.

Rouhani also warned Yemenis would make those attacking their country rue their actions as a Saudi-led coalition pounded the rebel-held capital with heavy airstrikes.

“The people of Yemen will make their aggressors regret their actions,” he said.

His comments came a day after the killing of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh by Iran-backed Houthi rebels triggered a renewed Saudi-backed offensive on the Yemeni capital Sana’a.

The commander of Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards, Mohammad Ali Jafari, said Saleh was killed because he had been trying to overthrow the Houthis.

Saleh had recently broken his uneasy three-year-old alliance with the Houthis and said he was open to talks with the Saudis.

“The traitor Saudis are seeking to create insecurity in the region under orders from the United States and working



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani poses during the inauguration of a newly built extension of the port of Chabahar, near the Pakistani border

alongside Israel... We witnessed their attempt to launch a coup against (the Houthis), which was strangled at birth,” Jafari said, according to the Fars news agency.

Saudi Arabia, Iran’s main regional rival, has been leading a coalition against the Houthis in a war that has cost thousands of lives and become the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations.

Tehran denies direct military support for the Houthis, but a recent UN report said a missile fired by the rebels into Saudi Arabia appeared to have been designed and built in Iran.

ISRAEL'S FIRST FEMALE TANK CREWS SET FOR DEPLOYMENT AS CRITICS FIRE FRESH VOLLEY

JUDAH ARI GROSS

The Israeli army's first female combat tank operators have finished their initial training and have moved to deployment along the borders of southern Israel, as part of a pilot programme to assess fuller gender integration in the Armoured Corps.

The development comes amid a renewed backlash against women in combat positions and co-ed military service in general. Dozens of former officers some two weeks ago sent a letter to Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman calling for him to scale back the integration of women into fighting units.

In March, the army announced that it was choosing 15 women from a cohort of mixed-gender combat recruits who drafted that month, to take part in the pilot tank programme.

Two of the candidates washed out in basic training, but the remaining 13 women then moved to the Armoured Corps' Shizafon base in the Negev where they completed training on the Merkava Mark 3 model, which they will operate.

This month, the 13 candidates will take up positions in southern Israel for the final stage of the pilot programme. They will serve in the army's 80th Division, which is responsible for the southern Negev and Arava deserts, and help guard the southern borders, a tank officer said earlier this year.

The female recruits will not be integrated into the Armoured Corps' combat brigades - like the 188th, 7th and 401st Armoured Brigades - but will serve in the newly-formed Border Defence Force, which is meant to secure Israel's borders, but not cross them.

This pilot programme is part of a growing trend of women taking combat positions in the Israel Defence Forces. Over the past five years the number of female combat soldiers has increased fivefold.

Critics of the gender integration often decry it as a dangerous social experiment with potential ramifications on national security, while defenders generally trumpet it as a long-needed corrective measure, one that has already occurred in many Western countries.

Detractors note that some requirements for combat soldiers have been lowered - which they say is a sign that effectiveness is being sacrificed - and that female soldiers suffer stress injuries at a higher rate.

In the letter sent to Lieberman, the approximately 70 reservist officers, including a former brigadier general, called for an end to female combat service “in order to prevent serious and unnecessary damage to the IDF's power, to the female recruits and the female combat soldiers who are endangering their lives to ensure the security of the state”.

Military physiologists have been working to better adapt equipment and training methods for women's bodies in order to prevent injuries for female soldiers.

The army insists that it is allowing more women to serve in combat positions out of practical, not social, considerations, saying it requires all the soldiers that are available to it.

1,8 million Israelis, 842 000 of them children, under poverty line – report

MARISSA NEWMAN

Some 1,8 million Israelis, including 842 300 children, were living in poverty in 2016, according to new figures released by the National Insurance Institute this month.

The poorest region in the country continued to be Jerusalem, where some 55 per cent of children live under the poverty line (down from 58 per cent in 2015), followed by northern and southern Israel.

The annual report underlined improvements in reducing poverty and inequality compared to previous years, though Israel remained in a worrisome position by Western standards, it said.

“Despite the marked improvements in the poverty and inequality rates in 2016, and a drop of a full percentage point in two years in the incidence of poverty among individuals even according to OECD calculations, Israel’s relative position internationally continues to be grave,” it said.

“In the rankings of OECD countries, Israel continues to place at the top of the poverty scale,” it said. “At the same time, in terms of inequality, its position is better.”

Being poor in the State of Israel in 2016,

for an individual, meant taking home a net monthly paycheque of NIS 3 260 (\$920) or less; for a couple, earning less than NIS 5 216 (\$1 480); and for a family of five, less than NIS 10 000 (\$2 800).

The report saw fewer impoverished Arab families compared to the previous year (falling from 53,5 per cent to 49,4 per cent), though the ultra-Orthodox still represented 15 per cent of poor families in the country, three times above their share of the Israeli families in the general population.

The report for the first time in four years obtained accurate figures on poverty among Israel’s Bedouin population, noting that 58 per cent of the population of 17 000 families, and 70 per cent of its children, live under the poverty line.

As unemployment rates shrank from, 3 per cent to 4,8 per cent between 2015 and 2016, poverty among the employed rose slightly, while the rates dropped among the unemployed for the first time in years (from 73 per cent to 70 per cent), according to the report.

Among immigrants, the proportion of impoverished dropped from 17,7 per cent in 2015 to 17 per cent in 2016, continuing a years-long trend, it said. However, measures of the depth and severity

of poverty among those immigrants continued to be high.

The report marked a 3,8 per cent rise in the Israeli standard of living, adjusting the poverty line accordingly.

Israel’s welfare agency attributed overall positive developments to the government raising of the minimum wage and higher child and elderly welfare allowances, and higher employment rates among Israel’s lower socioeconomic classes. Though it touted the rise in minimum wage, the report stressed that

a single mother with one child working fulltime at minimum wage and receiving child allowances, would still be poor, though her condition is much improved as compared to previous years.

Following the report’s release, opposition lawmakers accused the government of failing to reduce the gaps.

“The uncaring coalition dedicates hundreds of hours to corrupt bills for its own survival, while nearly two million people are living in dire poverty,” said Zionist Union MK Shelly Yachimovich.



Living in poverty...

Holiday Guide

Taking time out with a guide

It is that time of year that we close our laptops, switch off our alarms and simply start winding down. It is holiday time! Some of us will find our way down to the coast for a traditional beach treat, while others may head for the hills and mountains. Some of us may be fortunate enough to have a changing currency holiday, exploring some foreign clime in Europe, Asia or America. And then there are those of us who will be making hay right here in Johannesburg. This year, the SA Jewish Report decided to make life a little easier for you over this period and bring you a special holiday

supplement that will give you ideas about what to do on those glorious days that you wake up with no plans. We carefully selected the most popular holiday spots for Jewish people. It wasn't too complicated because it is in our nature – most of us anyway – to spend our relaxation time among those same people with whom we spend the rest of the year. Yes, we travel and holiday in packs. We love bumping into the people on the beach, those who live two doors down from us back home. We love connecting with those in our school lift scheme and having a good jabber about all the stuff

we experience back home. So, you are most likely to find that most Jewish people holiday in Cape Town, Plettenberg Bay, Umhlanga Rocks and Ballito. There are those who choose to head for places off the beaten track, but as South Africa has too many of those for us to actually give you guides for that, those folk are on their own. I guess that is the preference for those choosing that type of holiday. From us at the SA Jewish Report, enjoy this holiday special and have a splendiferous holiday! – Editor

Cape Town in December – the insiders know

TALI FEINBERG

The highlights, the classics, and off the beaten track – we look at just some of the activities you and your family can enjoy in Cape Town during the festive season.

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa

Cape Town's new museum of contemporary art, the Zeitz MOCAA, is the biggest thing to emerge in the Mother City since Table Mountain. It has been described as being on par with the Tate Modern or the Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art, and is Africa's first contemporary art museum.

It is a showcase for the African art collection belonging to businessman Jochen Zeitz, as well as the museum's permanent collection and loaned works. Just the architecture is thrilling to behold, carved within an abandoned grain silo at the V&A Waterfront. The building has a soaring atrium, fantastic views and over 80 galleries over 100 000 square metres distributed over nine levels. There is also an eatery, a museum shop and a rooftop sculpture garden. It's best to make a day of it, whether you want to explore the extensive art collections or just to spend time in the area.. It's an ideal outing for adults and teens.

Outdoor entertainment

It's summer in Cape Town – the perfect excuse to enjoy indoor activities outside. The Galileo Open Air Cinema will be hosting film screenings such as The Jungle Book, The Holiday and Mamma Mia! every Thursday, weather permitting from 18:00- 22:30 at a variety of outdoor venues around Cape Town. Tickets

from www.webtickets.co.za and visit thegalileo.co.za to see a full list of films and venues. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens has a riveting line-up of musicians to entertain you at their outdoor concert venue – think expansive lawns, mountain views, and you can bring along a picnic as Goldfish, Freshlyground, Prime Circle, the Parlotones and others, perform under the stars. Visit Webtickets to buy tickets and www.insideguide.co.za/cape-town/kirstenbosch-summer-concerts/ to see the full line-up.

Ideal for families, teens and older kids.

Beaches off the beaten track

Clifton's famous four shores and Camps Bay's picture-perfect sea and sand, mean that many tourists will be heading for these locations, and you can definitely do the same. But if you're looking for something a little quieter, calmer and where the locals like to go, Cape Town also has plenty to offer.

Queen's Beach wins for convenience, kid-friendliness and lack of wind. Just off the Sea Point Promenade; its rock pools are heaven for children to explore, and while the rest of Cape Town may be blown over by summer's South Easter, you can enjoy a sheltered beach day until sunset.

Beta Beach is possibly Cape Town's best kept secret. Tucked away in Bakoven, this small stretch of sand offers breathtaking views, calm coves and sea for swimming, and wins all round for family-friendliness and being just too cool for the teens. Get there early to grab a parking place and a spot on the sand.

If you're heading to the Southern Peninsula you're probably planning to visit Boulders Beach, which is



At the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art

Photo: Howard Sackstein

great for swimming with penguins in a calm (but cold) turquoise sea. There is a fee to enter, so if you're looking for a similar free experience, head to Seaforth Beach nearby. It is sheltered from the wind and also has penguins and beautiful boulders with calm water for everyone to enjoy a swim.

Queens Beach and Seaforth Beach are best for families and kids of all ages. Beta Beach wins with the teens but is also great for kids and families.

To market, to market

Capetonians love their markets, and there really is something for everyone. You have probably visited the Neighbourgoods Market at the Old Biscuit Mill in Woodstock, and it is still an excellent outing.

Looking further afield, the locals adore the Oranjezicht City Farm Market, which has now expanded to The Lookout Area at the Waterfront. Head there to grab the best local produce; then enjoy artisanal coffee and gourmet healthy treats.

An exciting development is the new Vegan Market, ideal for anyone interested in a more eco-friendly and kind lifestyle. Wide variety of goods on offer, from brownies to burgers. 10:00- 16:00, Khanyisa Waldorf School, Plumstead.

Head to Hout Bay for a truly local experience at the Bay Harbour Market near the harbour, open on weekends. Located in a once-abandoned factory, it has a rustic, energetic vibe and is filled with

food traders, shopping stalls and entertainment both for kids and adults. 31 Harbour Road, Hout Bay. Friday Nite LIVE! 17:00 to 21:00. Weekends: 09:30 am to 16:00.

Winning at the winelands

You're spoilt for choice in visiting the Cape's magnificent Wine Route. Veregelegen Wine Estate on Lourensford Road, Somerset West has beautiful grounds, manicured gardens, a historic homestead and library, award-winning wines and fantastic restaurants. Stables Bistro is a family-friendly restaurant and there is an amazing play area for the little ones a little distance away from the eatery. (021) 847-2100 www.veregelegen.co.za

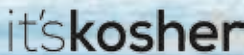
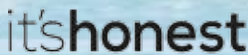
Lourensford Wine Estate, also in Somerset West, is welcoming to families and even allows kids to join in wine tasting with a children's kid's grape juice pairing! The Millhouse Kitchen is a relaxed family restaurant for breakfast, lunch and dinner with a large garden and three natural wood jungle gyms. When booking, request a table near the kids' play area. (021) 847-0030 www.lourensford.co.za

Vergenoegd Wine Estate, a family destination in the Stellenbosch Winelands is well-known for its "Duck Parade", where over 1 000 ducks run free to assist in the control of the snail and pest population in the vineyards. There are also outdoor games, giant chalk boards and cookie decorating, and a market. Wine tasting, picnics and a top-class restaurant means this really is the wine farm for the whole family. Baden Powell Drive, Faure, Stellenbosch, 7131. Reservations: + 27 (0) 21 843 3248 / +27 (0) 63 629 3629 / reservations@vergenoegd.co.za

Best suited to the whole family.

Continued on page 3>>

Thank you to our contributors
for making our Holiday Guide so helpful



Holidaying in KwaZulu-Natal

Durban Central
Family fun: Durban Botanic Gardens Festive Trail of Lights
See the gardens as never before, lit up at night with magical fairy lights. Every evening December 17-24.
www.trailoflights.co.za (031) 309 9240

Moses Mabhida Stadium: Take the SkyCar or walk the 500 steps to the top of the stadium’s iconic arch for 360 degree views of the city. Experience the Guinness-accredited world’s tallest free-fall swing across the field (attached to a harness, of course!) The stadium tour is a must for sports fans.
www.mmstadium.com (031) 582-8242

Natural Science Museum and Art Gallery: Housed at Durban’s historic City Hall, these beautifully curated exhibitions offer hours of fascinating viewing out of the heat of the sun.
www.durban.gov.za; (031) 311-2264

Ride the Rickshaw bus: The quickest way to see the city’s major sites is on the double-decker Rickshaw bus. Departs daily from North Beach Tourism Office.
www.durbanexperience.co.za (031) 322-4209.

Sinbad on Stage: The Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre’s annual pantomime is a riotous romp over the seven seas, starring Durban’s most celebrated performers.
www.computicket.co.za 0861 915 8000

Victoria Street Market: Explore a market with a difference, trading in everything from African beadwork to traditional medicines. Tours available.
www.marketsofwarwick.co.za (031) 309-3880

Xpression on the Beach: Rent bikes to coast the famous Golden Mile (kids’/tandem bikes and pedal karts also available). Water babies can hire surfboards and stand-up paddleboards plus, get lessons.
www.xpressiononthebeach.com/durban (074) 134-1232

For the kids
Mitchell Park: This manicured park boasts a large playground (including paraplegic facilities), a zoo which is home to a variety of small animals and birds. The shaded gardens are perfect for picnics.
http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Services/ParksRecreation/pnature/Pages/mitchell.aspx (031) 303-2275

People’s Park: Innovative play equipment for kids of all ages and plenty of space to ride bikes and go-carts (which you can rent on site). Café with free Wi-Fi for parents.
www.mmstadium.com/attractions/peoples-park (031) 582-8242

Ushaka Marine World: The world-class aquarium is interactive, Wet ‘n Wild water park will keep you cool all day, and Ushaka Kids World Climb boasts Africa’s biggest jungle gym and a kiddies spa.
www.ushakamarineworld.co.za (031) 328-8000

Jewish
Durban United Hebrew Congregation: The brand-new shul in Silverton Road is every bit as impressive as its previous premises. Try out the new Jew-el in Durban’s crown at the daily minyanim and special services for Shabbat and Chanukah. (031) 201-5177

Durban Progressive Jewish Congregation: Egalitarian services are held on Shabbat evenings and mornings at the Durban Jewish Centre, the new home of the DPJC since the closing of Temple David in 2016. (031) 337-9858

Durban Holocaust Centre: For a meaningful and enriching experience, pay a visit to this world-class museum. Access via the gate in Sylvester Ntuli Road as the municipality often closes K E Masinga Road in peak season.
www.dbnholocaust.co.za (031) 368-6833



The Circle Café: Set in the tranquil Garden of Remembrance behind the Durban Holocaust Centre, all proceeds from the café and exquisite boutique gift shop support the centre’s educational work. Milchik menu available for sit-down or takeaway. Best cheesecake in town! Kiddies play area.
www.circlecafe.co.za (031) 368-1766

Kosher bakery and butchery at Pick n Pay Musgrave: Brett the friendly mashgiach will help you source all you need for kosher cooking on the east coast. (PS their chocolate chip challah is absolutely sensational!) (031) 201-4208

Umhlanga Family fun
Barn Swallows: Watch the dazzling natural phenomenon of three million barn swallows coming home to roost for the night. Don’t forget the picnic, binoculars and mozzie cream.
barnswallow.co.za (031) 568-1557

Beautiful parks: Upper Umhlanga offers ideal locations for picnics. Chris Saunders Park on Centenary Boulevard features a fishpond with fountains and thriving birdlife; the playground on the corner Millennium Boulevard and Equinox Road, has modern equipment and a bike track.
Don’t miss: Wonder Market on December 11 and 18 at Chris Saunders Park (www.wondermarket.co.za)

KZN Sharks Board: Famous for their up-close dissections open to the public, the Sharks Board aims to educate the public about

these little-understood marine creatures.
Book a ticket for a fascinating film followed by a dissection, or a boat tour to watch staff maintain shark nets.
www.shark.co.za (031) 826-6000

Jump for Joy: Perfect for rainy days when the beach is out of the question, Jump for Joy offers wall-to-wall trampoline action that will help run off all that holiday energy. Try the Foam Pit and the Dodgeball Court.
www.j4j.co.za 086 158 6745

WavePark, Gateway: The 180m supertube is its claim to fame, but the speed racers and Flow Rider will keep water lovers of all ages busy for hours. The park also offers a splash pad and play zone for toddlers as well as an asphalt track (bikes, skateboards and helmets for hire).
www.wavepark.co.za (031) 584-9400

For the kids
@Play at The Pearls: This indoor fun world in the brand-new Pearls Shopping Centre in Umhlanga is the perfect place to bring your little ones.
www.thepearls.co.za/play 010 900 2191

Funky Monkey: Indoor play area for kids of all sizes in their new venue in the village (first floor of Umhlanga Centre, above Spar). New branch now also open in Ballito.
www.funkymonkey.co.za (031) 566-2000

Jewish
Chabad of the North Coast: Join daily minyans as well as Shabbat and Chanukah services at Chabad in Umhlanga. Giant chanukiah every night of the festival, plus various theme nights including a MasterChef Braai-off on Eighth night! Shabbos hospitality available.
www.chabadnc.com (082) 550-0503
Mikveh: 072 -775-7753

Umhlanga Jewish Centre: Daily minyanim and special Shabbat and Chanukah services are held in this magnificent shul making a name for itself as the most picturesque synagogue on the coast.
www.umhlangajewishcentre.co.za (031) 566-3227
Mikveh: 083-236-6453

Kosher
Pick n Pay in Umhlanga Village and The Crescent operate dedicated kosher sections (Village branch includes frozen Moishe’s, Nussbaum’s, Feigel’s, Orit’s and more).
Umhlanga: (031) 561-6365
Crescent: (031) 566-5667

Spar in Umhlanga Centre stocks a selection of kosher products. (031) 561-2231

The Candy Store sells kosher Chilla Slushies to beat the heat.
9 Zenith Road, Umhlanga Ridge. 083-566-2055

Kosher pop-up restaurant at Umhlanga Jewish Centre Dec 27, Jan 2, Jan 4, from 18:00. 072-770-8564

Ballito Family fun
Crocodile Creek: Get up close and personal with crocs, snakes and more. This hands-on experience is fun AND educational. But if you prefer to sit quietly at the back, that’s fine too.
www.crocodilecreek.co.za (032) 940-4444

Sage Café: Kids can while away the day in a huge secure play area. Grownups can drink gourmet coffee, buy unique gifts, clothes and décor items or indulge in beauty treatments.
www.sagecafe.co.za (032) 525-8059

Sugar Rush Park: Their wide range of adventure and leisure activities will keep the whole family busy all day. Highlights include a jump park, laser tag, and mountain bike tracks.
www.sugarrush.co.za 060 997 9996

The Waterberry: Excellent coffee shop with play area settled on the edge of an indigenous coastal forest. Walk the paths looking for deer and birdlife.
www.thewaterberry.co.za (032) 946-2797

For the kids
Flag Animal Farm: Animals, activities, and playgrounds galore - bring a picnic for a full-day experience.
www.flaganimalfarm.co.za (032) 947-2018

Kosher
Sweets From Heaven at Ballito Junction stocks a special range of local and imported kosher goodies. 082-823-6526

Inland Family fun
Makaranga: Explore 30 acres of indigenous and exotic gardens complete with streams, ponds and a waterfall. Makaranga is also home to the largest private collection of Zimbabwean stone art in southern Africa.
www.makaranga.com (031) 764-6616

Nelson Mandela capture site: Commemorative sculpture, museum and shops mark a pivotal spot in the struggle against apartheid.
www.thecapturesite.co.za; 071-834-4349

PheZulu Safari Park and Zulu Village: A great family outing in the Valley of a Thousand Hills just 35 minutes from Durban. Free entry to restaurants, curio shops, kids’ play area; charged activities include Zulu village and dancing shows, hourly reptile tours and game drives.
www.phezulusafaripark.co.za; (031) 777-1000

For the kids
Lucky Bean: Huge indoor and outdoor play areas plus craft activities for the little ones. Great coffee for the bigger ones.
www.luckybean.co 082-216-3892

Willow Creek Farm: Ever patted an alpaca? Kids of all ages can interact with animals in a fun and educational way at this hidden gem just past Hillcrest.
www.willowcreekfarm.co.za 078-760-5436

Kosher day tours: Family outings across the province arranged through Chabad of the North Coast. 082-550 -0503

Kosher catering in your self-catering: From family get-togethers and braais to intimate dinner parties, these kosher personal chefs take the legwork out of family holidays:
Chefs by the Ocean 072-902-6092 / 082-210-7763
Jacqui Burne 083-955-3758

Useful numbers
SAJBD KZN Council (031) 335-4452
CSO (031) 368-2653



Family friendly in Plettenberg Bay

There’s a world of fun for kids and adults alike In Plett this year. Both outdoors and in, there is so much to keep you occupied and away from that great book you want to read. And then there is also much to keep the littlies busy from morning until bedtime, while you tuck into that book.

You can explore Plett’s beautiful sandy beaches and the lagoon. Take one of the hikes at Robberg Nature Reserve. Learn to surf at a proper surf school. Rent a boat and go up the Keurbooms River. Grab the bait and tackle and head to Lookout for some fishing. Take golf lessons for kids at the Plettenberg Bay Golf Club. Or rent the family SUP (stand up paddle).

Live entertainment is also plentiful in December. The Beacon Isle Resort hosts weekly Goodluck Summer concerts and will this year be featuring Majози, Matthew Mole and other phenomenal names. The new venue, CoCo Valley, will host the “We Love Summer” concert series. And don’t forget this year’s Goldfish in the Park family event.

Plett has a few great shops for kids. The Cycle Shop has an incredible selection of bikes and accessories. Summer Sands has you covered for beach toys. Visit one of the Crush Surf shops for an amazing selection of clothing, shoes, and swimming costumes for boys and girls. And, to reward patient kids for going along with their parents’ shopping adventures, Ice Palazzo is just the thing – voted by children “most likely shop to go to when in Plett”.

Plett Summer means lots of kid-friendly events to mark the festive season. Check the Plett Tourism website for the daily calendar of events over the holidays.

Adventure Land

Your kids won’t want to leave this place, which is open seven days a week and set in a beautiful natural setting on a 24 hectare estate.

Relax on the large lawns or on one of the wooden decks. Enjoy a picnic or have a braai and watch your family and friends enjoy the water activities and playground. For the hungry, there is a take-away kiosk.

Activities at Adventure Land:

- Supertube – One of the most popular rides, with a 75m supertube that thrills you with twists and turns and finally spits you out into a pool of gushing water.
- 2 Lane Racer – Challenge your friends and family to a race and fly over humps and almost lift off as you zoom towards the finish line.
- Kamikazi slide – Not for the faint-hearted and designed for the speed freaks. This slide takes you to new levels of excitement as you feel yourself sliding on air.
- Free Fall slide – For the ultimate rush, drop down a 12m free fall slide.
- Raging Rapid Tube ride – Rush down the raging rapids, fly around the corners and finally slow down as you calmly float into the main pool.
- Mini-Supertube – The mini-supertube caters for the youngster and the more calm at heart.
- Kiddies Slides & Pool – Designed for your little ones. The rides are a kid’s delight.

Centrally situated between Plettenberg Bay and Knysna, with easy access off the N2. <http://www.adventurelandplett.co.za//index.php> Tel: (044) 532-7869; info@adventurelandplett.co.za

Wild Waters

Wild Waters Fun Park is open weekdays from 12:00 -17:00 and weekends from 10:00. Fun for the whole family with water slides, mini golf, kiddies play area, swimming pool, grass for tanning, trampolines and more. info@wildwatersplett.co.za Tel: (044) 533-3815; 8 Green Point Ave, Plettenberg Bay.

Learn to Surf

Learn to Surf Plett, offers surfing and stand-up paddle boarding instruction and lessons to locals and visitors of all ages. Being fanatical surfers themselves means the teachers’ passion for surfing reaches all those they teach and ensures that they put everything in to getting



Surfing at Robberg 5 Beach

you up, riding waves and discovering the joy of harnessing nature’s energy. <http://learntosurfplett.co.za/Bookings>: 082-436-6410.

Plett Winelands

Many Plett wine estates now have tasting facilities and delightful restaurants attached, making a meander through the Plett Winelands a good choice for any sunny summer afternoon. As Plettenberg Bay is a popular MCC (bubbly) region, you may wish to take a comfortable, fascinating and fun tour of the Plett wine region. Other options include a horse trail and carriage ride through the Plett winelands. <http://www.plettwinetours.com/>

Ocean Sailing Charters

Ocean Sailing Charters offer the ultimate in luxury catamaran sailing. Enjoy a thrilling entry into the surf by tender, then board Ocean Rhythm, a 44ft yacht. Explore the beauty of Plettenberg Bay’s coastline and marine life as you sail into the sunset. Take the helm and learn the basics of sailing, put out a line on the trawl. www.oceansailingcharters.co.za

Africanyon Adventures

Kloofing in South Africa is known elsewhere as canyoning or canyoneering. Canyoning is “the sport of travelling down a river situated in a canyon, by a variety of means including scrambling, floating, swimming and abseiling”. It includes swimming through mountain pools, abseiling in and around waterfalls, rock-hopping and, if you opt for the 4hr Canyon Adventure, enjoying the thrill of the rockpool zipline. www.africanyon.com

Canopy Tours

Enjoy the unequalled beauty of the indigenous forest high up on 10 treetop platforms. Gently glide along in a harness, on steel cables 30 metres above the forest floor. Birdlife is abundant (including Knysna Loeries and the elusive Narina Trojan), and your guides will explain the ecology of the lush primeval forest. Safety is paramount, and the system has been built to the highest civil engineering standards. Guides are fully-trained

professionals. www.stormsriver.com

The Elephant Sanctuary

Elephant Sanctuary has African elephants and offers an interactive elephant experience, elephant back riding and overnight accommodation. It offers hands-on educational elephant interactions. www.elephantsanctuary.co.za

List of other child-friendly adventure activities

Puzzle Park – Walk the maze – www.plett-puzzlepark.co.za

WildX Adventures – Paintball – <https://www.wildx.co.za/>

SUP – Learn to stand up paddle – learntosurfplett.co.za/

Tsitsikamma Treetop Canopy Tours – www.canopytour.co.za

Waterworld – Swimming and putt putt golf

Staying kosher in Plettenberg Bay this summer

The Island Diner at the Beacon Isle Hotel is the only kosher restaurant under the supervision of the Cape Town Beth Din along the Garden Route. It offers a sit-down menu from December – February. Contact Joan for any kashrut questions; 073-140-5553. The Island Diner; jorge@islanddiner.co.za; +27 (0)44 533 3545 | +27 (0)83 327 5724.

The Melville’s Corner Spar carries a large selection of kosher and halaal food items during the months of December and January. The Beacon Isle Spar, Pick n Pay and Woolworths also carry a small selection of kosher items throughout the year and include more stock during the months of December and January.

There is a mikveh in Plett. Contact Joan Estrin on +27 (0)44 533 5740. Joan also runs the kosher B&B, Urban Plett.

There is a shul in Plett on Longships Drive. They are also available for kosher catering.

Cape Town in December...

>> Continued from page 1

Kosher cuisine and Chanukah fun

Chabad on Campus is having a Chanukah party for 18-25 year-olds on December 14. Visit ‘Chabad on Campus CT’ on Facebook for more information.

Coffee Time at Astra Centre in the City Bowl offers kosher buffet lunches, an a la carte menu, all day breakfasts, speciality coffees, baked goods and takeaways and a gift shop. Your waitrons are from the sheltered employment centre, so support this worthy cause and enjoy excellent food and a lovely garden. A cupcake decorating workshop for kids at R100 per child. Visit Coffee Time on Facebook or call (021) 461-8414 for opening times and workshop dates.

Goldies Deli is opening a Chalav Yisroel kosher Popup Pizza takeaway at 176 Main Rd Sea Point – one door away from Goldies. Trading from 11:00 to 22:00 and Fridays till 15:00, Saturdays open one hour after sunset.

Goldies – (021) 434-1116 or (021) 439-3008 174 Main Rd Sea Point – trading from 08:30 Sun-Fri. Closing 18:00 Sun-Thurs, 16:30 Fri.

The Press Bar & Grill – (021) 434-7724, 176 Main Rd Sea Point – trading from 10:00 – 02:00 Sun-Thurs, till 16:00 Fridays and open one hour after sunset on Saturdays.

Private parties can be booked at The Press Grill as well as Shabbos dinners by arrangement.

Avron’s Place is open through the season from December 16 to mid-January including, Saturday night. A themed Shabbat dinner at Ohr Somayach on December 29 and traditional Shabbat dinners at Avron’s Place. A full catering facility for people wishing to have Shabbos at home, and a selection of lunchboxes available on order for picnics. Like the ‘Avron’s Place’ Facebook page for more info.

The Jacob Gitlin Library will be having a special Chanukah storytime for kids ages 3-7 on Tuesday, December 19 from 11:00 – 12:00, 88 Hatfield St, Gardens. A morning of fun stories, art, crafts and games. Suggested donation: R10 per child. Info or to



Latin dancing on Sea Point promenade on Sunday evenings

Photo: Howard Sackstein

RSVP: Janine@gitlinlibrary.co.za or tel (021) 462-5088.

They invite children, parents and grandparents to enjoy the new children’s room at the library. Books available for young children and teens.

For bibliophiles, the library will also be selling a selection of second-hand adult books throughout the holidays.

Join educator and tour guide Craig Nudelman for a walking tour of Jewish Cape Town, where you will visit sites relevant to how the Jewish community came to be as we know it today.

Contact Craig on craig.nudelman@gmail.com or visit “Mother City Jewish Tours” on Facebook.

Martine Sandler will be hosting a kids’ holiday club in the City Bowl from December 11-14, 10:00 – 14:00 for girls in grade 2 and 3. Activities include baking, art and dancing. Lindy for more information: holidayclub234@gmail.com

The comedy theatre production “From Koe’siestes to Kneidlach” at the Baxter Theatre from December 19 to January 6 at 20:15 nightly and a matinee on December 23 at 16:30. The story follows what happens when a girl from the Cape Flats gets involved with a Jewish boy from Johannesburg. Tickets range from R100 to R140 and New Year’s Eve R250. Book at Computicket.

And finally – don’t forget to save water while in Cape Town!

Nom, nom, nom!

Your kosher nosh guide.

- Meat Restaurants

Milchik Restaurants

Kosher Shops

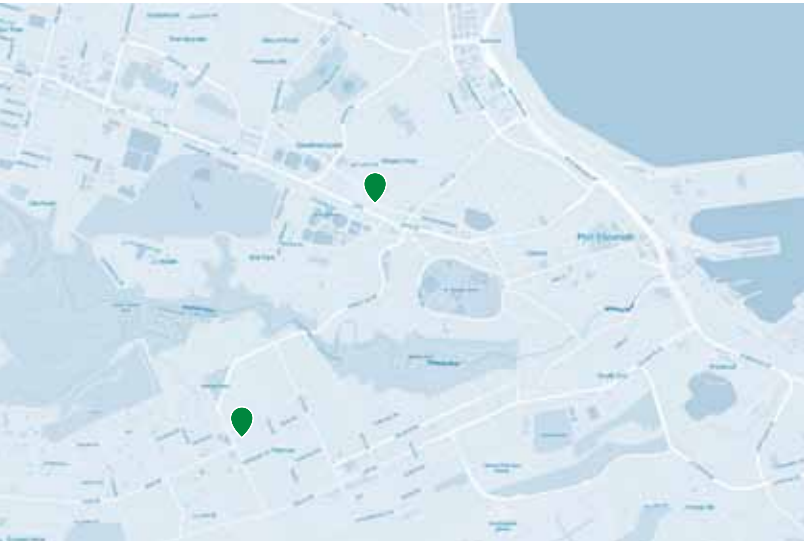
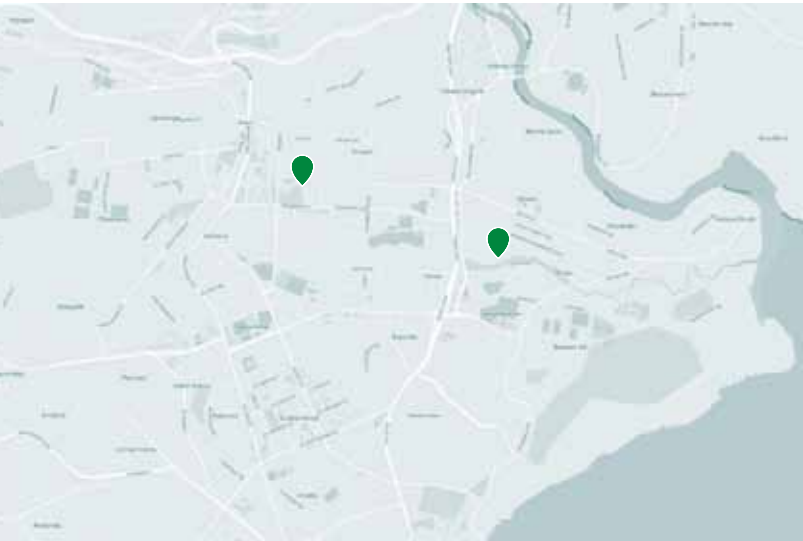
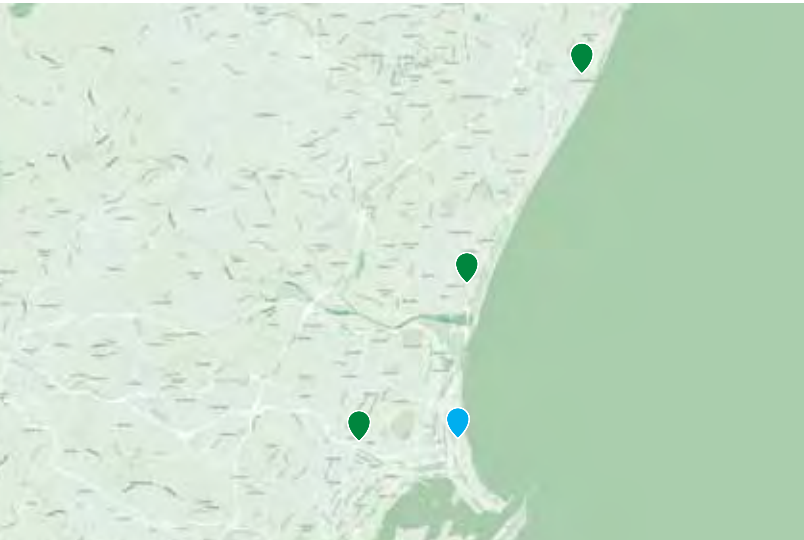
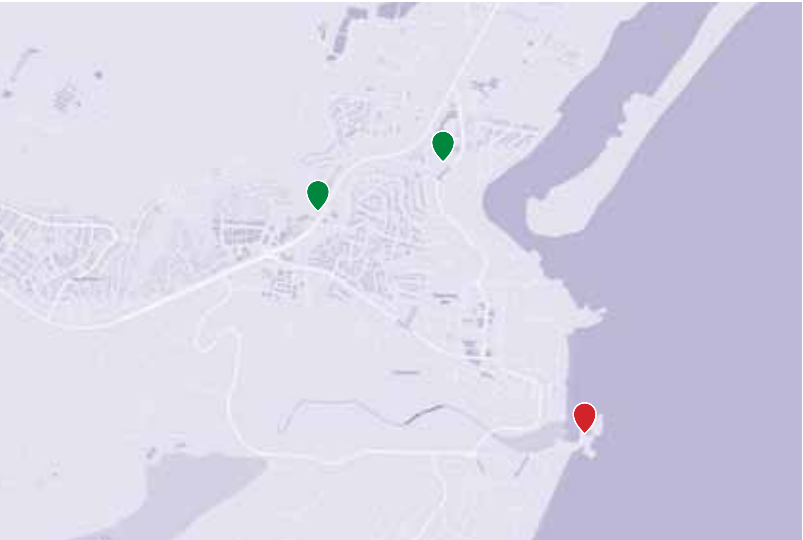
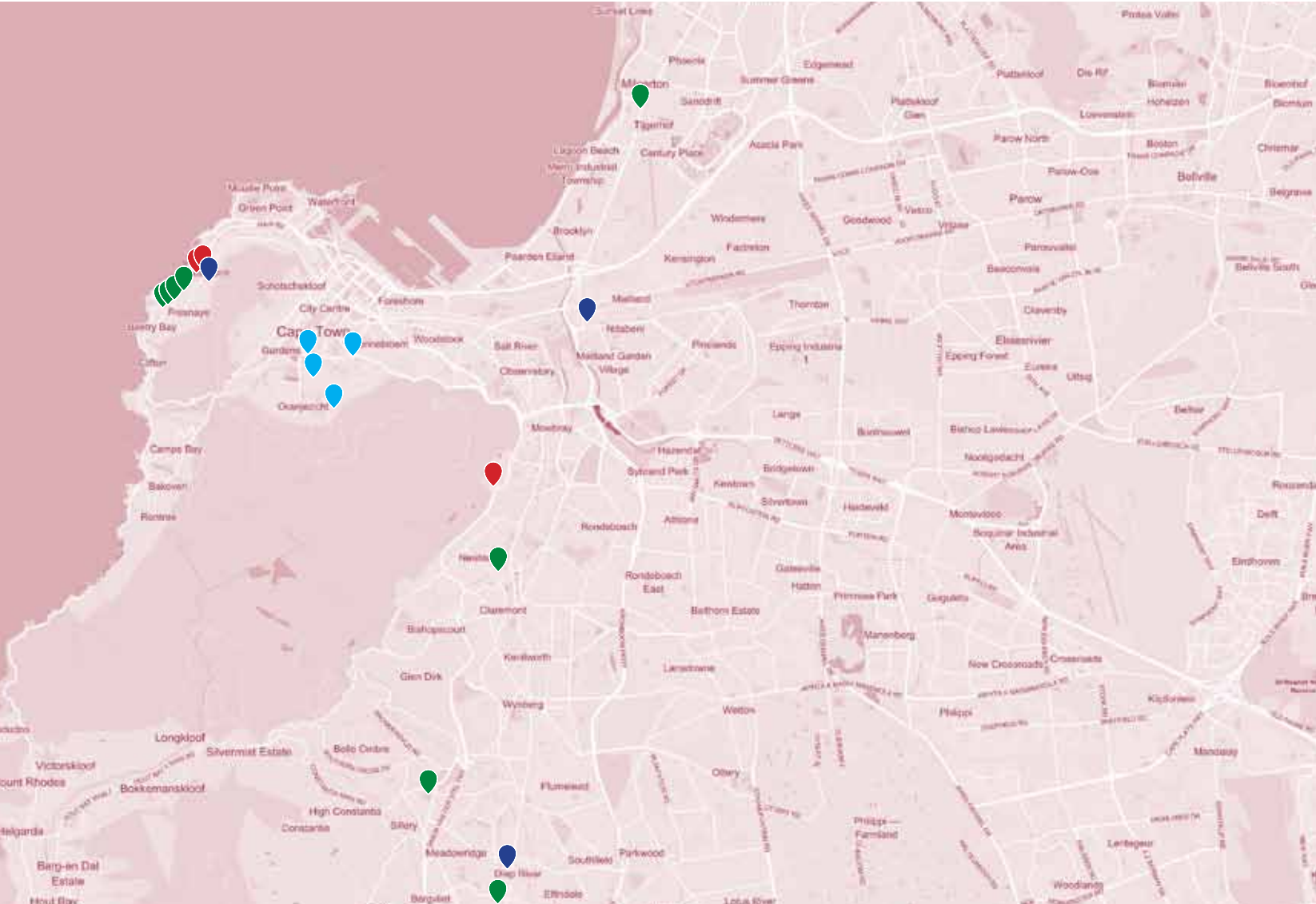
Kosher Catering
- Cape Town

East London

KwaZulu-Natal

PE

Plett



Cape Town

MEAT RESTAURANTS

The Press (Restaurant / Takeaways)

Meat / Parev
176 Main Rd, Sea Point
012 434 7724 | david@thepresscpt.co.za
facebook.com/thepressbarandgrill

TRADING HOURS: 10:00 - 22:30
FRIDAYS: OPEN UNTIL 16:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: OPEN 1 HOUR AFTER SHABBOS

Goldies Deli (Restaurant / Takeaways)

Meat / Parev
174 Main Rd, Sea Point
021 434 1116 | 021 439 3008 | goldiesdeli@gmail.com
goldiesdeli.co.za

SPECIAL REQUESTS: PAT YISRAEL
TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 18:00
FRIDAYS: OPEN UNTIL 16:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Avron's Place (Restaurant / Takeaways / Catering)

Meat / Parev
19 Regent Rd, Sea Point
021 439 7610 | https://www.avronsplace.co.za
avronsplace@mweb.co.za

TRADING HOURS: SUN - THURSDAY 10:30 - 17:15
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 14:30
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Cafe Kaplan (Restaurant / Takeaways)

Meat / Parev (changing to milchik in July 2018)
Rachel Bloch House UCT Upper Campus Rondebosch 7701
021 650 3064 | 021 650 2688 | kaplan-centre@uct.ac.za
kaplancentre.uct.ac.za/kaplan/about/canteen

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 15:00
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 15:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

MILCHIK RESTAURANTS

Cafe Riteve (Restaurant / Takeaways / Catering)

Milk
88 Hatfield St, Cape Town City Centre
riteve@norriecaterers.co.za | 021 465 1594
http://caferiteve.co.za/

SPECIAL REQUESTS: OFFER CHALAV PRODUCTS
TRADING HOURS: 08:30 - 16:30
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 14:30
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Coffee Time (Restaurant / Takeaways / Catering)

Milk
20 Breda Street, Gardens, 8001 Cape Town
coffeetime@jsec.org.za | 021 461 8414
http://www.astrajse.com/coffee-time/

TRADING HOURS: SUN - THURS 07:30 - 15:30
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 14:30
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Cafe B'tayavon @ Highlands House (Restaurant / Takeaways)

Milk
234 Upper Buitenkant Street, Vredehoek
residents@highlandshouse.co.za | 021 461 1100
http://highlandshouse.co.za/projects.aspx

TRADING HOURS: 09:00 - 16:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

KOSHER SHOPS

Checkers (Deli/Fishery/Butchery/Winery/Bakery)

Meat / Parev
Cnr Regent and St Andrews Rds, Sea Point
berkies@iafrica.com | 021 430 4680
https://www.facebook.com/checkerssa

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 21:00
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 16:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Pick n Pay Adelphi Centre

Meat / Bakery / Deli / Fishery
021 434 8987
https://www.pnp.co.za/welcome

SPECIAL REQUEST: PAT YISRAEL
TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 20:00
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 15:00

Sea Point Super Spar

Meat / Bakery / Deli / Fishery
Regent Rd, Sea Point
021 439 0913 | chris1@retail.spar.co.za

SPECIAL REQUEST: PAT YISRAEL
TRADING HOURS: 07:00 - 19:30
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 14:45

Shoprite Sea Point

Deli / Baked goods (pre-packed from Checkers)
365 Main Road
021 430 3360

SPECIAL REQUEST: PAT YISREAL

Sea Harvest

Fish shop (sealed kosher packaging)
84 Regent Rd, Sea Point, Cape Town
072 146 8790 | info@seaharvest.co.za
dlreffat@seaharvest.co.za

TRADING HOURS: 09:00 - 18:00

Checkers Meadowridge

Meat / bakery (pre-ordered & received from Checkers Sea Point)
Park 'n Shop Centre, Cnr Firgrove & Howard Drive, Meadowridge
021 674 5908

SPECIAL REQUESTS: PAT YISRAEL
TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00 (CLOSED ON SUNDAYS)

Pick n Pay Claremont

Main Rd & Clareground Rd, Claremont, Cape Town
021 674 5908

NOTES: BAKERY NO LONGER KOSHER
TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 20:00

Pick n Pay Constantia (Kosher Butchery)

Spaanschemat River Rd & Doordrift Rd, Silverhurst, Constantia
021 794 5031

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 20:00
NOTES: OPEN UNTIL 18:00 ON SUNDAYS

Shoprite Milnerton

Cnr Koeberg and De Grendel Roads, Tygerhof Est, Milnerton
021 528 1680

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00

KOSHER CATERING

B. Delicious (Catering)

Milk
23 Caxton Way, Constantia
021 712 6830 | bsacks@gmail.com

Carolyn's

Catering (Milk / Meat)
47 De Villiers Street, Western Cape
082 903 3541 | carolynscateringsa@gmail.com
https://goo.gl/m9FJqn

Berkies

Catering (Milk / Meat / Fish / Sushi)
The Belmont, Holmfirth Rd, Western Cape
berkies@iafrica.com | 082 854 1865
https://www.facebook.com/BerkiesKosher/

SPECIAL REQUESTS: MEHADRIN

Hadassah Friedman

Catering (Milk / Parev)
27 83 346 1795
https://goo.gl/ickXNH

Cafe Riteve

Catering (Milk / Parev)
88 Hatfield Street, Gardens, Cape Town
021 465 1594
www.caferiteve.co.za

TRADING HOURS: 08:30 - 17:00
FRIDAYS: UNTIL 15:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: CLOSED

Norrie Caterers

Catering / Butchery (Milk / Meat / Parev)
Unit 5d, Product Park, Product Street, Maitland
021 510 5882 | stanley@norriecaterers.co.za
http://www.norriecaterers.co.za/

Merle Rubin

Catering (Milk / Meat / Parev)
021 439 1322 | samrubin@mweb.co.za

East London

KOSHER SHOPS

Pick n Pay

Meat
Devereux Ave, Vincent Park Centre, Vincent, East London
043 726 3258

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00

Nahoon Fisheries

Parev
93 Old Transkei Rd, Nahoon, East London
orders@nahoonfisheries.co.za 043 735 4114

TRADING HOURS: 10:00 - 18:45

KwaZulu-Natal

MILCHIK RESTAURANTS

Circle Cafe

Milk / Parev
44 K E Masinga Rd, Stamford Hill, Durban
info@circlecafe.co.za 031 368 1766
www.circlecafe.co.za
https://www.facebook.com/circlecafedurban/

TRADING HOURS: 08:30 - 16:00
FRIDAYS: CLOSING AT 14:00

KOSHER SHOPS

Pick n Pay Musgrave

Butchery
135 Musgrave Rd, Musgrave Centre, Musgrave, Bere
031 201 4208/9 / 072 770 8564 | hummelbrett50@gmail.com

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00
FRIDAYS: CLOSING 13:00

Pick n Pay Umhlanga

Pre-packed meat
Shop 16, 14 Chartwell Drive, Umhlanga
031 561 6365

TRADING HOURS: 07:00 - 20:00

Pick n Pay Hyper by the Sea

Packaged goods
Uitsig Road, Mangrove Park, Durban North
031 581 5300

TRADING HOURS: 09:00 - 19:00
MOTZEI SHABBOS: SATURDAY & SUNDAY CLOSING AT 17:00

PE

KOSHER SHOPS

Pick n Pay

Butchery / Frozen Meat (Mold nussbaums)
Walmer Park, Main Rd, Walmer
041 367 1116

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00
FRIDAYS: CLOSING 15:00

Buttercup Bakery

Milk
24D Newton Street, Newton Park
041 365 1255

TRADING HOURS: 08:30 - 16:30
FRIDAYS: CLOSING 16:30

Pick n Pay

Frozen Meat / Chicken
Vincent Park Centre, Devereaux Avenue, Port Elizabeth
043 726 3258

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00
FRIDAYS: CLOSING AT 19:00

Plett

MEAT RESTAURANTS

Indigo Bay--Bay Beacon Isle Hotel

Meat / Fish
Beacon Isle Crescent, Plettenberg Bay
044 533 1120 | functions@islanddiner.co.za |
jorge@islanddiner.co.za
http://www.islanddiner.co.za/kosher.html

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 17:30

KOSHER SHOPS

Robberg Fisheries

Fresh fish counter
Theron St, Plettenberg Bay
044 501 2620

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 17:30

Pick n Pay

Frozen chicken (Tender Chick)
Beacon Way, Plettenberg Bay
044 533 4331

TRADING HOURS: 08:00 - 19:00

Every effort has been made to provide correct information. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Kosher team on our Kosher Desk Facebook page or email socialmedia@uos.co.za

Family fun in Johannesburg

School holidays are heaven for kids and not so much fun for the adults who have to work out how to keep them busy. From family-friendly shopping to high octane aerial adventures, we’ve got the rundown on how to spend your holidays in Johannesburg.

Markets

The Rosebank Sunday Market closes the year with the Rosebank Night Market on December 21, featuring live music, gifts, crafts and foods. Every Tuesday until December 19, head to the Bryanston Organic Market for its Moonlight Market, offering festive food, handcrafted gifts and plenty of kids’ crafting activities. Rosebank Sunday Market Rosebank Mall (Level 4), rosebanksundaymarket.co.za Open Sunday 09:00 – 16:00. Bryanston Organic Market, 40 Culross Rd, Bryanston, bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za. Open Thu, Sat and public holidays 09:00 – 15:00. Moonlight Market every Tues from 17:00.

Action and adventure

Burn off the extra energy at Acrobranch’s aerial playgrounds, with courses in Huddle Park and Melrose. They are suitable for kids as young as three years old, as well as more adventurous obstacles that are perfect for teens. Take the kids to Bounce in Fourways for some crazy trampoline fun. Bounce off the walls, practise your flips and generally unleash your inner Spiderman. There are also bouncy dodgeball courts, a slam dunk arena, special areas for younger kids and an expert trampoline area.

Gold Reef City theme park, is open throughout the holidays and you’d be hard-pressed to find a better place to keep surly teenagers amused. Extreme rides like the Anaconda, Jozi Express and Tower of Terror, are for the brave, and for toddlers there’s the option of a gentle train ride. Acrobranch tel. +27 86 999 0369, acrobranch.co.za Bounce tel. +27 11 517 2500, bounceinc.co.za Gold Reef City tel. +27 11 248 6800, goldreefcity.co.za

Ride the City Sightseeing Bus

The perfect time to explore Johannesburg and Soweto with the open-top hop-on hop-off City Sightseeing Bus. Take advantage of the Sunday Sizzler discount; kids under five ride for free; kids under 18 pay R100 and adults also get a discount. There are two routes which travel through the city. City Sightseeing Bus tel. +27 86 173 3287, citysightseeing.co.za/johannesburg

Art and history

Pay a visit to Johannesburg landmark Constitution Hill and join one of the free guided tours of the complex that is included in the entry price. Constitutional Court building is home to an outstanding collection of contemporary South African artworks. There’s also the Johannesburg Art Gallery’s Spellbinders: Myths, Mysteries and Hidden Tales, exhibition. The exhibition has been themed around myths and folk narratives and includes everything from Ming Dynasty roof tiles to a room dedicated to Hidden Tales of



Acrobranch in Melrose

the Johannesburg Art Gallery collection. Constitution Hill tel. +27 11 381 3100, constitutionhill.org.za Johannesburg Art Gallery King George St, Joubert Park, City Centre, tel. +27 11 725 3130, Friendsofjag.org

The great outdoors

Pack a basket and head to parks like the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens in Emmarentia, Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens, or the Hyundai Mushroom Farm Park in Sandton. Alternatively, spend the day exploring the Unesco-protected Cradle of Humankind. The Maropeng visitor’s centre is one of the most child-friendly museums in the provinces. The “Almost Human” exhibition is a must see. Maropeng Visitor’s Centre and Sterkfontein Caves tel. +27 14 577 9000,

maropeng.co.za

All things Jewish Chanukah

Chabad will be holding a candle-lighting every night of Chanukah at KosherWorld in Glenhazel and outside Sandton City (on Rivonia Road). **Gan Yisrael** Running from December 11 - 22, Gan Yisrael Camp caters for children aged 3 to 12 years old, with a separate overnight camp for high school pupils. * For more info about Gan Yisrael visit www.cgijoburg.co.za • *This information is from Johannesburg In Your Pocket City Guide, see www.johannesburg.inyourpocket.com and SAJR staff*

Holiday time means more time for books

STEVEN KRAWITZ

Holidays are almost here and reading moves up the priorities list.

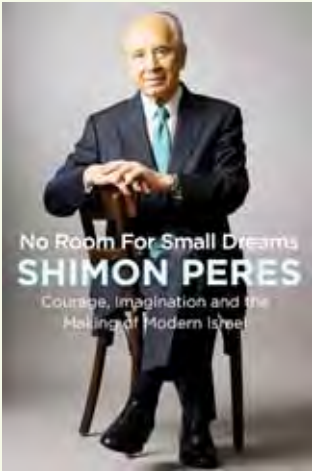
Jewish interest

I cannot recommend Simon Schama’s Story of the Jews, (The Bodley Head) both volume I and II, enough. Schama, acclaimed professor and broadcaster, has distilled almost three millennia of Jewish experience into a vibrant narrative that resurrects long-gone communities and individuals: Volume Two ends in 1900 and Schama will bring his magnum opus to an end in the future with a third volume covering the 20th century.

Shimon Peres’ memoirs completed just weeks before he passed away on September 28, 2016, is a valuable account of the statesman’s life. Written with Peres’ love for Israel, he opens a window on many episodes of Zionist and Israeli history. No Room For Small Dreams (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) shows how Peres was truly a giant of a man.

South African interest

Two political books that should be read together to highlight the good and the bad, are Nelson Mandela’s Dare Not Linger (Macmillan) which was completed by Mandla Langa, and Jacques Pauw’s explosive The President’s Keepers (NB Books).



Dare Not Linger continues where Long Walk to Freedom left off and recounts the achievements of Mandela’s one term as president. Pauw lifts the lid on the destruction of state security, intelligence and crime fighting institutions and the promotion of gangsters into state structures under the Zuma presidency.

South African anthropologist James Suzman draws on his decades of experience living and working with every major southern African Bushman group, to ask what we can learn from these hunter-gatherers today. In Affluence Without Abundance (Bloomsbury) he explores the collision between the modern globalised economy and the oldest hunter-gatherer society.

Four-time cancer survivor Lauren Segal’s memoir, Cancer: A Love Story (MF Books) is a tour de force. From the call one wintery morning in 2014 that shatters her existence, Segal learns how to live with an uninvited life companion, death. Ultimately

Segal views her battle with cancer as an unwanted gift, rather than a curse. Lauren’s story is inspiring and her message is that anyone can overcome an unwanted life situation and develop a greater appreciation of life.

Johannesburg lawyer, Peter Harris, turns his sharp eyes, and

sharper pen to the nexus between politics and business in Bare Ground (Picador Africa). Noses are about to get dirty at the feeding trough when Max Sinclair, a mining mogul, has to sell off 25 per cent of his mining house in an empowerment deal, that is the cost of doing business in South Africa. A whistle-blower, a lawyer with struggle credentials, corporate espionage, politicians and the antics of the newly-rich black one percenters contribute to this gripping narrative which approaches the rot Pauw looks at. But this is from a fictional viewpoint.

Australian writer Tony Park’s 14th African novel, The Cull (Macmillan) spans game parks from Kruger to the Serengeti in Tanzania putting poachers under the spotlight.

Sonja Kurtz, a former mercenary is hired by a business tycoon Julianne Clyde-Smith to head an elite team dedicated to taking down poaching kingpins and saving the continent’s endangered wildlife. Success brings Sonja to the attention of the Scorpions, an underworld criminal syndicate. When Sonja’s boyfriend, Hudson Brand investigates the death of a poacher at the hands of Sonja’s team, she has to ask herself if her mission has gone too far and who she can trust.

Thrillers

You can’t go wrong with the latest Jack Reacher, The Midnight Line (Bantam Press) by Lee Child. New Jersey author Harlan Coben’s Don’t Let Go (Century) is another

thriller that hits the spot. Small town, big secrets, unresolved murders and a cop haunted by the suicides of his teenage brother and his girlfriend create the perfect pot boiler.

For women, look out for Krysten Ritter’s Bonfire (Hutchinson). Ritter, the star of NetFlix’s Jessica Jones, has penned a gripping, tightly wound thriller. Abby Williams left her small hometown in Indiana 10 years ago. Now a successful Chicago lawyer, she has removed all traces of her previous life. When a new case leads her back to her former life, cracks start to appear in Abby’s life.

Teens

For teens in search of the next big book, grab This Mortal Coil (Penguin Books) by Emily Suvada. Humanity is being devastated by an uncontrollable virus. Lachlan Agatta, the world’s leading geneticist, is working on a vaccine that is mankind’s last hope. A thriller with pace, twists and emotional punches to spare.

Literary fiction

Three books beg to be read. Gnomon (William Heinemann) advances Nick Harkaway’s reputation as a visionary author. In a near future, a Britain that has perfected surveillance to the extent that everything is recorded and direct democracy has replaced parliament,

Diana Hunter is a refusenik, living off the grid.

Matthew Sullivan’s debut novel Midnight at Bright Ideas Bookstore (William Heinemann) is fiendishly clever. When a bookshop patron commits suicide, it’s his favourite store clerk who must unravel the puzzle he left behind. Sourdough (Atlantic Books) by Robin Sidan, is a worthy follow-up to Mr Penumbra’s 24

Hour Bookstore. Lois Clary, a San Francisco software engineer, is left a sourdough culture by the owners of a failed bakery. Fusing hi-tech culture with artisanal baking, Lois enters a fantastical underground world.

History

Ken Follett’s A Column of Fire (Macmillan) is a 750 page immersion into 16th century England and Europe.

Biographies

Walter Isaacson’s Leonardo da Vinci: the Biography (Simon & Schuster) is an excellent comprehensive study of one of history’s greatest geniuses. Isaacson, a former editor of Time and biographer of Benjamin Franklin, Einstein and Steve Jobs, brings Leonardo back to life by focusing on how he combined his passions for science, art and technology, to spur his imagination on to new creative heights.



What’s on at movies and theatre in Jozi

PETER FELDMAN

There is loads of fun and entertainment to be had in Johannesburg for those remaining in the city over the holiday period.

On the movie scene, two outstanding productions worth seeing are the animated feature *Coco* and the welcome return of Michael Bond’s cuddly Brazilian bear, *Paddington*. They will appeal to both young and old audiences.

Coco is one of the best animated features Pixar has ever produced and it will sweep you away. The story, about a 12-year-old Mexican boy realising his musical ambitions with help from his ancestors, will tug at the heartstrings. It offers zesty energy, colour, music and humour and the animation is first-rate.

Paddington 2 is a glorious sequel to an original production that sets new standards in the field of animation and live action. The chief protagonist, *Paddington*, voiced by British actor Ben Whishaw, is now happily settled with the Brown family and is a popular member of the local community. With Aunt Lucy’s 100th birthday coming up, *Paddington* has to find a suitable present for the occasion. He visits an antique shop and discovers the perfect gift; an unusual pop-up-book of London, but cannot afford it. While saving up to buy it, the book is stolen and *Paddington* is framed for the theft and goes to prison. The *Who’s Who* of the British acting fraternity is featured here and it’s fun spotting the celebrity.

Adult audiences may also enjoy *Battle of the Sexes*. This is a superbly executed look at a real-life *Wonder Woman*, tennis ace *Billie Jean King*.

Directors *Valerie Faris* and *Jonathan Dayton* have fashioned a film that focuses on the drama that went down both on court and off. This was when Wimbledon triple-winner *Bobby Riggs* challenged ladies tennis world champion *Billie Jean King* to a boys-against-girls exhibition match.

The outcome is widely known, but the back story proves exuberantly entertaining. It comes at a time when people around the world are fighting for gender equality and exploring their sexuality.

Also worth seeing are *Man With the Iron Heart*, which chronicles the rise to power of ruthless Nazi leader, *Reinhard Heydrich*, brilliantly played by *Jason Clarke*, and the plans to assassinate him, and the reworked version of *Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express*, directed by and starring *Kenneth Branagh* and a host of glossy names.

The live theatre scene is also active during this period with a number of year-end musicals.

Pinocchio, that perennial favourite from director *Janice Honeyman*, is once again on at the *Joburg Theatre*. This is *Honeyman’s* 30th pantomime and it pulls out all the stops. It runs until the end of December and features a host of South African talent, including crowd favourite *Tobie Cronje* as *Geppeto* who creates a wooden puppet that magically becomes a little boy.

Two musical productions that should be on your list, too, are *A Handful of Keys* and *# Respect*.

A Handful of Keys has been done several times before (with *Ian von Memerty* and *Bryan Schimmel*) but this one ticks all the right boxes. Director *Von Memerty*, who conceived the idea of two pianists enjoying themselves over the keyboards some 20 years ago, has kept the winning formula intact. The fun, the musicality and the jokes still flow effortlessly – but the shining light here is the harnessing of fresh new talent in *Port Elizabethan*, *James Smith*.

He is tall, thin, with expressive features, impossibly long hair, and a bent for acting and comedy. He is a mere 19 years’ old – and what a tremendous find! *Stalwart Roelof Colyn* is still at the helm and the two performers create a wonderfully energetic platform for a variety of musical styles and shadings.

#Respect at the *Auto & General Theatre* on the

Square in Sandton features *Black Yoghurt*, a dynamic threesome of vocal power who engage their audience with a wide range of upbeat songs made famous by female performers. This home-grown group, comprising the elongated *Donovan Yaards*, the diminutive *Itu Tshabane* and the slick *Sean McGrath*, are highly entertaining.

For something completely different, *Cinderella on Ice* at the *Teatro* at *Montecasino*, performed by the world-famous *Imperial Ice Stars*, is a must. These amazing artists, who have won international acclaim, will amaze with the dexterity on ice and dazzle with the striking costumes and set pieces. This show is a winner for all ages.

The classic holiday favourite, *Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol*, is being staged at the *Studio Theatre*, at *Pieter Toerien’s Montecasino Theatre*. *Elizma Badenhorst’s* production uses animation and original music to provide a sensory delight.



Now it's Kosher to go to Mauritius

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* Anahita Mauritius	17 Jan - 22 Mar 2018 1 May - 27 Sept 2018	One Bedroom Prestige Golf Suite	Half Board	R 36 860 R 28 650
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Sofitel So Mauritius	17 Jan - 22 Mar 2018 1 May - 27 Sept 2018	Lushury Room	Breakfast Daily	R 24 750 R 18 800
The Residence	17 Jan - 22 Mar 2018 1 May - 27 Sept 2018	Colonial Garden View Room	Half Board	R 27 400 R 20 520
Sands Suites Resort & Spa	17 Jan - 22 Mar 2018 1 May - 27 Sept 2018	Superior Suite	Half Board	R 19 090 R 14 760

Please note:
A surcharge may apply on some dates. Long Beach / Anahita has a supplement for stricly Kosher meals. All hotels above have indicated a willingness to assist guests with Kosher requirements. Glat and Mahadrin is not catered for.
Package includes: Return direct flights to Mauritius on Air Mauritius (ex Johannesburg). Return transfers. Meal Plan as specified. * Half Board: Breakfast & Dinner daily. All land and non motorised water sports as per brochure. Daily Entertainment. Complimentary WiFi.
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Air Mauritius Travel Smart Benefits: Maximum of 2 children (2 - 11) fly FREE. Only paying for transfers, taxes, levies and surcharges. Additional 3kg per person of baggage. Discount off the brides airfare when travelling on honeymoon. All rates quoted are per adult sharing and subject to availability at time of making the reservation. Airfares & taxes are subject to change within the specified seasons and are carrier specific, which could impact on the rate quoted. Rates are subject to currency fluctuations which are subject to change without prior notification and exclude any administration fees. Standard Tc's and C's apply.

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REUNION

BUY A PROPERTY IN CYPRUS & GET EU RESIDENCY / 2ND CITIZENSHIP!

There is a growing urgency for many South Africans to secure a tangible Plan B for themselves and their family. By investing in an offshore property, investors can insure themselves against political instability as well as economic risk; plus earn a Euro-based income.

The preferred property investment destination is still by far Europe, as not only does the EU offer many business opportunities, but Europe is the world's largest single market and global trading block. In The Med, Cyprus has become very desirable due to the incredible lifestyle options on offer and being away from the mainland.



Frontline, seafront villas right on the edge of The Med – living the dream.

CYPRUS – an English-speaking, ex-British colony and full member of both the EU and the Common Wealth – offers the option for a property investor to get either permanent residency status; or secure a 2nd passport for him/herself and the family.

GETTING PERMANENT RESIDENCY

Cyprus is THE ONLY country in Europe where permanent residency permits are issued in 4 – 6 weeks of making application; and the permits extend to 3 generations in the same family – including all dependent children up to age 25 as well as both the parents *and* the parents-in-law. Unlike some European countries where you have to buy a property in a special designated area (SDA) or you have to physically live in the country, none of these conditions apply to Cyprus. A tangible benefit is that you CAN rent out the property to earn a Euro-based income either with a long-term tenant, or over the bustling summer season, so your investment ends up working for you.

THE LIFESTYLE

This country offers a lifestyle very similar to South Africa – without any social problems or a refugee crisis. The cost of living in Cyprus is a fraction of living in South Africa, yet the lifestyle is 1st world. Having access to excellent English-speaking universities, world-class hospitals and medical centres gives you comfort that you have made the right investment decision.

The Western side of the island – Paphos - is a firm favourite amongst South Africans as the lay of the land is very similar to the Western Cape, with wide open spaces and an abundance of nature.



There are a number of excellent wine estates and top-notch golf courses; plus hiking and cycling trails in abundance. Paphos is a short 40min drive up to the mountains where it snows for 3 months of the year.

Cyprus is an island of all seasons – and is in demand!

GETTING 2ND CITIZENSHIP

Cyprus' 'Citizenship through Investment' programme is unique in Europe. This is THE ONLY programme where EUROPEAN citizenship is granted in 3 months; and *all* dependent children up to age 28 qualify. Securing a 2nd citizenship gives the investor and his whole family visa-free access to more than 169 countries in the world; and complete freedom of access to the whole of the EU – including the UK.

This means that everyone can live, work, study and travel *anywhere* in Europe without any restrictions.

Now that's a serious Plan B that's worth investing in!



YOUR TRUSTED PARTNERS

Cypriot Realty – a proudly South African company in operation for more than 9 years with offices in Sandton, Cape Town and Cyprus – is your trusted partner to realise your Plan B in Cyprus. We are recognised and respected as Southern Africa's authoritative investment specialists promoting Cyprus as an ideal destination for acquiring EU citizenship or permanent residency, for property investment, for immigration or retirement and starting an EU-based business. We understand investor's needs, and we have an impressive track record showcasing our success.

PROPERTY INSPECTION TRIPS

We arrange personalized property inspection trips for you to come to Cyprus to look at the property options and to experience for yourself the lifestyle on offer. From arranging meetings with taxation and legal specialists, to opening up your offshore bank account – we hold your hand every step of the way.

Contact us for a confidential meeting to discuss how we can help *you* invest safely in Cyprus; and to realise your Plan B.



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Capital punishment

JOSHUA DAVIDOVICH

There are two immediate and telling takeaways one can get just from glancing at Israel’s main newspapers Wednesday morning, hours before US President Donald Trump publicly recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in a move seen by some as a miracle 3 000 years in the making and by others as a historic mistake.

The first is the fact that both the Yedioth Ahronoth and Israel Hayom tabloids have nearly identical front pages, with pictures of Trump at the Western Wall, and a bottom strip mostly taken up with a long horizontal picture of the army’s first cohort of female tank crew members.

Even though the headlines lean in different directions (“Girding for Trump”, in centrist/populist Yedioth, and “Eyes upturned toward Jerusalem”, in right-wing Israel Hayom), they both focus on the possibility of violence in the wake of the announcement and other opposition to the move.

The takeaway is that recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, has mainstream consensus support in Israel across a wide swath of society, even if the rest of the world thinks it’s wrong. And if you push Israel into a corner over it, they will sic their armoured Amazonians at you.

The second is that despite the fact that all three papers were published before an official White House background briefing in which the administration made its plans for Wednesday’s speech known, all three papers have almost all the details, since they were all leaked out ahead of the official leak.

The takeaway from that is the simple idea that the White House is still showing signs of disarray and struggling to control its messaging. And going off the record for no reason often just leaves everyone looking silly.

Just like the fact that everybody knows what’s in the speech before the speech is delivered, it seems that everybody also knows what will happen in reaction to the speech, with most of the coverage in all three papers focusing on not only the historic moment, but also the harsh backlash that’s expected, for both the US and Israel.

“The declaration and the warning”, reads a headline in Yedioth, reporting in its lead on 11th-hour efforts by everyone and their mother to get Trump to change his mind.

“This decision will inflame the situation on the ground. We are going back to square one. This could start an intifada,” the paper quotes a Palestinian security source as saying.

Israel Hayom takes a much more gung-ho view of the situation, using words like “historic” and “dramatic” to describe the announcement, in a good way. And though the paper reports on fears of violence, it plays up the fact that the army is staying mum on any possible girding it’s doing in the face of the threats.

Haaretz’s headline deals with the calls Trump made to Arab leaders, though it confusingly attributes the recognition of the capital to readouts of those calls, when in actuality the statements from the Arab leaders dealt with Trump informing them that he was going to move the embassy and it was US officials who leaked the fact that he was going to recognise Jerusalem as the capital (though one could say tomato, tohmato, since moving the embassy likely involves recognition).

The paper doesn’t have any trouble getting confused with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s account of his call with Trump, because there is none.

“Netanyahu’s bureau was keeping a low profile and ordered ministers not to make public statements on the embassy issue, at the White House’s request,” the paper reports.

While Cabinet ministers are squirming and trying to keep in all their opinions, pundits do the opposite in Wednesday’s editions, letting loose with an avalanche of

words and making predictions like only they know how ahead of the coming announcement.

In Israel Hayom, Chaim Shine disregards all the nattering naysayers who think the move will somehow make peace talks harder, hot-taking his way to the conclusion that it will actually bring peace closer.

“Trump’s firm stance on Jerusalem, given the geopolitical changes taking place in the region, could convince the Palestinians that it is better to talk to Israel for their own good. Attempts to promote peace by applying unfair pressure on Israel have failed. Now is the time to try a different path. Peace is not at hand, but Trump’s decision creates an opening for peace,” he writes.

That opinion is not shared by the pundits in the other two papers, with a general feeling coming through that even if the move is the right one, it’s likely not worth blowing up the peace process over it, while subjecting Israelis to renewed terror and any other punishments that might be in store.

whatever its final details may be.

“But if the price is loss of human lives, destruction of the peace process, a propaganda victory for Tehran and a Middle East radicalisation that could threaten so-called moderate regimes, a responsible Jewish response would be encapsulated in the Yiddish saying ‘moykhel toives’.

Dear President Trump, the message should go, don’t do us any favours,” he adds.

In Yedioth, Alex Fishman writes with the tired resignation of someone who needs another bout of violence like a hole in the head, but notes that the Groundhog Day-esque cycles of violence might actually help Israel in this case.

“The Temple Mount metal detector riots in July revealed to security forces who the driving forces were behind the unrest in Jerusalem, which will again be the centre of the violence,” he writes.

If writing that repeated rounds of unrest can be a good thing is unpopular, Yoav Fromer in Yedioth one-ups him by being the rare voice inside Israel saying that there is no reason for the US to recognise Jerusalem or move the embassy there at all.

“In the parlance of political theatre, the Jerusalem Embassy Act is a symbolic measure, hollow and superficial, which is not meant to change the situation on the ground. And

that’s what it seems Trump is planning to do anyway now: Instead of delivering his ‘historic deal’ between Israel and the Palestinians, as he promised to do, it seems he’s given up the hard work of peace talks in favour of empty statements,” Fromer writes.

“One cannot forget that the law has been pushed off for 22 years for a reason – because it is terrible for the US, and also Israel. Trump’s predecessors – and some Israeli leaders – opposed the embassy moving because they understood the heavy price: Not only that the US will give up its standing as a fair broker in the conflict, which will only hurt Israel, but also that the president will waste what little support he has left in Arab capitals, enrage the Arab street and distract from the real threat – Iranian expansionism.”

Palestinian protesters burn pictures of US President Donald Trump at Bethlehem’s Manger Square on Tuesday



Photo: AFP Photo/Musa Al Shaer

“For Israelis, recognition of Jerusalem won’t change a thing. Either way, Israelis consider it the capital of the country, even without recognition by the United States,” Zvi Bar’el writes in Haaretz.

“But if I were a right-winger, I would plead with Trump to leave Jerusalem alone, because the price tag that might be attached to recognition isn’t worth it. If he’s a true friend of Israel, let him remain in the traditional American position of an onlooker and not make waves. That’s the position the right likes in every US president, so he won’t make us pay the necessary compensation for this bribery called recognition of Jerusalem.”

Similarly, Chemi Shalev in the same paper notes that “in a perfect world, all of us would welcome Trump’s decision,

Highway patrolman races couple to wedding after car breaks down

A bride and groom on the way to their wedding, were on track for an unforgettable day recently – though perhaps not the one they had bargained for – when their car broke down on the Route 4 highway en route to the festivities.

Their saviour was also an unexpected one, in the form of a patrolman for Netivei Israel – the government-owned company in charge of Israel’s roads.

The incident occurred last week near the southern city of Yavne. According to Hadashot news, when the patrolman inspected the desperate couple’s car and realised it was beyond an easy fix,



A driver of one of Netivei Israel’s new mobile units, places a traffic cone on a highway in Israel

he radioed in to ask for permission to temporarily abandon his post and escort the bride and groom to their wedding himself.

He even asked – and was granted – permission to decorate the car, as

befitting the occasion.

Thus, a potential disaster became a tale the newlyweds will likely one day tell their grandchildren.

The Netivei Israel patrol car was one of 10 to recently hit the roads with the aim of helping drivers who are forced to pull over due to vehicle trouble.

Among its other tasks, the fleet will help drivers change flat tyres, their engine oil and add water to their radiators in cases of overheating.

After last week’s incident, though, Netivei Israel may want to consider adding “emergency wedding chauffeur” to the job description.

Desperately seeking this Frida Kahlo painting

**ANNA MARIA JAKUBEK
POZNAN, POLAND**

After taking an overnight bus to Poznan in Poland for an exhibition on Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, two Portuguese sisters are now standing in front of a curious blue suggestion box.

“Who can tell us what happened to the missing painting or where we can find it?” reads a sign next to a photo of Kahlo’s largest

work, “The Wounded Table”, a mysterious surrealist masterpiece that vanished without a trace in Warsaw more than half a century ago.

“I wrote that the painting was probably destroyed. Or it could have been stolen and sold on the black market,” says 21-year-old Ines Cavaco, currently studying in the Polish city of Krakow.

“For sure. It’s sitting in someone’s living room,” adds her sister Joana, a 23-year-old megafan who did her hair up with flowers in homage to Kahlo’s trademark look.

A black-and-white replica of the horizontal oil painting, a double self-portrait with Kahlo represented both as herself and a wounded table dripping with blood, can be seen until January 21 at “Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Polish Context”.

The exhibition at the ZAMEK Culture Centre – a castle built for Kaiser Wilhelm II and later meant to be a residence for Adolf Hitler – spotlights the famed married couple’s little-known links to Poland.

Several dozen of their works shine against a vibrant yellow wall that recalls Kahlo’s bright palette and love of life, despite loneliness and pain brought on by lifelong health issues and Rivera’s many affairs, including with her sister.

The exhibition also features work by two Polish-born Jewish artists close to the couple: photographer Bernice Kolko, who captured Kahlo on her deathbed, and muralist Fanny Rabel, one of Kahlo’s most devoted students.

Finally, a blue room focuses on the 1955 Warsaw exhibition of Mexican art where “The Wounded Table” was last shown.

“It must be somewhere. It cannot have just disappeared. Such a big painting. Unless they burnt it in an oven in the 1950s,” curator Helga Prignitz-Poda told AFP.

“That is one of the reasons why I made the exhibition. Because somebody in Poland might remember that he had seen this painting once somewhere.”

the exhibition that would travel around several socialist countries, but the painting never made it past the first stop.

Prignitz-Poda points out that while the painting is considered great today and would be worth around \$20 million, back then its “surreal absolutely cruel depiction of the double Frida” went against the preferred socialist realist style.

“There were official statements saying that this painting is not exhibitable, that it is so terrible that they really didn’t find it worth the money to pay for transport. It is possible that the (Russian) landlords didn’t want it back,” she said.

For Prignitz-Poda, who just published the book “Hidden Frida Kahlo: Lost, Destroyed, or Little-Known Works”, the disappearance is frustrating because only half of Kahlo’s 300 works are available to see. The rest are missing, burnt or in collections that never lend.

“I’m happy that I got to see even a bit of this legend in the original. Mexico’s far,” said 56-year-old actor Krzysztof Najbor, who took the train up from his southern mountain town of Zakopane for the exhibition.

“After leaving a gallery, my family and I always ask ourselves what we’d walk off with. What we’d like to have at home. Well, there was this small Frida self-portrait that I really liked,” he told AFP with a laugh.

The self-portrait is still there. And “The Wounded Table” is still missing, despite many contributions to the suggestion box.

“People write all kinds of funny things. That because the table’s wounded, the painting must be at the hospital. Or it’s at Putin’s place. Or under their rug at home,” ZAMEK director Anna Hryniewiecka told AFP.

“Drawings too. Children make little maps of how to find the painting. There are reviews of the exhibition. But no information that would actually point us towards some kind of clue.”

But there is hope for a happy ending: a Rivera mural, “Glorious Victory”, that also disappeared in the mid-1950s was discovered in the storerooms of Moscow’s Pushkin Museum in 2000. (AFP)



The Wounded Table, 1940 by Frida Kahlo

At 2,4 metres long by 1,2 metres high, larger than a standard door, the painting was unusual for Kahlo, who preferred to work small, unlike her muralist husband Rivera.

The artist known for her unibrow, long skirts and heavy jewellery, created the painting for the 1940 International Exhibition of Surrealism in Mexico City. For a long time it hung in her dining room, before she donated it to the Soviet Union out of love for communism.

The Last Supper-like work was then sent to Warsaw for

director Anna Hryniewiecka told AFP.

“Drawings too. Children make little maps of how to find the painting. There are reviews of the exhibition. But no information that would actually point us towards some kind of clue.”

But there is hope for a happy ending: a Rivera mural, “Glorious Victory”, that also disappeared in the mid-1950s was discovered in the storerooms of Moscow’s Pushkin Museum in 2000. (AFP)

Jerry Seinfeld’s best friend is always along for the ride

JESSICA STEINBERG

When Jerry Seinfeld arrives in Israel at the end of December, he’ll be travelling with one of his oldest friends, comedian Mark Schiff.

Schiff has been lucky enough to travel with Seinfeld for the last 15 years – on Seinfeld’s private jet, no less – opening for Seinfeld in arenas and theatres.

An inveterate comedian of moderate fame, he likes to talk about his “clean” sense of humour – not like other comedians, he says – and falls back frequently on a repetitive slate of Jewish moms, long marriages and doctor visits for a familiar 15 minutes.

Schiff will open for Seinfeld again in Israel, when the king of comedy appears for two consecutive shows on December 30 at Tel Aviv’s Menora Mivtachim arena.

“We had such a great time last time,” said Schiff of their 2015 visit. “We weren’t there that long, and it was a tough time for Israel with the stabbings taking place, so we wanted to go back when we felt that there was a little less pressure, less craziness going on. Jerry loves Israel.”



Comic Jerry Seinfeld (right) with his old friend and fellow comedian Mark Schiff.

The Israeli audiences loved Seinfeld so much so that he added three additional shows after the first one sold out within minutes. But Schiff? Not so much.

Local reviewers said Schiff was “old school” in his manner, making jokes heard before in multiple variations.

He wondered aloud how Israelis learn English from TV shows when he hasn’t succeeded in learning much Hebrew while watching “Srugim” and “Fauda”.

At the time, one Walla reviewer said Schiff didn’t succeed in translating his jokes to a global language, and his references to the American world left “a lot of closed faces in the audience”.

Schiff didn’t see it the same way, apparently. And it would seem, neither did Jerry, who is bringing him along again.

Apple Music ad features electronic sound of Israeli musician Noga Erez

JESSICA STEINBERG

It’s mid-November, and electronic musician Noga Erez is ensconced in Berlin, her base for two months of touring around Europe. It’s been a crash course about life on the road, according to the musician.

“It’s being in a car with people for a very long time every day,” she said. “We’ve become closer, but touring is fun and it’s hard and it’s always a duality. It’s never just fun... You have to let go and let go of control.”

The 27-year-old Erez emerged into the electronic scene in 2016 with her first single, “Dance While You Shoot”, and has become a singular voice – and sound system – in the EDM, or electronic dance music scene worldwide.

These days her music is being broadcast to an even wider audience with a new Apple Music ad, the result of some entrepreneurial e-mailing.

She was participating in a music conference as part of an Israeli delegation and sent about 80 e-mails to see who to connect with from the guest list. Out of the 80, the only answer she received was from the head of the music advertising department at Apple Music, who wanted to work with her.

Now Erez’s latest anthem, “Dance While You Shoot”, is the background of an Apple Music TV commercial.

It’s heady stuff for the musician, who was studying musical composition at the Jerusalem

Academy of Music just a few years ago.

It was during those years that Erez began tinkering with computerised music after years of working on her singing, piano playing and guitar work. She had chosen the academy because she wanted to learn proper music composition, but found that she was spending a lot of time playing around with music software in order to record acoustic instruments rather than simply play them.

What ensued was a gradual passage between styles of music for Erez. She loved the music she could create on the computer, as opposed to that of an acoustic ensemble, finding it sounded more soulful to her.

“I was never really part of any scene,” she said. “That’s why electronic music was a good way for me to go. It allows you to be a loner or work by yourself. For me, the whole electronic sound is just an exploration out of the Internet.”

Erez served in the musical unit in the army and then began working with local producer Ori Rousso to create what are now Erez’s familiar beat-driven sounds as the background for her thoughts and views on a wide range of issues. In 2016, Erez performed at the Rio Olympics as part of the official Israeli music showcase and was signed on to Berlin label City Slang. Last November, the label issued her debut single, “Dance While You Shoot”, a conflicted treatise about living a safe life just kilometres away from areas of extreme Palestinian conflict.

It’s always Chanukah in this picture-perfect Italian town



An inside view of the synagogue in Casale Monferrato, Italy, which dates to the 16th century.

**RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
CASALE MONFERRATO, ITALY**

It’s always Chanukah in this picturesque town in northern Italy’s Piedmont region.

Jews have lived in Casale Monferrato for more than 500 years, with the community reaching its peak of 850 members at about the time Jews here were granted civil rights in 1848. The town still boasts one of Italy’s most ornate synagogues, a rococo gem that dates to the 16th century.

These days, only two Jewish families live in Casale. The synagogue, which is part of a larger museum complex, is now a major tourist attraction – and not only because of its opulent sanctuary with huge chandeliers, colourfully painted walls and lots of gilding. The former women’s section has been transformed into a Judaica and Jewish history museum. And the synagogue’s basement, formerly a matzah bakery, is now home to the Museum of Lights.

Chanukah here is commemorated nonstop with a year-round exhibit featuring dozens of menorahs, or chanukiyot, created by international contemporary artists. The collection has some 185 menorahs, according to Adriana Ottolenghi, whose husband, Giorgio, has been president of Casale’s Jewish community since the 1950s. There is no other museum in the world quite like it.

“We receive more every year, and each year at Chanukah there is a public ceremony, where we light menorahs and welcome the new pieces,” she said.

Only 30 to 40 can be displayed at a time in the vaulted underground chambers. The only time the collection was shown in its entirety was at Casale’s centuries-old castle, part of an event connected to the 2015 Milan Expo.

The Museum of Lights’ chanukiyot come in an amazing variety of shapes, sizes, colours and media. Many resemble traditional menorahs: a straight line of candles or a candelabra with eight branches, with a ninth branch for the “shamash” candle used to kindle them. Some of the menorahs can be lighted and used on the holiday.

But other menorahs on display are more fanciful sculptural works created from the likes of metal, ceramic, plexiglass and wood.

“Artists were given a completely free rein to create a functional object or a purely evocative one,” curator Maria Luisa Caffarelli wrote in the collection’s catalogue.

Each menorah is what designer Elio Carmi, who co-founded the collection in the mid-1990s with the non-Jewish artist Antonio Recalcati and other artist friends, describes as a “homage to the story of Chanukah” and its message of the triumph of light over darkness.

They conceived the project as a way to highlight Jewish culture as a source of artistic inspiration, promote creativity based in Jewish tradition and underscore the vitality of Jews in contemporary society.

“The idea was born to show that Jews, though small in number, are determined,” said Carmi, who is the vice president of the Casale Jewish community, “and to use interpretations of the Chanukah menorah to demonstrate, symbolically, the continuity of the community.”

At Chanukah, Jews light menorahs for eight days to recall the defeat by the Maccabees of Syrian tyrants in the second century BCE.

According to legend, when the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple, the eternal light miraculously burned for eight days rather than the expected one, symbolising the survival of the Jewish people.

Each menorah in the museum is a personal interpretation of the Festival of Lights and its symbolism. The Italian artist Stefano Della Porta, for example, used ceramics and steel to create a menorah that appears to be made from giant burnt matches. American-born artist Robert Carroll created his menorah from olive wood, red Verona granite and brass. It has a sinuous, trunk-like base that supports eight branches that open out like a flower, each supporting a candle.

Carmi and his friends provided the first chanukiyot for the project - Carmi’s was a silver-plated metal bar with small cups for the eight candles and the shamash - and then reached out to others for contributions.

Other artists - Jews and non-Jews, mainly from Italy but also from other countries - soon began making their own menorahs and presenting them to the growing collection. All of the works are donated, most of them by the artists themselves.

“It was like a chain of artists,” Carmi said. “And well-known artists began to be attracted.”

Among those is Arnaldo Pomodoro, one of Italy’s leading sculptors. His menorah, presented in 2013, is a horizontal metal girder that supports the nine candles and is decorated with abstract symbols.

“I tried to bring out a series

of abstract, imaginary signs to create a story that would connect, on a general level, with the idea of thought, experience and memory; without, however, wanting to enter into the multi-faceted complexities of the symbology of the Jewish world,” Pomodoro describes in the catalogue.

Ultimately, Carmi said, the Museum of Lights is about “Judaism, art and identity”. (JTA)

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Stories of resistance during the Holocaust

TALI NATES

Until the truth about the “Final Solution” and the mass murder of the Jews became known in 1942, Jewish resistance was mostly non-violent. It was designed to conserve lives and make them as meaningful as possible.

Coining the phrase “Choiceless Choices”, Professor of English and Holocaust Studies Lawrence Langer, explained that the Jews faced choices that were often between “bad and worse”. In many cases, it was only a choice of how to die and not how to live.

Abba Kovner, the leader of the Jewish Vilna resistance movement, tells a story about the last time he saw his ageing mother in the Vilna ghetto. He was about to leave to fight in the forests and came to say goodbye to her. She begged him not to leave her as she was alone and afraid. But he did.

To the end of his life he felt the guilt of his choice. He said: “Am I the hero of the resistance, or the coward who abandoned his old mother in the most difficult time of her life?”

Kovner was one of the many to choose resistance – whether it was armed or non-violent – to do what they could to stop Nazis destroying Jews throughout Europe.

It was seldom a strategy for survival, but rather an act of courage and honour. The constant fear and desperate conditions in the ghettos made resistance extremely difficult and dangerous. Despite this, Jewish men, women and children, found varied ways to resist the Nazi terror. Between 1941 and 1943, underground resistance movements were active in about 100 ghettos in Poland, Lithuania, Byelorussia and the Ukraine.

Even in the shadow of death, Jews resisted. In 1943, there were revolts at Treblinka and Sobibor killing centres in occupied Poland. On October 14, Jewish prisoners in Sobibor organised an uprising and mass escape from the camp during which 11 SS guards were killed and 300 prisoners escaped. All but approximately 50 were caught and killed.

On August 2, 1943, prisoners of Treblinka started their revolt, seized weapons from the SS storeroom, attacked the German and Ukrainian guards, and set a number of buildings on fire. Some 300 prisoners escaped and about 100 survived the ensuing Nazi manhunt.

On October 7, 1944, members of the Sonderkommando (Jewish prisoners forced to work in the crematoria) started the uprising in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Crematorium IV was set on fire and SS guards were attacked. The Sonderkommando of Crematorium II killed a Kapo and several SS men. Several hundred prisoners escaped, but all were caught and killed.

Some 20 000 Jews fled into the forests of Eastern Europe to form their own fighting units or to join other partisans in resistance against the Nazis. Their life was harsh and uncertain.

Forced to move from place to place, find food and endure freezing winter conditions, they also had to

evade betrayal by local populations. Large numbers of Jews fought in resistance organisations in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and the Soviet Union.

During the Holocaust, Jews resisted by attempting to maintain their humanity and dignity under profoundly dehumanising circumstances. They defied the Nazis in ghettos, camps and in hiding, through documenting the catastrophe, cultural activities, clandestine religious observances and school lessons, despite the prevailing conditions.

Women played a significant role in resisting the Nazis. They were part of underground movements in the ghettos and camps, they were part of smuggling operations with better chance not to be recognised

as Jews if caught. They were key players in the Auschwitz resistance – four women, Roza Robota, Ala Gertner, Regina Safirsztajn and Ester Wajsblum smuggled gunpowder to the men of the Sonderkommando of Birkenau, paving the way for the revolt of October 7, 1944. They were hanged in the last hanging in Birkenau on January 6, 1945. In their final moments, they cried out for vengeance and sang “Hatikvah”.

Humour was also a form of resistance. It served as a defence mechanism and many saw it as a tool for mental perseverance. This in return helped the will to live.

One of the survivors told how humour was at times directed back to oneself to keep the morale. It made it easier to laugh at yourself as you coped with the most horrible of situations. This survivor told about

her reaction to the shaving of hair in Auschwitz and how she made light of it and laughed so as to deal with the pain of it all.

A group of undernourished and starving women in Theresienstadt (in German-occupied Czechoslovakia) wrote recipes of beloved dishes. Sometimes steps or ingredients were missing, the gaps a painful illustration of the condition and situation in which the authors lived.

They created a hand-sewn cookery books. By doing so, they defied the Nazis by preserving their heritage and a part of themselves. This was proof that the Nazis could not break the spirit of those women.

The cookbook was a manifestation of defiance, of a spiritual revolt against the harshness of the conditions they had to endure. It allowed them, in imagination only,

to go back to a time in their life when food was available, when women had homes and kitchens and could cook a meal for their families.

The fantasy must have been painful for those courageous women. Remembering those recipes was an act of discipline that required them to suppress their current hunger and to think of the ordinary world before the camps – and to dare to dream of a world after the camps.

Mina Pachter, one of the primary authors of the cookbook, died of hunger sickness on Yom Kippur 1944. The book “In Memory’s Kitchen, A Legacy from the Women of Terezin”, was published in 1996.

Much like the Maccabees in the time of Chanukah, Jewish men and women will be remembered for their acts of resistance and courage during the Holocaust.

In Budapest, Chanukah comes out of the shadows and onto the ice rink

CNAAN LIPSHIZ BUDAPEST

The outdoor ice skating rink – the largest in Central Europe – in Budapest’s city centre, has been part and parcel of Hungary’s Christmas tradition for nearly 150 years.

Stretching across 3,5 acres between Heroes’ Square and Vajdahunyad Castle, the Budapest City Park Ice Rink draws hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the country each winter. They come for the Christmas market, the winter festival, and the promise of smooth ice and affordable skate rentals.

It’s an enormous and enormously popular attraction, so City Park Ice Rink is busy nearly every day with the Christmas revellers. Except, however, on the first night of Chanukah.

On that evening, the rink is populated with hundreds of Jews. They gather to sing Chanukah songs as they watch rabbis on skates light a large menorah built by EMIH, the local branch of the Chabad Chasidic movement. With help from a donor in Budapest, they rent the rink for \$12 000, and distribute sufganiyot and tea to holiday revellers who have pre-purchased tickets.

The City Park Chanukah celebration started just over a decade ago, and it is unusual in that it’s one of just a few places in Europe where the North American “Chanukah on ice” tradition has taken root. In the US, Chabad rabbis organise dozens of Chanukah on ice events each year featuring the ceremonial candle-lighting, munching on the deep-fried Chanukah delicacies and ice skating, with games for children and training for the inexperienced.

But in Budapest, the event is part of a broader “coming out” of Jewish communities in the former communist bloc, where after years of practising their religion underground, Jews are now celebrating Chanukah in very public ways.

“Chanukah used to be low-key in Budapest, as was everything else connected to Judaism during socialism,” said Rabbi Boruch Oberlander, one of the early organisers of Budapest’s Chanukah on ice tradition. Back then, Jews feared that practising any religion – and Judaism especially – invited persecution.

“But it’s not good for Judaism when things are low-key,” he added, because it made people leave the tradition. Throughout the Soviet sphere of influence, decades of religious persecution compounded the Nazi-caused devastation.

Unaware or ashamed of their Jewish identity, countless Jews in that part of the world assimilated, distanced themselves from Judaism and produced children that no longer regarded themselves as Jewish.

Against this background, Chanukah has a special significance in the post-communist world, said Oberlander, a Brooklyn-born rabbi who settled in Budapest 28 years ago as an emissary of Chabad.

His interpretation of how Jews should celebrate Chanukah is shared by many rabbis all over the world



Rabbi Slomo Koves, right, and a participant at Chabad Hungary’s 2015 Chanukah on Ice event, take selfies at Budapest’s City Park Ice Rink, on December 6, 2015.

– Chabad rabbis, in particular – who stage large, public menorah lightings in central squares of major cities. New York, for example, boasts two such massive events: The Grand Army Plazas in both Manhattan and Brooklyn have been in competition over which holds the title of World’s Largest Menorah.

Such displays inspired Jews to think big in Western Europe, ending decades in which communities, traumatised by the Holocaust, had shunned initiatives that advertise Judaism.

Since 2013 in the Netherlands, for example, the chief rabbi has been lifted in a crane (along with the Israeli ambassador) to light the first candle of an 11-metre menorah built for the Jewish community by Christian Zionists who say it is Europe’s largest. In Berlin, a giant menorah is lit at the Brandenburg Gate monument.

Like the massive menorah lightings, Europe’s growing Chanukah on ice trend – which this year can be observed in Budapest, Moscow and London – also started in the United States, where it is occurring this year in locations from Wollman Rink in New York’s Central Park, to Houston to San Mateo, California.

In Moscow, the popular Chanukah on ice event, which began in 2012, is eclipsed by what may well be the largest celebration of Chanukah in Europe: the annual gathering of 6 000 Jews at the State Kremlin Palace for an evening of dance and performances, as well as the bestowing of awards to communal VIPs. Organisers say the venue is important to them for symbolic reasons because it produced some of the world’s worst anti-Semitic policies after the fall of Nazi Germany.

In Budapest, the city’s summertime Jewish cultural festival is also an example of Jews reclaiming their place in society. Judafest, which was held for the 10th consecutive year, draws thousands of Jews and non-Jews to the historically Jewish 7th district for sessions,

activities and exhibitions connected to Jewish cooking, dancing and Yiddish.

But there’s something special about the Chanukah on ice event, which is held at an iconic location with strong ties to the holiday period for all Hungarians.

“I think it indicates a generational difference in which young people our age don’t think twice about participating in an event that celebrates, publicly, our Jewish identity,” Eszter Fabriczki, 30, a regular at the event, told JTA. “Holocaust survivors passed the fear element to their children, but not to their grandchildren.”

Despite the generational gap it exposes, Fabriczki said she and her mother have bonded over the City Park Ice Rink Chanukah event.

“I’m quite religious but my mother is not, so the Chanukah on ice event is something we can share, because she likes to ice skate and it’s important for me to observe all the Jewish holidays,” Fabriczki said.

But for 16-year-old Sara Szalai, Budapest’s Chanukah on ice means quality time with her dad, Kalman, who is the managing director of the Jewish community’s Action and Protection Foundation – the local equivalent of the Anti-Defamation League, which monitors anti-Semitic incidents.

The event typically unites Jews across the religious-secular divide. Chanukah has fewer restrictions than other Jewish observances such as Shabbat or Yom Kippur, when observant Jews are not allowed to operate machines, travel or perform any action classified as work.

In Hungary’s fractious Jewish community – where interdenominational tensions are rising amid polarising policies undertaken by the nationalist government – the Chanukah on ice event offers a rare armistice in which the secular, religious, local and Israeli Jews put aside their differences for a night of fun. (JTA)

Getting used to December not being the end of the year



Aliya – the good, the bad and the meshuga
Benita Levin

December has always marked the start of the year end slow-down. For as long as I can remember, we’ve called it the silly season in the news world. Schools are about to wrap up the year, businesses start winding down their work load and final holiday plans are being confirmed.

It’s time to start taking your foot off the accelerator and focus on some much needed time-out.

December in Israel is a different story. While I haven’t heard any Christmas carols in the shops, people gathered outside Bethlehem’s Church of Nativity at the start of the month for the traditional lighting of a giant Christmas tree and fireworks. Thousands of Christian pilgrims and tourists flock to the area to mark the start of the festive season.

But December 25 is not a public holiday here. More jarring is the thought that January 1 is just another normal work and school day. I have triple checked! While many Anglos apparently do have their own private New Year parties, and I’ve been assured that Tel Aviv may be quite festive on the night, the first of January 2018 will be like any other start of any other month.

At first, I wasn’t sure why this seemed so, well... wrong. It certainly wasn’t about missing out on a huge New Year’s Eve party. It was definitely about the psychological closure, marking the end of a year. The end of a chapter - reflection on how that chapter had been - and thoughts around the clean slate for a new year, a new chapter.

I’m definitely not talking about New Year’s resolutions. For me, any sudden decision to be healthier, cut down on caffeine or exercise more, has a life span of around 10 days! It’s more about having a clean slate from the first of January - a time to think about what one hopes to focus on long term during the year ahead.

Abuse is a solvable problem

>> Continued from page 10

In addition, prevention of child sexual assault programmes need to be run on an annual basis in all our schools. If your shul or school does not have a policy in place or does not offer prevention programmes, you, as parents, have the right to lobby on behalf of your child’s safety.

Koleinu is a community organisation working to combat abuse in the Jewish community. Koleinu is currently working with Dr Shira Berkovitz, the founder of Sacred Spaces, to aid shuls, schools and youth movements in the implementation of policies to prevent and deal with cases of abuse which may occur.

Koleinu also gives training and presentations to groups of parents, focusing on education for kids as to how to protect themselves in situations of potential or actual abuse. Should you want to host a talk in your home, please contact us. If you’re interested in effecting change in your shul or organisation, please call us and we will assist your organisation in formulating a policy specific to their requirements.

Each one of us needs to ask ourselves: “Where do I stand on the bystander continuum? How can I help support victims, and make our communities safer?”

If you know of anyone who is or may be a victim of abuse of any kind, please give them Koleinu’s details: Helpline no: (011) 264-0341. Mon & Wed:09:00 - 12:00 and Tues & Thurs: 19:00 – 22:00.

• *Rozanne Sack and Wendy Hendler are the founders and directors of Koleinu SA.*

September is the New January?

It all makes perfect sense. The reason there is no official New Year’s Eve bash, no countdown and no day off on the first of January, is because here, the start of the year really is September.

It comes at the end of a sweltering two-month holiday in June and July, and coincides with the start of the school year. But most significantly, the year starts whenever the country marks the festival of Rosh Hashanah. The apple and honey for a sweet new year, the family time and the many meals mark the beginning of the Hebrew calendar year.

The appropriate time to start the year with a clean slate here is obviously the Yom Kippur fast. One doesn’t need to be a religious scholar

to understand the significance of the time of reflection - a time to look back on the previous year and a time to focus on being a better person in the year ahead.

December holidays for new olim from South Africa are about to change dramatically – no beach in Clifton or Plettenberg Bay. Instead, a winter break dotted with an array of calorie-defying doughnuts, complete with toppings and a plastic injection-like tube of chocolate, icing or custard. These are all in the name of the festival of Chanukah.

Camping is said to be a popular pastime during the eight-day school break - for those who are happy to brave what are expected to be much colder temperatures.

And for those of us who are used to treating December as a time to mentally unwind ahead of the new calendar year, I suppose there’s nothing stopping me from keeping that personal ritual, while sitting at work on the first of January, with a doughnut at the coffee break?

New food of the week – Chavitah yaroka – vegetable omelette, with spinach, onion and any other vegetable combination. Outstanding!

Phrase of the week – Chag molad sameach – merry Christmas

Smile of the week – meeting an American visitor to the country. When I told him I was from South Africa, he asked: “Do you know my friend from Nigeria?”



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RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN,
SYDENHAM SHUL



Everyone knows the story of Chanukah. The Maccabees defeated the mighty Greek armies and reconquered Jerusalem. When they wanted to kindle the menorah in the Temple, they could only find one jug of oil - enough to burn one day - but, miraculously, it continued burning for eight days until new oil could be procured. Because of the miracle of the oil, the sages established an eight-day Festival of Lights.

In this, there is a famous question. Why should we celebrate Chanukah for eight nights? After all, there was enough oil in the Temple for one night, so when it continued burning for eight nights, only seven of those days were actually miraculous.

One day's supply existed and for the first day it burned quite naturally without any Divine intervention. So, the question is, if the miracle of the oil was only for seven days, why do we celebrate eight?

There are many answers given to this question, but the one I want to focus on here, is that just finding that one jug of oil, with the seal of the High Priest intact, was a miracle too. And from the commentaries, it seems that

it wasn't discovered immediately. It was quite a search with some opinions suggesting it was eventually found in the very catacombs of the Temple. So, it wasn't easy, but finally they found it.

When Jews are struggling to find light; when the forces of darkness have trampled on all that is holy; when every last cruse of oil seems to have been defiled, we could be forgiven for giving up the search for light.

So, we'll get new oil from Tekoah, the town renowned for its quality olive oil. So, what if it takes another week? We waited this long, we can wait another week, big deal!

But, no, the Maccabees were determined not to let the holy Menorah remain unkindled even one more day. And they refused to give up the search, until their efforts were rewarded, and the pure cruse of oil was discovered.

That spirit of faith and determination is part of the miracle of Jewish survival and is surely worthy of a special day of celebration in its own right.

A few years ago, I had the very unusual privilege of seeing this idea fulfilled before my very eyes. Our son, Rabbi Michoel, is the Chabad shliach in Kauai, one of the most beautiful islands of Hawaii.

Once, while visiting Honolulu, he met a Jew who originally came from New York. When he heard that our family lives in Johannesburg, the



fellow told him that his grandfather had come to South Africa from Eastern Europe many years ago and had died here as a young man.

To make a long story short, on that fellow's behalf, my son did some serious research with our local Chevrah Kadisha and, in the archives, was able to identify when the grandfather had died and where he was buried. It was in the old Brixton cemetery.

When the man realised that there was no tombstone over his grandfather's grave, he resolved to travel across the world, from Hawaii to South Africa, to consecrate a memorial stone.

It was my privilege to officiate at the unveiling of the tombstone. To our utter amazement and disbelief, as I read the inscription on the stone, we discovered that the day of the unveiling was taking place on the exact same day of the grandfather's yahrtzeit. And the man had died over 100 years ago!

That amazing, spiritual twist of fate

(Divine coincidence) was a powerful validation of the importance of the very special good deed that was being done.

And it could only have come about because a grandson living on the other side of the world, was determined to find his grandfather's unknown and unmarked grave and do justice to his memory.

He never knew his grandfather. The events were a century in the past, but the mitzvah was done, and we can only guess as to the important spiritual effect it had on that soul up in Heaven!

It wasn't easy for the man, but his sincere and genuine search yielded beautiful results.

Long ago, Deuteronomy (4, 29) assured us: "You will seek Hashem, your G-d, and you will find Him, if you search for Him with all your heart and soul."

And the Talmud reassured us that if we put in the effort, those efforts will be rewarded. Yogato umotzoso taamin (If one says I have toiled and

been successful, believe him - Megilla 6b). And even the more contemporary Yiddish proverb confirms Az m'zucht, gefint men (If you look, you find). When we are absolutely genuine in our desire to achieve, we will.

I suppose whether we are looking for lost graves, missing oil, or spiritual light, the principle is the same. How many of us want to find a feeling for Yiddishkeit within our hearts, but we find it difficult to light the lamp.

We are believers and would really love to feel more inspired, but we struggle to see the light. Too often, too many give up the search too quickly. Please be assured, the oil is there.

The Jewish Lamp is inextinguishable. But we have to keep searching until we find it. It may be in the recesses of our soul or in the catacombs of our consciousness, but it is there. No Jew is ever lost. So, never give up the search.

If we look we will find. May the miracle of Chanukah live on in our lives.

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The Festival of Lights that signifies an inextinguishable faith

RABBI JONATHAN, LORD SACKS



What I find fascinating about Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Lights we celebrate at this time of the year, is the way its story was transformed by time. It began as the simple story of a military victory, the success of Judah the Maccabee and his followers as they fought for religious freedom against the repressive rule of the Syrian-Greek emperor Antiochus IV. Antiochus, who modestly called himself Epiphanes, “G-d made manifest”, had resolved forcibly to hellenise the Jews.

He had a statue of Zeus erected in the precincts of the Temple in Jerusalem, ordered sacrifices to be made to pagan gods, and banned Jewish rites on pain of death. The Maccabees fought back and within three years had reconquered Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple. That is how the story is told in the first and second books of Maccabees.

However, things did not go smoothly thereafter. The new Jewish monarchy known as the Hasmonean kings, themselves became hellenised. They also incurred the wrath of the people by breaking one of the principles of Judaism: the separation between religion

and political power. They became not just kings, but also high priests, something earlier monarchs had never done.

Even militarily, the victory over the Greeks proved to be only a temporary respite. Within a century, Pompey invaded Jerusalem and Israel came under Roman rule. Then came the disastrous rebellion against Rome (66-73), as a result of which Israel was defeated and the Temple destroyed. The work of the Maccabees now lay in ruins.

Some rabbis at the time believed that the festival of Chanukah should be abolished. Why celebrate a freedom that had been lost? Others disagreed, and their view prevailed. Freedom may have been lost but not hope.

That was when another story came to the fore, about how the Maccabees, in purifying the Temple, found a single cruse of oil, its seal still intact, from which they relit the menorah, the great candelabrum in the Temple. Miraculously the light lasted eight days and that became the central narrative of Chanukah.

It became a Festival of Lights within the Jewish home. symbolising a faith that could not be extinguished. Its message was captured in a phrase from the prophet Zekhariah: “Not by might nor by power but by My spirit, says



the L-rd Almighty.”

I have often wondered whether that is not the human story, not just the Jewish one. We celebrate military victories. We tell stories about the heroes of the past. We commemorate those who gave their lives in defence of freedom. That is as it should be. Yet the real victories that determine the fate of nations, are not so much military as cultural, moral and spiritual.

In Rome, the Arch of Titus was erected by Titus’ brother Domitian, to commemorate the victorious Roman siege of Jerusalem in the year 70. It shows Roman soldiers carrying away the spoils of war, most famously the seven-branched menorah. Rome won that military conflict. Yet its civilisation declined and fell,

while Jews and Judaism survived.

They did so not least because of Chanukah itself. That simple act of families coming together to light the lights, tell the story and sing the songs, proved more powerful than armies and longer-lived than empires.

What endured was not the historical narrative as told in the books of Maccabees, but the simpler, stronger story that spoke of a single cruse of oil that survived the wreckage and desecration, and the light it shed that kept on burning.

Something in the human spirit survives even the worst of tragedies, allowing us to rebuild shattered lives, broken institutions and injured nations. That to me is the Jewish story.

Jews survived all the defeats, expulsions, persecutions and pogroms, even the Holocaust itself, because they never gave up the faith that one day they would be free to live as Jews without fear.

Whenever I visit a Jewish school today, I see on the smiling faces of the children the ever-renewed power of that faith whose symbol is Chanukah and its light of inextinguishable hope.

• Lord Sacks, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth

The light and the darkness of Chanukah

ADINA ROTH



Eight years ago on first night of Chanukah, I gave birth to my first child. Afterwards we joked that she was determined to be born on Chanukah. With a 37-hour labour, it seemed that this little one was waiting for night to turn to day to turn to night. She emerged with the arrival of the lights and miracles festival. And she was our miracle baby. For a day or so, I was on a birthing and mother’s high. Completely intoxicated with my child, recapping the highs and lows of the birthing experience, flooded by messages of love and warmth and overwhelmed every time I looked at or touched or even thought about my daughter.

It felt as if I had been transported into the land of the wondrous and the miraculous. About three days later, with hormonal changes and who knows what else, the miracle had taken a very challenging plunge. I struggled to sleep at night and had developed a terrible onset of anxiety, something I had never experienced before. What had started out as perhaps the most wonderful time of my life swung into something incredibly challenging as the terms post-natal-depression suddenly became whispered and I felt I was losing control over the world around me and my self.

On about the fourth day of Chanukah, I reached out to some friends and also to my gynaecologist who prescribed some medication for me. I then began a six-week period of returning to my self. Mostly, I cocooned with my child and very close family, building up my reserves, trying to come to terms with the move from a place of such joy and abundance to an experience of such a fall. I remember very clearly lighting the lights of Chanukah every single night. The lighting that year took on a very special and different meaning for me. It was about starting in darkness and building up each day. It was about the possibility of



hope and renewal. As we reached night eight, although I was still in the thick of my anxiety, the lights of Chanukah reminded me that people had been through hard times before and that from points very low, lightness had been restored.

Perhaps there is a painful analogy between my experience of a short-lived joy, followed by a plunge into something harder and deeper and the story of the Hasmoneans during our Second Temple Period. Indeed, we are reminded again and again that as wonderful and triumphant as it seemed to push the Greeks out of the Temple and restore the light and sacred rituals, the period of Jewish sovereignty was short lived and deferred by 200 years only, the utter destruction of our Second Temple and the beginning of a 2000 year exile. What does it mean that our festival of miracles, recalls a miracle that didn’t have holding power? What might this teach us about the nature of miracles in general?

Nachmanides and Maimonides differ on their approach to miracles. While Nachmanides regards miracles as the events of the everyday,

arguing that we need to see G-d’s hand in every thing, the rising of the sun, the birth of a child, Maimonides says that the events of everyday life need to be regarded as the course through which our natural world runs. Miracles are the reserve of the extraordinary and the transcendent. For Nachmanides,

miracles are a daily affair. For Maimonides, miracles are rare indeed, the splitting of the sea, the perpetuation of a small amount of oil. When we sing Al Hanisim in the Amidah, we recall different kinds of miracles, those that are obvious, revealed (more akin to a Mainomidean idea) and those that are hidden and

subtle, a la Nachmanides. In today’s hyper-scientific world, Maimonides’ grand notion of the miraculous might feel remote from us and we might gravitate towards Nachmanides view of the miracle in the ordinary, the hidden. But what kind of miracle is childbirth?

On the one hand, childbirth happens every day, all the time. It is medically and scientifically explicable. But on the other hand, childbirth feels transcendent. Many describe the explosion of love that fills the heart of a new parent. It is

probably one of the last few remaining repositories of the extraordinary in our modern world, the other space of extraordinary being the actual sensation of falling in love. But we now know that this experience of the miraculous is accompanied by loss. Whether it is as obvious as the loss of sleep and one’s previous freedom or a more mournful type of loss where some women sing a song of sadness at this time. But, does this sadness detract from or amplify the sense of the miracle? Is the arrival of the child any less miraculous because a mother might have a sad song to sing in her post-natal period? Can a miracle still ‘count’ if it is intermingled with terror or angst?

It has taken some time and some work of healing to make peace with the idea that the initial joy of my Chanukah baby was cut short by a

terrifying, uninvited guest of anxiety and post-natal depression. But when I look back, I am filled with an awe that speaks to an experience of the miraculous. We light candles over an eight-day period of Chanukah. Each night we light a candle, gradually increasing our light. But what we don’t see is the space between the candles. The space between the candles is punctuated by a light that is less bright, perhaps some kind of shadow. If we focus on the light only and wish all the darkness away, we might end up disappointed. For life generally is not about light in a totality, it is about beautiful light interspersed with slices of shadow. When I think of miracles in this way, the notion of Nachmanides’ every-day miracles including the miracles of childbirth, are rendered accessible and real, even in our post-modern era. Chanukah is the reminder of the beauty of light in our lives always, interspersed with loss, sorrow and imperfection. The dance between the light and the shadows makes up the full Chanukiyah.

• Adina Roth is a clinical psychologist and a Jewish educator practising in Johannesburg. She also teaches for the Melton Adult school of Jewish education through Hebrew University.

There is always a pitcher of oil

RABBI DOVID HAZDAN

Our Jewish festivals encourage us to journey through time and to increase our knowledge and awareness of our history. More significantly, our festivals are potent with opportunity to access meaning and direction. They give us strength and inspiration to confront the challenges of the present day.

In our blessing thanking G-d for the miracles that we have experienced as a people, we include the words: "He made miracles for our forefathers in those days and in our present time."



and invincible spirit of humanity.

It reminds us of the infinite force of omnipotent G-d and signals the victory of spirituality, justice, tolerance and freedom over the forces of materialism, prejudice, persecution and darkness.

In South Africa, Israel and throughout the world, whenever the darkness of doubt and despair overwhelms the light of optimism and hope, we need to find our individual and collective "small pitcher of oil".

We cannot submit ourselves to apathy, indifference and surrender. We need to access our inner spirit and the insuppressible soul of society. We need to begin sharing light. A tiny ray of light dispels immense darkness. And the fragile flame that we kindle in ourselves and around us has a strength to defy our horizons and our assumed limitations and change the course of history.

Happy Chanukah!

• Rabbi Dovid Hazdan is spiritual leader of the Great Park Synagogue and Dean of Torah Academy



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The festival of Chanukah commemorates events that transpired almost 22 centuries ago. A ruthless Assyrian Greek king – Antiochus 4th – enacted laws and decrees that specifically targeted the Jewish religion’s devotion to G-d. They tolerated the quaint cultural practices and traditions associated with Judaism, but they wanted to root out our commitment to Hashem –Creator of the Universe. This was a war to eradicate our spiritual existence and identity.

The Holy Temple was invaded, desecrated and robbed of it treasures. Antiochus placed an idol of Zeus on the holy altar and forced the Jews to bow before it under penalty of death. As his troops tightened their grips on our people, the vulnerable Jews seemed incapable of resistance.

Matityahu, a priest from the small village of Modin, was to change the course of history together with his five sons, and with the call of “Mi LaShem Eilai” – “All who are with G-d – follow me”.

Matityahu gathered support and miraculously overthrew their oppressors. A small group of 6 000 Jews heroically, incredulously, defeated a heavily armed battalion of over 50 000 seasoned enemy troops.

Returning to rededicate the Temple, they found that all the holy oil used to kindle the lights of the candelabrum had deliberately been defiled. A small pitcher of undefiled oil – still sealed with the seal of the High Priest – was found.

There was enough oil to burn for one day. They kindled the lights with heavy hearts, knowing that it would take eight days to produce new supplies of sacred oil. To their surprise, the oil miraculously continued to burn for eight days.

The finding of the tiny cruse of pure uncontaminated oil, was profoundly symbolic. It teaches us that, notwithstanding the prevailing conditions of defilement that envelopes us, we can and must search for our inner purity and soul that eludes and transcends the grasp and designs of darkness.

Amid decaying values of morality and overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness, we need to dig deeper into ourselves, to find the “pure pitcher of oil” – the essence of our inner soul that is not conditioned by circumstances and the prevailing loss of purpose or conscience.

We need to find and access our incorruptible core. And when we do, and when we ignite it, it has the capacity to transcend expectations and reality to extend its light, miraculously defying the milieu and the natural order.

It was the same inner journey that Matityahu and his men travelled in the trenches of battle and war. It was when they found their “inner pitcher of oil” – when they discovered their indelible essence connection to G-d – that they accessed the fortitude and courage to enter the battlefield and vanquish the formidable enemy – against all odds.

The Festival of Chanukah records historical events of heroism, courage and power of the spirit. It echoes its message through the centuries to our present day. It kindles the hope

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Chanukah oh Chanukah... let’s buy lots of presents!

NADIA BILCHIK

My earliest memories of Chanukah were going to my grandparents’ home and lighting a menorah, eating fresh potato latkes made by my Lithuanian- born grandfather and celebrating the rededication (during the second century BCE) of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, where we were told brave Jewish soldiers had risen up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt.

Then, when my own children were young, we took them to the Hypermarket to light the big menorah, feast on more latkes and once again celebrate the triumph of the Maccabees and the legendary miracle of the Temple lamp whose oil lasted for eight days.

Latkes, dreidels, chocolate coins, and the cherished brass menorah my grandfather brought out for the festival, were basically the extent of the artefacts I associated with Chanukah. That is why I was completely bewildered when, in December 1997, my first Chanukah in America, I was asked what I was getting my children for Chanukah. This was not a holiday I associated with gifts, and there and then I resolved that I would not buy into the orgy of gift giving that Chanukah in the United States has become.

Easier said than done.

Not only do American Jewish kids associate Chanukah with gifts, they associate the Festival of Lights with ONE GIFT EVERY DAY for eight days. So yes, the Holiday of Lights, has become the Holiday of Multiple Gifts.



And not just eight small gifts: In some households we are talking electronics, vacations and expensive jewellery.

But wait, there’s more: The homes of some of my friends are now adorned with Chanukah bushes, Chanukah lights and Chanukah trinkets. Over the 20 years I have lived in the US, I have been to Chanukah parties with decorations, lights and gifts. The only difference is that instead of being wrapped in red, green and gold, there are multiple boxes under a Chanukah Bush, wrapped in blue, white and silver.

Growing up, I always enjoyed my friends’ ornate Christmas trees, and the iconic image of unwrapped gifts waiting to be torn open on Christmas morning. But this was something that we didn’t do, and

I was okay with that. It just was what it was, and it never occurred to me that there was an entire country of retailers who saw Chanukah as a mammoth opportunity.

And given the American talent for declaring every occasion worthy of celebration and commerce, we also now have the hybridised festivals of Festivus (thanks to Seinfeld), Kwanza (celebrating the African-American heritage), and Chrismukkah. The latter gained pop-culture fame after being featured in the Fox television programme, The OC. It was a favourite holiday for a popular character,

Seth Cohen, in response to his mixed religious heritage.

Accordingly, every year I do a segment on CNN on Christmas traditions around the world and always end by wishing our viewers “Merry Chrism Hanna Kwanza Ka.....

And so, this year, I too will be hosting a Chanukah party, will give gifts to my friends’ children, and decorate my home in blue, white and silver. And yes, there will be latkes, not like grandpa’s, but we will nevertheless pay homage to all of our ancestors, and the miracle of the oil.

The miracle of Chanukah and nutrition

AMIR LAUFERT

We live in a world which is full of new research, especially when it comes to nutrition. However, these new findings usually get hyped up on the news and social media and often leads to confusion.

As a nutritional scientist, it is my duty to understand the research and separate fact from fiction. When it comes to basic nutrition, there are some fundamental aspects which form the foundation of a good diet and that have held true for centuries. With Chanukah around the corner, it seems fit to talk about one of the foundations of nutrition, being fats and oils with the miracle of Chanukah and Judaism.

In relation to Chanukah, once the royal Hasmonean family was victorious over the Greeks, only one sealed oil flask was found, enough to light the menorah for a single day. A miracle occurred, and they lit the menorah with this oil for eight days.

Olive oil has also formed part of Middle Eastern diet and Jewish religion for many years. In fact, within Jewish learning, olive oil corresponds to yesod (foundation). Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) explains that olive oil cleanses the liver and loosens stools.

Furthermore, ancient Jewish scholars were believed to drink a teaspoon of olive oil every morning before eating, to help keep the urinary tract healthy. With the connection of olive oil and Judaism, maybe there is a lesson embedded for us to learn from? Let's take a deeper look into the macronutrient that olive oils falls under - fats.

In nutrition, oils (including olive oil) are almost 100 per cent fats. Here is some information on fats:

Fats: You either love them or hate them, but we all need them!

Fats are essential to life and the proper functioning of the body. Nutrition experts commonly classify dietary fat as either saturated “bad”, monounsaturated, or polyunsaturated “good”, I’m sure you are familiar with these words too.

A simple way to differentiate between them: Saturated fats will be solid at room temperature whereas unsaturated fats will be liquid. Simple, right? Fats are required to produce and build new cells. Now that’s pretty important, but wait, they are also a source of energy and are critical in the transmission of nerve impulses, brain function and development. They are also involved in the production of other essential molecules such as hormones.

So, fats pretty much keep everything in our

bodies in proper working order. It is like the oil for a car.

Now, before you go back to drinking olive oil by the glass, remember this: fats contain nine calories per gram, carbohydrates for example contain four calories per gram. So, 30g of fat has 270 calories while 30g of carbohydrates has 120 calories.

Fun facts about fats

- The majority of foods that are naturally high in fat, come loaded with a copious amount of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. Fats are also a great source of energy for the body and if eaten in the right amounts can help you to achieve fat loss.
- The average person carries about 80 000 to 120 000 calories of fat on their bodies!
- Fifty billion. The number of fat cells in most adults. We reach maximum capacity around puberty. However, fat cells have the ability to grow 10 times their original size to accommodate for excess storage and, once full our bodies have the ability to create more, but once a fat cell is created, it can never be removed completely, only emptied and left dormant.
- Fat cells in the body live for up to 10 years and when they die they are replaced with a new one right away. About 140 fat cells die every second!
- Females use fat cells to store the hormone oestrogen, making fat loss more technical.

(Extracted from my E-book called Limit-Less)

Cooking with olive oil

Olive oil is well-known for its heart healthy effects. However, is it still healthy when we use it in cooking?

The short answer is, yes! Olive oil is fairly resistant to heat, meaning that if you use it in moderation to lightly sauté or otherwise cook your food before reaching the smoke point (375 - 405°F), it is still safe to cook with.

To ensure that you are receiving the most bang for your buck, choose extra virgin olive oil as it has much more nutrients and antioxidants than the refined type. Plus, it tastes much better.

A tip: Keep your olive oil in a cool, dry, dark place, to prevent it from going rancid.

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Adding Sephardi flavour to festivals

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

For Jews, festivals and religious holidays are deeply intertwined with the food we eat – or in some cases, we don’t eat. With a predominantly Ashkenazi community in South Africa, Nirit Saban – founder of a popular Middle Eastern Cape Town eatery – adds Sephardi flavour to her festivals.

For Saban, who was born in Cape Town to Israeli immigrants, food has always been about family. “Both my parents are big cooks and my mom is an ultra-cook – she still cooks like we’re all still living at home, although none of us is – she’s always waiting for visitors to come and eat! Food has always been the medium through which we could all express ourselves the most and show how much love we all have for each other. It’s the thing that brings us all together.”

Saban’s rich heritage plays a central role in her dishes. Her father is of Libyan descent, while her mother’s side of the family comes from Romania. While Sephardi food and traditions were the most prevalent influences in her home, Nirit spent two years working in Israel and spent time with her Romanian granny cooking, which was a big inspiration.

“But even my mom’s taken up a lot of my dad’s heritage in terms of cooking style,” she says. “We generally prefer the Sephardi way of cooking as it tends to be a bit richer and deeper in flavour and a little spicier with ingredients like paprika, peppers, chilli and garlic. It’s a nice mingle of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean flavours coming together.

“Even though it’s mainly from Spain and Italy and that side of Europe, this influence went to Israel and was combined with Middle Eastern flavour to create Sephardi cooking,

which is now in a great space. My family and I do a lot more Sephardi cooking than Ashkenazi, but we love both sides so we just choose the best of both.”

With the undeniable link between food and festivals, Jewish tradition for Saban is also tied up in cooking. “The religious side of my life is all about the traditions and having everyone come together – having that base is very unifying,” she says.

“Our shul is quite small compared to Ashkenazis and we still have the old-school Sephardis who are making borekas and all the traditional pastries and sweet things. The world is moving so quickly and we’re losing that real sense of tradition in all religions, I think.”

Aside from the obvious influence Sephardi food traditions have on Saban’s restaurants and cookbooks, they also shine when it comes to chagim. “For Pesach, we usually make chraime, a classic fish dish that my dad’s mom makes,” she says.

“You need a meaty fish, usually we use salmon but you can use fish like yellowtail, tuna or dorado and marinate it overnight in lemon juice. Then you create a sauce with finely diced or grated onion, lots of garlic, tomato paste, paprika, cumin and a bit of the lemon juice and water.

“You simmer that sauce for 10 to 15 minutes and when it gets thick and delicious you add your fish and then cook for another 10 to 15 minutes till the fish is ready. It’s quite a spicy dish, but it’s also got a nice lightness to it.”

One of Saban’s favourite Rosh Hashanah family food traditions, is serving fritters at the start of the meal, when making brachot. “My mom makes four types of



fritters, spinach, sweetcorn, butternut and cinnamon and leek and onion. On your plate you have these fritters together with dates, pomegranates and your apples and honey.

“Those fritters before the main meal is everything to me, that’s me full! And I love the fact that we dip these fritters into the honey as we say the brachot – it’s the contrast of sweet and savoury coming together.”

As Chanukah approaches, Saban reflects further on family traditions around the festival. There’s the traditional mouth-watering Sephardi food. “For Chanukah, my mom and dad usually make a pastry which is a soft dough that they fry, called Sfınj. They put lots and lots of icing sugar on top but you can also use honey.

“They also make bistil – something my dad’s

mom used to make. It’s quite a thing, it takes lots of time and effort. You mash potatoes and you separately make a semi-spicy mince filling with onions, coriander and spices. Then you mould mash on one side of your hand so you make a pocket and fill the inside with the mince. You close the other side with mash and dust it with flour and egg, and flour again and then you fry each of them.

“My parents usually make that every Chanukah for dinner as a light meal served with a simple lettuce, tomato and cucumber salad.”

As she talks about festivals and food, it’s clear that for Saban, cooking isn’t a job, it’s a passion. Having originally started Sababa, a restaurant in Sea Point with her sister Tal Smith, with whom she penned a successful cookbook of the same name, Saban left almost seven years ago to run another branch in the City Bowl. This later became her now independent restaurant, Olami.

“The food world always seemed very inviting to me just because it’s endless and now that we’ve changed the restaurant’s name to Olami which means world, global, or universal, it’s opened up every option available to me,” she says.

“Eating is such a primal need, so to be able to celebrate that and nourish your body, soul and spirituality, is special,” she says. “I’m continually inspired to evolve and be as fresh as possible, to stick with what people want, but also introduce new things they might not have thought of.”

Having just released her second cookbook, Olami, which is filled with simple recipes underpinned by Middle Eastern and Mediterranean flavour, it’s clear Saban’s doing just that.



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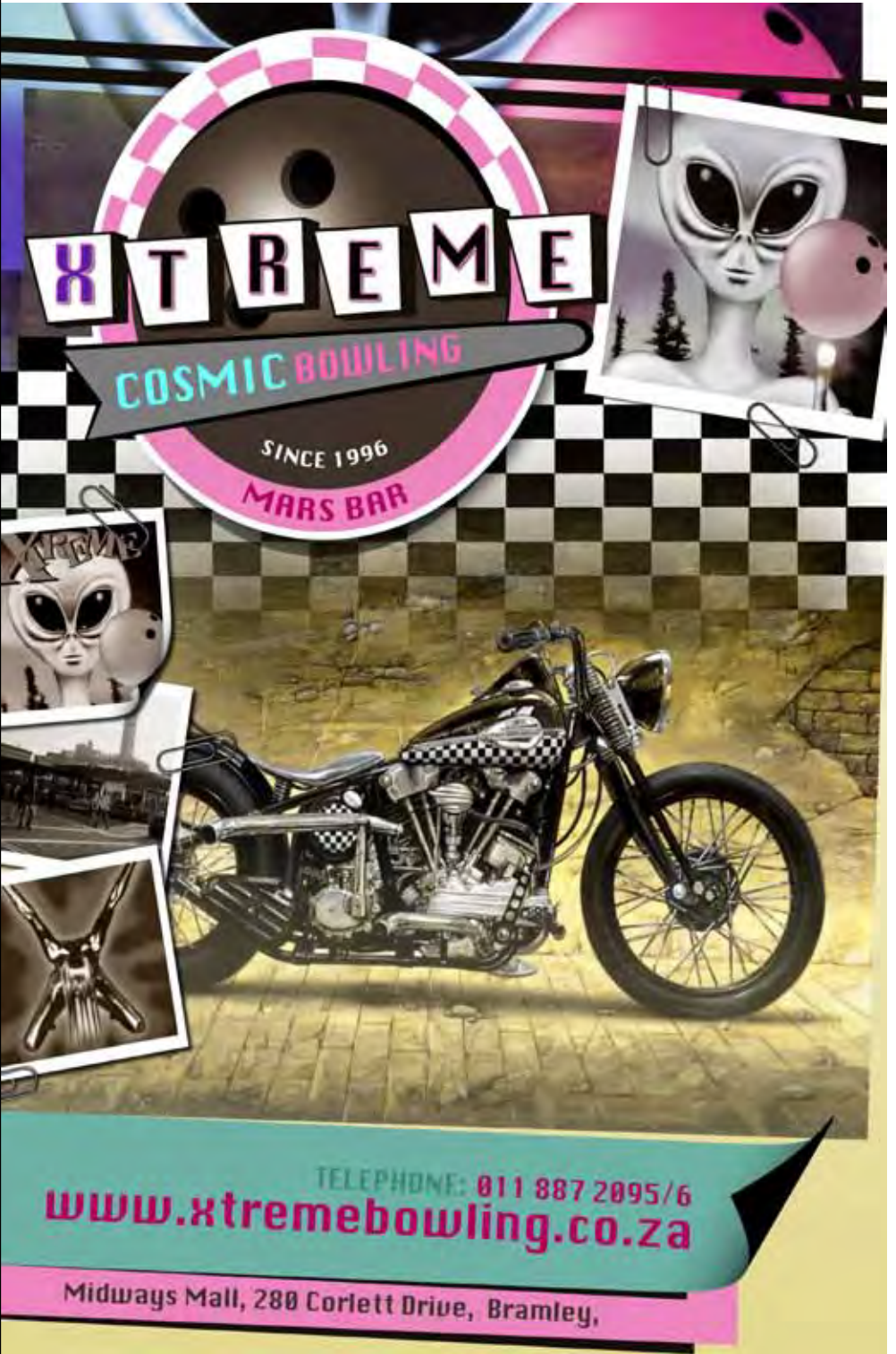
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Zucchini and sweet potato latkes with salmon and poached eggs

SHARON GLASS

Latkes are synonymous with Chanukah. Here’s my modern take on the usual potato latkes. Topped with smoked salmon and poached eggs, they make a yummy meal!

- 400-500g sweet potato
- 125g zucchini
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 jumbo egg
- 3 tbs flour
- 3 tbs fresh mint
- 3 tbs fresh Italian parsley
- 3 tbs fresh basil
- 1 tbs grated lemon rind
- Salt and pepper
- Grapeseed or avocado oil for frying
- 200g smoked salmon

Method:

- 6 poached eggs
- Grate the sweet potato and zucchini coarsely.
- Chop all the herbs coarsely.
- Mix everything together in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper.
- Heat a medium frying pan with a thin layer of oil. (You might need a little more as you fry them, but they are not deep fried).
- Place loose mounds of mixture in the frying pan and fry until golden on each side and cooked through. (I do 3 at a time)
- Cool on a baking rack. Serve warm immediately topped with smoked salmon and poached eggs.
- Or these can be reheated in a preheated 160°C oven for about 10 minutes on a baking rack so that they don’t get soggy underneath.

Makes six latkes

This recipe was specifically created by Sharon Glass, one of South Africa’s foremost cookery experts, for the SA Jewish Report.



Hake fishcakes for Chanukah

NURIT SABAN

- Ingredients**
- 1kg fresh hake fillet
 - Juice of 2 lemons
 - 1 tablespoon chopped chives
 - 1 tablespoon freshly chopped coriander leaves
 - 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
 - Salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper
 - 200g cornflake crumbs
 - 3 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Method

- Soak the hake overnight in lemon juice.
- On a chopping board, slice the hake fillet into long thin strips and then dice into small chunks.
- In a medium size mixing bowl, add the chopped diced hake flesh, all the herbs, salt and pepper and mix loosely. Shape into 8 - 10 fishcakes.
- Put the cornflake crumbs, sesame seeds, salt and pepper, on a tray and crust each fishcake with it.
- In a frying pan warm the oil on a medium heat and fry each cake for 2 minutes each side or until golden brown.

This recipe is from Nirit Saban’s latest recipe book, Olami, that was released in October 2017. See story on page 25.



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22317 OLD FRIENDS YOUNG TALENT

Israel: Can the enemy of my enemy really be my friend?



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The current diplomatic flurry about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visiting numerous African countries all over the continent to strengthen or create ties, has many positive angles, but also rattles skeletons in the closet, particularly for South African Jews.

Ties to the 48 states of sub-Saharan Africa have a complicated history with high-points and lows. Israel’s geostrategic interests have long been promoted there, especially in the Horn and East Africa. Training in intelligence and security has been given to countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Nigeria and others.

What about South Africa? The strong Zionist links to Israel of the South African Jewish community is one aspect. But when older South African Jews think of Israel-

South African ties, several uncomfortable affairs come to mind, particularly Israel’s strong military ties to the apartheid regime in the 1970s. A lot has happened since, and it is used today mainly to discredit contemporary Israel. But the notion of who we make friends with is important.

Israel openly criticised apartheid through the 1950s and 1960s, with the spectre of the Holocaust still in recent memory as a moral background. Alliances with post-colonial African governments were forged. Then came the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Under pressure from the Arab world, most African states severed Israeli links, helping to make it a “pariah state”.

Looking around for friends, Israel drew close to another pariah state, South Africa. In 1976 it even invited South African Prime Minister John Vorster – former Nazi sympathiser and leader of the fascist Ossewabrandwag that sided with Hitler – for a state visit. South African Jews were uncomfortable with the ironies, as Vorster visited Jerusalem’s Holocaust Memorial.

His visit produced an Israel-South Africa alliance which became a leading weapons

developer locally and internationally.

Israel’s attitude was: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend”. They were both states driven by fear, seeing themselves in a struggle for their existence. In Israel until the late 1970s, the threat from its Arab neighbours was very real; the country had fought three wars to protect itself.

White South Africans, meanwhile, watched with horror as colonial empires receded and black rule swept Africa. Scenes of whites fleeing Angola, Mozambique and (then) Rhodesia, were used by the apartheid regime to terrify white citizens about black rule; phrases such as “swart gevaar” gained traction.

Today, South African Jews would like nothing more than for the South African government and the Israeli government to be on excellent terms. The countries do have formal diplomatic relations, including ambassadors, and below the surface there is much trade and other connections. But politically it remains a cold relationship, epitomised by calls from important ANC members to downgrade the links.

The ANC’s criticism towards opposition

leader Mmusi Maimane’s public visit to Israel earlier this year, ignoring President Jacob Zuma’s urging for South Africans not to visit there, shows how pervasive anti-Israel feelings still are.

Israel is strong today, no longer the pariah state it once was, even though it is portrayed that way in some places. Even BDS, the worldwide campaign to boycott it, has failed as an economic and diplomatic weapon. Israel’s gross domestic product of some \$154 billion in 2006, when BDS began, has nearly doubled to \$299 billion for 2015.

Israel still faces the eternal question of how political links should be used. Some of the African states that Netanyahu is courting, use Israeli assistance to suppress democracy, engage in civil wars and perpetrate human rights violations. The dilemma about whether politics is only about “interests” or must also be driven by morality, has no definitive answer. But it is given special fuel by the South African experience.

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

Community Column

-----A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Looking back on an eventful, yet satisfying, 2017

This being my final column for 2017, I will take the opportunity of reviewing the year that has passed and some of the highlights of the work of the SAJBD during this period. For our country, it has been another eventful, often turbulent, period.

However, through it all, our Jewish community has continued to be active and vibrant in all fields of Jewish communal endeavour, and we look forward to building on these achievements in the year to come.

For the SAJBD, it has been a busy time, and indeed continues to be so even as 2017 draws to a close. Currently, our main focus is our campaign against the proposed downgrade of the South African embassy in Israel, which will be discussed and voted on at the



Above Board Shaun Zagnoev

falls into the category of prohibited hate speech.

There was an enthusiastic reception for the SAJBD’s 49th biennial national conference, which combined addressing the nitty-gritty issues in which the Board is involved with honouring members of our community adjudged to have made a particular outstanding contribution in the fields of both general human rights activism and in Jewish communal affairs.

An equally striking success was the World Jewish Congress Community Directors Forum, held in Cape Town. Delegates from over 50 countries attended this prestigious event, which gave us a unique opportunity of showcasing our community and everything it is accomplishing.

As reported on in more detail in my previous column, the Board’s Parliamentary liaison initiative has gone from strength to strength, and has indeed been a game-changer

in terms of our ability to represent our community in the sphere of public policy-making.

Our Cape Council has again been particularly involved in outreach and interfaith activities, including co-ordinating the Jewish community’s relief efforts in the wake of the Knysna fire disaster. Among the memorable public events organised by the Board in Johannesburg, was the opening of the acclaimed “Goldene Medina” exhibition on 175 years of Jewish life in South Africa, where we were honoured by the presence of Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba.

In conclusion, I sincerely thank my colleagues and friends for their loyal support over the past 11 months and wishing everyone in our community a restful and safe end-of-year break.

• 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

Letters

MISTAKES IN SPRINGBOK MINYAN STORY

The “Who are the members of the Springbok minyan” article which appeared in last week’s Jewish Report, needs correction.

The author states that there have been 10 Jewish rugby players who have represented South African in rugby tests.

He then proceeds to name them. The following are the errors:

Alan Menter never played in a Test match.

Joel Stransky is not Jewish.

Richard Kinross
Johannesburg

Jack Milner apologises for saying that all these players had played in Test matches, rather that they were all Springboks, having played for their country. While Alan Menter may not have played a Test, he still played two matches for the Boks on the 1968 tour of France. As for Joel Stransky, he has been inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame and won Maccabi SA awards.

– Editor

ADAM AND GIDEON OF BLESSED MEMORY

I have supported your distinguished publication for many years as a necessary voice for our community, and indeed have urged, with some success, those who boycott the paper for religious reasons, to re-think their position.

However, I must take issue with the publicity accorded those who like and support Mr Shaked of Beit Emanuel and his BDS colleagues, including its president (whom I worked with in the Struggle, G-d forgive me) while claiming to be “Zionists”. Such individuals belong in the garbage of Jewish history.

The Reform movement, to which I once belonged, had in this country, a number of leaders and rabbis who were farbrent supporters of the Zionist movement and Israel. In my time there was the Chief Minister, Arthur Saul Super of blessed memory, followed by the rabbi of Temple Emanuel and my close friend, Dickie Lampert.

Most of all, there was the founder and builder of Reform in South Africa, Rabbi M C Weiler, whose memory I revere. Incidentally, for most of those who don’t know, he was the first Jew, let alone rabbi, to establish a school, in Alexandra, for black children.

More than that, he was the essential Zionist and at the end of his career in the

rabbinate, made aliya and raised his family in Israel. MC’s sons, Adam and Gideon, had their education in Israel. After school, like all Israeli youth, they were called up to serve in Israel’s army, Zahal. During the 1970 War of Attrition with Egypt,

Adam was killed while serving as a tanks company commander near the Suez Canal. In 1973, the Yom Kippur War broke out. In the fighting on the Golan Heights, Gideon, serving as a tank instructor, lost his life in combat. I knew both these Giborei Yisrael, and saw Gideon while serving myself in an artillery unit during the war. I remember them every year on Yom Hazikaron.

Anyone who attends a conference of the anti-Israel ANC, of which I was once a devoted member, and when asked to say a prayer, blasts a tirade of hate against Israel, and indeed any Jews who support BDS have placed themselves outside the ranks of our community.

The Beit Emanuel congregation, and Reform movement as a whole, should remember MC Weiler and his hero sons, whose memory is insulted by the likes of Shaked and his ilk.

Rabbi Ben Isaacson
Johannesburg

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the SA Jewish Report.

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.

editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

Getting the full impact of Chanukah



Children at secular remedial schools don’t always get the full impact of Chanukah, so Ohr Chana – a support group for moms dealing with children with remedial issues – organised a special event for them. Shareen Richter, an international laughter and happiness professor, addressed the mothers on happiness 101: the bounce back breakthrough. The kids were treated to an interactive Chanukah show performed by Rachel Diamond and Michal Furman. These sisters perform educational shows for school-aged children.

Women Inspired to think about who was responsible for the Holocaust

James Cairns playing the roles of well-known people who in the past contributed to the rise of and spread of anti-Semitism, may seem unusual at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre. However, it offered a successful and stimulating WIZO Women Inspired evening on November 26.

The performance – cleverly scripted by Helen Heldenmuth – left the audience with the question of who was actually responsible for the Holocaust?

Joceline Basserabie who organised the event, told the audience of WIZO’s vital role in funding various projects in Israel, including Neve WIZO, a family foster home for abused children from the ages of 4 – 18 years, enabling them to take their place in society and to become contributing citizens. She also mentioned that the more WIZO members



Joceline Basserabie, Lee Joffe and Arnold Basserabie

we have, the more seating representation we get at the United Nations, enabling us to fight for our worthy causes.

Letters

INDEPENDENT MEDIA PUBLISHED BANNER APOLOGY

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to Brian Josselowitz’s and Alan Wolman’s letters which were published in your previous edition.

There are two main issues which they raise; one, the perennial perceived anti-Israel bias, the other the specific issue of the publication of the three-year-old story taken from the Telesur news agency of the rocket attack into Gaza.

What your readers are perhaps unaware of are the very close lines of communication between the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the South African Zionist Federation that run directly to the offices of the executive chairman, the regional executive

editors and many of our title editors.

The Board of Deputies in fact had a media monitoring service – chosen by themselves – to probe The Star and the Cape Times over a year-long period for complaints of anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism. Neither could be proved.

In the case of the Telesur issue, Independent Media were not the only ones who published that wrong report that day; several US newspapers did too, as well as some in Europe. The issue was identified very quickly and responded to in the very next edition.

I became alerted to SAZF Chairman Ben Swartz’s unhappiness through an e-mail. I met him very shortly thereafter and the Group

Foreign Editor Shannon Ebrahim instructed that every world page the following day (in The Star, The Cape Argus, the Cape Times, The Mercury and the Pretoria News) publish a banner apology running almost the entire width of the page – in itself an unprecedented effort to make amends and show good faith. I am flabbergasted that none of your readers appear to have seen this.

There will always be people who take issue with newspapers, that is the nature of our business. Media freedom is not the freedom to publish views with which we agree, but rather the contrary, to publish news and views that will test the way we see the world. It is

incumbent upon us, though, to be balanced and fair. We will never compromise on that, indeed as Mr Wolman notes, that has been our executive chairman’s unequivocal injunction to all the editors in Independent Media since the very beginning – along with his commitment never to interfere with their decisions as part of his commitment to editorial independence. Dr Iqbal Survé will however respond in due course in the new year to your readers too, on all these issues.

Kevin Ritchie
Regional Executive Editor: Gauteng
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Celebrating numeracy and literacy at Orange Grove School



End-of-year party at Orange Grove Primary with Link volunteers and some grade 2 pupils.

Not all kids find literacy and numeracy easy to pick up, so The Link at Orange Grove Primary School (OG) ensures that as many Grade 2s as possible at the school that need help, get it. That way, improved literacy becoming a reality for the kids.

The Link organised an end-of-year party party for all the grade 2s. The theme was “Everyone is special”. Each pupil received a party pack and a new book and they enjoyed a story reading session. The school hall floor vibrated from lots of dancing and singing.

In appreciation, OG presented each Link volunteer with a gorgeous scarf. The Link has 11 centres – including Orange Grove School – and is growing. Each session with a child is 45 minutes, with the first 15 being paired reading, the middle 15 is to practise handwriting and literacy games and the volunteer reads to the child for the last 15 minutes. This enables the child to get one-on-one attention and consolidate reading skills, giving them a good foundation.

The organisation can only help as many grade 2s as there are volunteers, so if you would like to be a part of this project, contact Mickie Mayer at Mickiemayer@gmail.com or Robynne Abrahams (082) 651-7921.

KDVP – a top SA maths and science school

The University of Pretoria recognises King David High School Victory Park as one of the top schools in South Africa for maths and science in 2017. This is a truly proud moment for the school.

The framed award from the University of Pretoria



Torah Academy end-of-year performance



Photo: Chani Zwick

Grade 3 girls from Torah Academy Primary School are pictured performing in their end-of-year “our matriarchs/mothers” concert. The theme depicted each girl as a princess. Mothers and grandmothers of the pupils attended the concert.

Each grade in the school had its own concert: grade 1 had a siddur concert, general concerts for the other grades, while the grade 6 boys and girls had separate graduation ceremonies.

Sandton Sinai Primary’s new building is ready

Sandton Sinai Primary School’s new primary school building is complete and ready.

It’s modern, boasting airy classrooms and a state-of-the-art hall on the second floor. There’s even a slide from the first floor to the ground level for the grade 1s.



Grade 1s on the jungle gym

Andre’s Taekwondo Academy students shine bright in 2017

André van Tonder’s Taekwondo Academy trainees Eden Leibowitz, Da’el Basserabie, Aden Cohen-Louw, Mira Cohn, Aron Cohen, Shaina Resnik, Gabriel Diamond, and Darren Gomer have been selected to represent South Africa in the Taekwondo World Championships in the United States next year. This Norwood dojo finished off their year competing at the American Taekwondo Association South African National Championship in Pretoria on October 6. From there, they brought home a collective 39 medals, including 18 golds.

At the dojo’s end of year prizegiving, two Jewish trainees, Eden Leibowitz and Da’el Basserabie, of the dojo’s Jewish students, received their national colours.



Students from André’s dojo



The partners and staff of Grant Thornton would like to wish all their Jewish clients a Happy Chanukah.



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