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■ Volume 22 – Number 25 ■ 13 July 2018 ■ 1 Av 5778

# south african Jewish Report

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## Bomb scares terrorise Durban

TALI FEINBERG

A series of bomb threats across Durban over the past week has left its population – including a small and ageing Jewish community – living in fear. Several explosive devices have been found in public spaces, and while no one has yet claimed responsibility for the string of scares, Jevon Greenblatt, director of the Community Security Organisation (CSO), says these incidents show a “deeply concerning shift towards radicalism”, no matter what the reason behind them.

“The aim is to create fear, which is terrorism in itself. This may be a way to test the system – to see if it is possible to plant devices in shopping centres, and then to ramp up the process to a more serious attack at a later stage. It’s like opening Pandora’s Box: if something like this is carried out, it allows the next extremist to do the same,” Greenblatt told the *SA Jewish Report*.

Furthermore, the latest incidents may be linked to a terrorist attack that was carried out on a mosque in Verulam, just outside Durban, in May, as well as to the kidnapping and killing of an elderly British-South African couple in the same area in February by Islamic State operatives, which led the UK government to issue a terror warning for travellers visiting South Africa.

According to Willem Els, senior training co-ordinator at the Pretoria-headquartered Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the device found at the Woolworths Gateway store on Saturday bears similarities to a device found at the Verulam mosque after the terrorist attack there.

“The aim is to create fear, which is terrorism in itself. This may be a way to test the system – to see if it is possible to plant devices in shopping centres, and then to ramp up the process to a more serious attack at a later stage.”

After the attack on the mosque, Maulana Aftab Haider, the national co-ordinator of the Ahlul Bait Foundation of South Africa, said: “This has all the hallmarks of the Islamic State style of operation.”

And, when the suspects in the murder of the British couple were found, an Islamic State flag was flying at their site.

“If the more recent explosive devices in Durban are found to originate from the same source as that used in the Verulam attack, the outcome of the Hawks’ investigation into the mosque attack takes on a heightened resonance,” wrote Rebecca Davis in the *Daily Maverick*.

“There are indications that the events of the past months are being taken seriously at the highest levels. One such sign was the visit paid by President Cyril Ramaphosa to the Verulam mosque on Sunday, almost two months after the mosque was attacked... Making time for the mosque visit is a possible indication of the importance being given to the issue,” she added.

Els emphasises that at the moment, authorities have very little information as no one has taken responsibility for the bomb scares. “It could be terrorism, extortion or personal grudges. The fact that Woolworths was targeted led to speculation that this could be a continuation of anti-Jewish sentiments, after a pig’s head was placed in a Woolworths store in Cape Town in 2014, but this is just a possibility at this stage,” he said.

“The entire population of KwaZulu-Natal is feeling unnerved and anxious about the discovery of these devices,” said Mary Kluk,

president of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and herself a Durban resident, after five suspicious devices were found in stores and public places around Durban over the past few days.

On Saturday evening, a device was found under two cars in the Berea on the day of the Vodacom Durban July horserace. Last Wednesday and Thursday, devices were found at Woolworths stores at Gateway and Westville Pavilion malls.

In a statement on Friday, Woolworths said: “We can confirm that we found an explosive device in our Westville Pavilion store late on Wednesday night and our Gateway store on Thursday. The device in the Pavilion store caused a fire in a section of our menswear department, which was extinguished quickly and no one was injured. As soon as we were made aware of a potential explosive device in our Gateway store, we immediately evacuated the store as a

precautionary measure in order to ensure the safety of our people and our customers.”

On Monday evening, Durban’s Bomb Disposal Unit detonated, in a controlled environment, a bomb-like device that was found at a Spar in Austerville in Wentworth. According to reports, a 10-year-old boy arrived at the supermarket and gave the manager a brown envelope which contained a 9mm bullet and a handwritten letter. The letter instructed that he put money inside a bag and leave the bag outside the supermarket, otherwise a bomb would explode. It further warned that he should not contact the police.

The boy who delivered that letter said it was given to him by an unknown male, and he was told to give it to the manager of the supermarket. The manager, accompanied by the boy, then took the envelope personally to the police station.

Continued on page 4>>

## The mystery of Kenneth Saffer’s JNF certificate is solved

Rabbi Adam Saffer  
and Irene House with  
Kenneth Saffer’s Jewish  
National Fund certificate.  
See story on page 4.



Photo: Ian Ossendryver



# Israel is flying high in the rankings

JORDAN MOSHE

Israel has been ranked third in the world in terms of innovation, and is the eighth most powerful country on the continent. This, according to two different international indices released this past week.

While the ANC continues to push for the South African embassy to be downgraded and International Relations and Cooperation Minister Lindiwe Sisulu remains adamant that the ambassador to Israel will not be reinstated, the Jewish State continues to rack up achievement after achievement.

Israel's success in virtually every sector is nothing short of astounding, and South Africa may well be missing out in downscaling its ties with this country.

According to the World Economic Forum

index, published earlier this week, Israel is third in terms of innovation and is among the top 10 most innovative countries on the planet. Israel came just after Switzerland and then America. It was well ahead of countries such as the United Kingdom, France, China and Italy.

On 8 July, Israel was also ranked among the most powerful nations in the world in an annual survey by the media company, US News & World Report. It based its findings on the answers of more than 21 000 people from four regions. Israel was ranked the eighth most powerful country in the world for the second consecutive year, ahead of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The surveys and rankings are based on nine categories, incorporating 65 indicators.

This ranking looks at 80 countries, falling into four categories:

- The top 100 countries in 2014 or 2015 in terms of gross domestic product (based on World Bank data);
- The top 150 countries in the UN's Human Development Index, based on the 2014 or 2015 report;
- The top 100 countries in terms of foreign direct investment inflows in 2013 or 2014 according to UN data; and
- The top 100 countries in terms of international tourism receipts in 2014 or arrivals in 2013, based on World Bank data.

Israel scored a 9.8/10 in perception of the



strength of its military and 7.9/10 for its political influence, according to *Haaretz*. It was also deemed to have strong international alliances and to be quite economically influential. It did not, however, earn a high score on the leadership indicator. Altogether, these factors made Israel the eighth most powerful country in the world for the second year in a row.

However, Israel came only 30th out of 80 in the overall list of "Best Countries", coming behind Russia, Greece and China. Israel also ranked poorly in terms of "adventure" where it came 70th (fun and sexy being two of the indicators in that category).

In the "Open for Business" category, it came 64th. The rankings suggested an inhospitable tax environment and high manufacturing costs.

Predictably, Canada, Germany and the Nordic countries fared well, with Switzerland taking top spot in the worldwide rankings for the second year in a row.

In terms of power, the US, Russia and China took the top three spots, respectively. The UK came behind Germany in fifth place.

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AUTO AFRICA

## Duarte insults original 702 owners

JORDAN MOSHE

According to ANC deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte, radio station 702 is "owned by people who have historically hated the ANC". For this reason, she did not give them permission to use comments she had made after a media briefing on Tuesday afternoon at Luthuli House.

The lead-up to her comment and behaviour above had to do with weekend newspaper reports stating that Duarte claimed ANC national executive committee member Tony Yengeni should never have been jailed for fraud in 2003. This, despite



his being found guilty of fraud 18 years ago in a case linked to the controversial arms deal. Yengeni is now heading a working group on crime and corruption at the ANC's election manifesto workshop.

It was this statement which Eyewitness News (EWN) reporter Clement Manyathela sought to clarify with Duarte at the press briefing on Tuesday. Although Manyathela claims that Duarte was happy to clarify it, she apparently made an about-turn a few minutes later and instructed him not to use her response – because he is from 702.

"If you were working for Africa World View," said Duarte, "I would have a different view because 702

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:14	18:06	Johannesburg
17:36	18:31	Cape Town
16:55	17:48	Durban
17:15	18:09	Bloemfontein
17:07	18:02	Port Elizabeth
17:00	17:55	East London

is owned by people who have historically hated the ANC." She then not only criticised the station further, but also 702 presenter Eusebius McKaiser and went on to say that the station's presenters had concluded that she is corrupt. "702 is a noted hater of anyone who is progressive, so I have allowed you to record it but I have not allowed you to use it," she said.

Was there something sinister in Duarte's comments? 702 was historically owned by Jewish media personality Issie Kirsh, who served as the chairman of Radio 702 Group and as the chairman of Primedia, the mother company of both 702 and EWN. Kirsh set up the station in 1980 and stepped down from his position a few years ago.

EWN acting editor-in-chief Sheldon Morais said the basis for Duarte's comments is

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### Torah thought of the week

## “Take an accounting of the booty...”

In this week's Parsha, Matot, Hashem commands the Jewish people to avenge the spiritual destruction that was wreaked on the Jewish men with the Midyan idolatrous prostitution ring. This was part of Bilaam's evil plan to destroy us internally when he failed to curse us.

We are a nation that has its power in the fact that we guard ourselves from immorality. Bilaam knew this and he knew, therefore, exactly how to weaken us.

Moav and Midyan were eternal enemies, but out of their hatred for the Jewish people they came together to form a truce. It should

be noted that only Midyan was taken to task. Moav has always been protected because of their ancestor Lot's devotion to Abraham, his uncle.

After the battle and the almost total annihilation of the Midyan camp, Moshe instructs the future accountants of the Jewish nation to make an exact audit of the spoils and the booty that was retrieved from the war.

I have always found these verses fascinating. Besides for them being the halachik source of the Biblical mitzvah of kashering vessels from treif to kosher, one can learn a very profound lesson

from them. Moshe calls for the said audit to ensure that not one item was misappropriated by anyone, especially himself.

Now isn't this crazy? Surely Moshe Rabbeinu is beyond all suspicion? Was it not a few weeks ago, during the skirmish with Korach and his rabble, that Moshe said: "I have never taken a single donkey from theirs, nor have I wronged any of them"? Moshe, who tangibly felt Hashem's presence around him at all times, would never succumb to petty theft.

We find a similar situation in Parshas Pekudei, where Moshe does an exact tally of all the silver half shekels and how they were used in the silver vessels and foundation blocks of the Mishkan. What's with all this suspicion?

The answer and lesson here is so significant. The Torah is telling us that no matter who we are, no matter our station in the community, we can never be beyond suspicion.

We have to go out of our way to be transparent. We have to divest ourselves of the attitude of "I don't care what others think of me! As long as I know that I am doing the right thing." Moshe is teaching us to always care and not put ourselves in questionable situations.

From here we learn the relevance of Marit Ayin and Tihu Nekiim. A Jew has to be beyond reproach, not only in the eyes of Hashem, but in the eyes of man as well.



Rabbi Ryan Goldstein, West Street Shul



# Zimbabwe Jewish community’s hopes and concerns ahead of elections

TALI FEINBERG

Jews living in Zimbabwe describe an atmosphere of “being between a rock and a hard place” regarding the upcoming elections on 30 July. They fear that nothing will change if the current regime is elected, but that the opposition coming to power could pose more challenges than solutions. “I think if the MDC [Movement for Democratic Change] comes to power, we are going to have a big problem on our hands,” says a Jewish businessman from Zimbabwe who prefers to remain anonymous. “The party is very inexperienced. For example, they’re offering to build high-speed trains, which would probably cost the same as the whole GDP of Zimbabwe! And secondly, I don’t think the army or Zanu-PF will accept it. The country is too entrenched in Zanu-PF, which owns so much of the infrastructure.” This man asked to remain anonymous as declaring himself to be anything other than politically neutral would affect his businesses, and he thinks others in the Jewish community feel the same. “Mugabe leaving was the major thing we all really wanted, and now that it has happened, we just want a smooth, free and fair election that is recognised by the global community and heralds investment,” he says. His sense is that the upcoming elections have had a paralysing effect on business and investment, as no one wants to conclude a deal or move forward until they know the outcome. He hopes that if President Emmerson Mnangagwa is re-elected, he will stay true to his slogan that “Zimbabwe is open for business” and root out corruption, as well as have a strategy to encourage investment. Arnold Joffe, chairman of the Harare Hebrew Congregation, says: “The country needs change, and I would be delighted if the opposition came to power.” He feels this way particularly because the MDC declared its intentions to build stronger ties with Israel should it be elected. However, despite high hopes, he does not think there will be a change of power, and many others in the community feel equally unsure. Speaking from Israel, Zimbabwean expat Dave Bloom says “more of the



Ian Wiesenbacher and Mduduzi Mdlongwa celebrating in the streets of Bulawayo when Robert Mugabe stood down as President of Zimbabwe

same” is the common response he received when he asked community members about the elections. Bloom is in constant contact with the 80 Jewish souls left in Harare and another approximately 50 in Bulawayo. Said one community

member to Bloom: “Whoever wins, the deposed leader will be unhappy. Voting will be the usual smokescreen. I see little chance of real change. We all wish for peace and a pro-business attitude.” Bloom says there was tempered

optimism when Mugabe stepped down last year, and some of the draconian policies were changed. However, he says, essentially Zimbabwe remains in an ongoing political and economic crisis which has spanned nearly 20 years of its nearly 40 years of independence. “The community struggles bravely to maintain a sense of community and support for each other, in the face of endless daily challenges.” Alana Baranov, a Zimbabwean expat and an expert on the politics of her birth country, says: “The ideal outcome for all Zimbabweans in the upcoming elections would be for a fair and free democratic process to take place, ushering in a new era of real political, economic and social change. “They particularly hope for an improved economy. Zimbabweans across social and economic lines want to be able to withdraw their own money from their own bank accounts. “Many Zimbabweans are looking to the parliamentary elections with excitement. There are currently a

crop of well-respected independent candidates running.” At the same time, she says there are worries that Zanu-PF has not created the right environment in the country for these upcoming elections to be truly free and fair.” Regarding the MDC’s recent promises to forge stronger ties with Israel, Baranov says: “Israel is also viewed in its context of being a close ally of the United States. So, stronger ties to the Jewish State would fit in with the MDC’s ideals of greater reintegration with the Western world. “Most Zimbabweans are part of the Christian community, and as such, see Israel as the Holy Land, as [MDC leader] Nelson Chamisa highlighted during his recent trip there. So, there is a religious connection upon which the MDC may build closer ties between the two nations. “Zimbabwe could also stand to benefit from Israeli investment as well as skills exchanges on key development issues, such as agriculture, if the MDC does reach out to Israel.”

## Professor Michael Katz – the man in the middle of Moyane’s demands

TALI FEINBERG

When the attorneys representing suspended South African Revenue Service (SARS) commissioner Tom Moyane wrote to President Cyril Ramaphosa’s lawyers on 2 July, one of their key demands was that Professor Michael Katz be removed from the commission looking into tax administration and governance at SARS. Their reason was simply: Katz has a close relationship with the president. Moyane’s lawyers, Mabuza Attorneys, wrote to Ramaphosa that “this renders Professor Katz as an assumed agent or extension of yourself... leading to bias”. So, they demanded that he “remove Professor Katz as your appointed assistant to Judge Nugent” – referring to retired Judge Robert Nugent, who is leading the commission of inquiry. Despite these attempts to undermine his integrity, Katz’s record shows the opposite. He has been described as a giant in the fields of law, taxation and corporate governance who has made an enormous contribution to the success and stability of the South Africa’s

corporate, legal and financial sectors. He is the chairperson of ENSafrica, specialising in corporate and commercial law. In a career that spans more than 50 years, he was appointed by the South African government to chair the Commission of Inquiry into Taxation in 1995 (known as the Katz Commission), and as part of this, nine “Katz Reports” were completed under his leadership. Katz was appointed by Chris Liebenberg, who was finance minister at the time, to also chair the Tax Advisory Committee, as well as to serve as a member of the Security Regulation Panel. Following these activities, he was presented with a Tax Honorary Fellowship Award by the South African Institute of Tax Practitioners (SAIT). He also chaired the Committee for the Restructuring of the Johannesburg Securities Exchange to review its structure and operations, and was on the board of directors of the South Africa 2010 FIFA World Cup. In addition, Katz has received various academic appointments and lifetime achievement awards. In short, he is highly qualified to look

into misconduct at SARS and advise how to rebuild the organisation. Over and above that, he has played a towering role in the South African Jewish community and civil society.



Professor Michael Katz

From 1983 to 1991, he served first as national chairman and then as president of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). “During these watershed years, when South Africa was engaged in a difficult and still very uncertain process of social and political transition, he provided the kind of calm, wise and forward-looking leadership that the

Jewish community needed,” says the SAJBD’s David Saks. “Since then, he still assists its leadership in dealing successfully with some of its most daunting challenges.” He is a trustee of numerous trusts, including The Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund, The Constitution Hill Trust, The Legal Resources Trust, The Constitutional Court Trust, The Donald Gordon Foundation, and The South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation. He is also a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is definitely a man to have in your corner. His relationship with Ramaphosa appears to be a close friendship, and the professor may have acted as an attorney for Ramaphosa in the past. When approached by the *SA Jewish Report*, Katz declined to comment. It remains to be seen if Ramaphosa will recuse Katz from the commission of inquiry, but with his expertise, it could be to the detriment of the investigation and the country as a whole.

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PROPERTIES



# The mystery of Kenneth Saffer’s JNF certificate is solved

JORDAN MOSHE

When Steve and Irene House arrived at the home of Rabbi Adam Saffer, the questions which had plagued them for almost a decade could finally be answered. A name on a certificate which had hung in their dining room for 10 years was going to be given a face, a personality and a home.

For Saffer, an uncle he had never known was coming home, after having been the subject of fixation for people who were complete strangers to him.

Unbeknown to him, a piece of his family history had been almost 50km away for the past 10 years and was now coming through his door. Little did he know that his family’s history had captivated people he had never met, and that this meeting would prove nothing short of extraordinary.

“If someone contacted me and said that they had found something that belonged to my family years ago, my excitement would be indescribable,” says Irene. “If a part of my history could be given to me, I’d want it more than anything.” Although her determination ensured that she eventually found the owner of her discovery, the journey was a long and trying one.

When she and her husband, Steve, visited a car-boot sale in Walkerville in 2008, Irene did not expect to come away with a mission. But as fate would have it, when she scoured the goods on offer that day, she found something that captured her attention immediately. It was a small Jewish National Fund (JNF) certificate, issued to one Kenneth Michael Saffer on the occasion of his birth and the purchase of a tree in Israel in his name. “I thought it was beautiful,” says Irene. “It simply had to come home with me, and I had to find its owners.”

After paying the princely sum of R5, she took it home and began her search. While the certificate hung in its frame on the wall of her dining room, Irene tried every avenue she could possibly think of in order to return the certificate to its owner, or at least his descendants. “The number of times I tried my luck with the phone book are too many to count,” she laughs. “There wasn’t a single Saffer in there whom I didn’t call. But no matter how many of them I spoke to, no one had heard of Kenneth. Neither had any of the Jewish schools I contacted.”

She explains how difficult it was to describe her mission to people. “Everyone immediately assumed I was trying to sell them something,” she laughs. “They couldn’t believe I was trying to give something back to its owner.”

Her relatives and friends were also sceptical. Although her husband shared some of her enthusiasm, others were at a loss as to why she was so determined. “My children



thought I was absolutely mad,” says Irene. “Many of my friends said to me: ‘You’re not Jewish, so why on earth are you doing this?’ I had to return it, and that was that.”

**“He was such a nice-looking chap, and I am so glad I know what he looked like at last. His certificate has been hanging in our dining room for 10 years, and now he has come home at last.”**

Years passed, Irene had little luck and admits that her hope flagged from time to time. It was in May this year, however, that her hopes were rekindled when her son brought home a copy of the *SA Jewish Report*. “My son walked in one evening with the newspaper, thinking it may help. I took a chance and decided to try my luck.”

It paid off. After receiving a call from Irene two days

It was later that week, however, that Saffer’s sad fate was revealed. On researching biographical news cuttings, Musiker came across a tragic article from *The Zionist Record* of 19 January 1973, which relates to the deaths of two children of Isadore and Rae Saffer, prominent Johannesburg Zionist supporters. Kenneth Michael and his sister, Pamela Saffer, had both died in separate accidents in 1963.

According to an obituary published earlier that month, Kenneth Saffer, a prominent Wits University student, died at the age of 19 in an accident while hiking in the Drakensberg mountains.

With this information, the *SA Jewish Report* turned to social media community platforms in the hopes of finding a living relative of the late Kenneth to return the certificate. However, when posts on sites like the Johannesburg Jewish Community Forum and Johannesburg Jewish Mommies yielded no response, other search methods were called for, and anyone with the surname Saffer was sought out and contacted.

Initial results included Minnie Saffer, who, aside from being related to Kenneth through marriage, suggested we contact Kenneth’s niece, Dr Shoshana Saffer. After contact with Shoshana yielded no results, it was Minnie’s husband Anthony – Kenneth’s cousin – who suggested the newspaper make contact with Shoshana’s brother, Rabbi Adam Saffer. He happened to be Kenneth’s nephew.

And finally, after weeks of searching, we were able to contact Rabbi Saffer, and arranged for him to meet Mr and Mrs House at his home in Glenhazel on 4 July, more than two months after our search had

begun.

“My father is two years older than Kenneth,” explains Rabbi Saffer. “After Kenneth and his sister Pamela were both killed in separate accidents in the same year, my father preferred not to talk about the tragedies. When I was growing

up, he would never speak about his brother.”

One of five siblings, Saffer is the son of Dr Israel and Sheila Saffer, both in their 70s and now living in Israel. Showing us photographs from his late uncle’s school days, Rabbi Saffer explained how it was his mother, Sheila, who had filled in the blanks of his family history for him. She had quietly told him about his father’s late siblings. “Dad never opened up about either of them,” he explains. “Thanks to my mother, I patched the family history together and came to know about the aunt and

uncle I never knew.”

Rabbi Saffer confirmed what the articles from the archives had indicated, and explained how his grandparents had founded Kiryat Moriah, a youth centre in Jerusalem, in memory of their son and daughter. “Kiryat Moriah is still going strong, and my father still visits there often. While he won’t talk about his late siblings, they’re still a part of his life.”

Now the rabbi’s uncle has become a part of his life, and his memory will remain cherished for years to come. Rabbi Saffer plans to keep the certificate found by the Houses, along with other family history memorabilia.

Irene couldn’t be happier. After living on a smallholding for years, she and her husband are scaling down, and she expressed her happiness at having brought the story to a close before they move.

Looking at the photographs of Kenneth, she says: “He was such a nice-looking chap, and I am so glad I know what he looked like at last. His certificate has been hanging in our dining room for 10 years, and now he has come home at last.”

How the certificate found its way to Walkerville remains a mystery, but that investigation will probably be another story entirely.

## Bomb scares terrorise Durban

>>>Continued from page 1

The police attended and cordoned off the area. The Bomb Disposal Unit arrived and with the use of a dog, conducted an explosives search inside the supermarket, where a black plastic packet was found at the entrance near the tills.

On Sunday, police said that a case in terms of the Explosives Act had been opened. However, they remain tight-lipped about whether the threats are linked to terrorism or if the suspects have been apprehended. On Monday, the Hawks took over the investigation.

CSO’s Greenblatt explained that the devices found in the mosque and in the stores were meant to cause a fire, while the ones found near the Durban July were explosive devices meant to cause injuries. He said that both are typical of what is found online when teaching extremists to build such devices. He assured the community that CSO is protecting all installations and encouraged everyone to remain alert.

In a series of tweets, Jasmine Opperman, Southern Africa director for the Terrorism, Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC), wrote that the broader context was of primary concern: “The use of extremist behaviour to draw attention – the question is what the next step is: actual killing of people? A culture of violence in drawing attention to an issue or grievance can only feed extremist agendas. Durban has a history of extremist activities. With the mosque attack in Verulam still left unanswered, do we have the intelligence and capabilities to investigate and draw this to a conclusion so as to counter fear?” she asked.

“Extremist behaviour is again showing South Africa’s vulnerability to violent behaviour. A person does not have to be associated to a group or to international terror groups to access knowledge on how to make a bomb or engage in extremist behaviour,” she concluded.

### Message from CSO regarding bomb scares in Durban

Although we do not have any clear information about the perpetrators or their motive, we are closely monitoring the situation and awaiting feedback from the police investigation.

The CSO urges you to be fully alert for suspicious bags, packages, people or vehicles in and around your facilities and in public places. If you see any such object, do not touch it. You and others must move as far away from the bag or package as possible to a safe place. Report it to the CSO, local security and the police immediately.

It is critical to carry out an effective search of your facilities and the immediate surroundings before any services, events or routine activities. Please also ensure that no unauthorised access can be gained to your communal facilities at any given time.

- *Remain vigilant and report anything suspicious to the CSO Control Room immediately on 0861 800 018.*



# Is the recall of the SA ambassador effectively a downgrade?

## OPINION

Steven Gruzd



The prospects of a swift return of South Africa’s ambassador to Israel look bleak. Last week, at her first newly instituted monthly press briefing, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Lindiwe Sisulu emphasised that current conditions prevent Ambassador Sisa Ngombane from going back to his post in Tel Aviv. Is this tantamount to a tacit downgrade of the South African embassy to a liaison office, as per the ANC’s December 2017 resolution?

According to the Town Press community newspaper, Sisulu said at the briefing: “I’m very glad that I recalled the ambassador, because we could not have been in the situation that we are at now. It’s been a violation that has gone on for a long time, and we can’t be looking away. We are holding back our ambassador until we are certain that we are making headway. For us this an unacceptable situation, completely unacceptable.”

Ngombane was recalled to Pretoria in mid-May to express government’s outrage about the deadly clashes at the Gaza border fence, as Gazans protested against Israel’s 70th Independence Day (Yom Ha’atzmaut) celebrations. The South African government blamed Israel alone for the violence.

Sisulu’s comments above suggests that South Africa was waiting for a trigger to prompt the

recall.

This comes after the ANC adopted the following resolution in December: “In order to give our practical expression of support to the oppressed people of Palestine; the ANC has unanimously resolved to direct the South African government to immediately and unconditionally downgrade the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office.”

Although the Gaza protests have subsided (and left the headlines), this has been insufficient to reverse the recall. There are no current peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians either.

By maintaining the status quo – with the ambassador cooling his heels in Pretoria indefinitely – does this accomplish the objectives of downgrading the embassy, without all the noise and formalities?

I think not.

The ANC has taken a resolution to downgrade the embassy, and to put this into effect will

require specific, formal steps. Until this is done, the two states maintain diplomatic relations, albeit increasingly strained the longer that Ngombane is grounded.

There is a difference between not having an ambassador at his post for a long time and a downgrade. The former, while uncomfortable for Israel’s supporters, means the embassy must be run by less senior officials, takes away some of its prestige, and sends a political signal of dissatisfaction by South

Africa. The US has not had an ambassador in South Africa since the end of the Obama administration, for example. Relations continue, but they lack gravitas.

A downgrade may mean that visas are required and could affect consular services such as passport applications and repatriating dead bodies. And if there is no embassy in Tel Aviv, there would be the inconvenience of working through a third country. It could amount to the de-recognition of Israel’s right to exist by South Africa.

The news website, *Independent Online* (IOL), reports that Sisulu, when asked at the briefing about what specific steps her department had taken on the downgrade, replied: “The ANC resolution on this issue at the 54th conference was clear and unambiguous... The ANC subcommittee on international relations has

not yet met to give us a deadline... this will be top of the agenda.”

The formal downgrade is thus still on the cards and is exacerbated (but not superseded) by Ambassador Ngombane not being at his post. Israel’s supporters will continue with high-level meetings, indignant press releases, feasibility studies, marches and petitions, but these have not swayed the South African government.

The longer the recall remains, the more fuel is being added to the downgrade fire.

• Steven Gruzd is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs

## Christians rally to support Israel

JORDAN MOSHE

Pro-Israel Christian communities are tired of keeping a low profile in the fight for Israel and have called for a mass rally in support of the Jewish State to happen on 25 July.

South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) has heeded this call and arranged for a rally in support of Israel to take place later this month. The churches which will be involved include the Shembe Nazareth Baptist Church, Council of Churches South Africa International, Reconciliation with Christ Ministries, the City of Mercy Tabernacle and Naturena Baptist Church.

On Wednesday, 25 July, the event will begin at Freedom Park in Pretoria, where supporters will gather in their numbers to show how much a connection with Israel really means to them.

The rally aims to give a voice to those who have thus far been relatively silent in their public support of the Jewish State.

This rally follows in the wake of the pro-Israel petition, launched almost a month ago by SAFI

co-chairperson Ben Swartz, which received some 37 000 signatures.

Considering this number of signatories, the rally will afford those who support Israel from across the religious spectrum another opportunity to take a stand and make their position clear.

“Although SAFI is facilitating the event, it has been through the Christian community’s insistence that the event has been initiated,” says Swartz.

They have been calling for an opportunity to demonstrate that they want to put the interests of greater South Africa first and strengthen its relationship with Israel for the country’s benefit, according to Swartz.

“Coming together in unity and in solidarity, Jews and Christians alike have committed to a cause which carries personal significance for many of them, and are determined to make themselves heard,” he says.

No further details have been shared for security reasons. For more information, contact SAFI at 011 645 2512.



Ambassador Sisa Ngombane

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south african

# Jewish Report

## Doing it because it is the right thing to do

When I was incensed that an Iranian teenager, Maedeh Hojabri, was arrested for putting videos of herself dancing on social media, people looked at me quizzically. I was then so thrilled to see that people around the world supported her and I, too, wanted to do my bit.

Those people who looked at me quizzically asked why I bother. “She is Iranian and has nothing to do with you – she is not even Jewish,” was their explanation. Why care about a young teenager in Iran who has never been allowed to express her individuality publicly?

She is not allowed to actually be seen in public – or at least, not without her face covered. She is certainly not allowed to show her joy in dancing, something I love to do.

As a South African who has the right to express my feelings and views wherever I want to and to dance until the cows come home, I feel her pain. What’s more, I wish I could do something to help her and all those women who have no rights in a country with the most draconian laws pertaining to women. I also feel so lucky to live in a country where, as a woman, I have rights.

I was in awe of the Iranians who showed their support for her by posting videos of themselves dancing on social media. They were risking a great deal more than we would be.

I was so moved that even in Israel, people supported a woman in a country that would like to see the Jewish State wiped off the planet. They too didn’t see her as an Iranian or or as part of the Iranian dictatorship. They didn’t see her as a pawn in a political game, but rather, as a person who needs as much help as she can get...

It is about doing the right thing. It is not about playing political games. It is about being someone who cares. People are not politics – people are living beings.

I am not sure that those of us on the southern tip of Africa who care will make much of a difference to the lives of women in Iran or to the life of Hojabri, but I do hope that somehow she knows there is this upswell of support for her. Either way, it is about doing the right thing.

When 12 Thai boys aged 11 to 16 and their football coach got trapped deep in a cave on 23 June and were unable to get out, the world was horrified. They had gone on an outing and a sudden downpour blocked all exits to the cave they were exploring. They got stranded in the dark tunnels for nine days and were only rescued this week.

They had limited time before the air inside the cave became toxic and the monsoon rains forecast would seal off the cave until next year.

Thai authorities were racing against the clock to save these boys and they simply could not do it on their own.

The first thing that became obvious to me was Thailand, a country that is incredibly polarised by political differences, united behind the struggle to free these children.

Then the world gave their support. An Australian doctor and cave-diving specialist, Richard Harris, gave up his holiday to assist with the rescue operation. He went into the cave and stayed with the boys to monitor their health while they waited to be rescued. There were individual British, Belgian, Danish, Finnish and Canadian nationals involved in the rescue.

And countries like the United States, China, Australia and the United Kingdom got involved with the rescue.

Israel also got on board with its technology, which enabled communication with the boys and their coach, who had all taken refuge in a chamber deep underground.

The point is: politics was thrust asunder as life became way more important and people from all religions, walks of life and political persuasions got involved. It was beautiful. All the boys and their coach were rescued, although one retired Thai Navy Seal died in the operation.

Nobody in the rescue operation questioned who was trapped what religious or political views they had. They simply went in to save lives. Why? Because it was the right thing to do.

As it so often happens, when we are faced with a life-and-death situation, all differences fall by the wayside as we do what we need to do.

Why on earth do we have to wait for life-and-death situations? Why do we need to wait for people to be locked up because all they want to do is dance and show others the joy they get from it? I don’t know.

The South African Jewish community is such a caring and thoughtful group of people and genuinely go out of their way to help others in need.

Whenever we put a story in the *SA Jewish Report*, in which someone could do with help, they get it. We generally don’t ask for help, but those who need it always get it in bucketloads. This never ceases to amaze me.

I look around at the Jewish organisations that quietly move mountains for people in need – they don’t ask to be recognised, they just do it. Why? Simply because it is the right thing to do.

I will keep doing my best to keep on fighting the good fight – doing things because they are right. Join me...

Shabbat Shalom!  
**Peta Krost Maunder**  
**Editor**

# Who will score the winning goal in soccer diplomacy?

## DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



Russia, this week, is the most popular place on earth. The semi-final England-Croatia game of the FIFA World Cup coincided with Russian President Vladimir Putin meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, bringing with it the promise of “soccer diplomacy” in which everyone expects to score a goal.

This has been a good World Cup for Russia – a chance to showcase the best that the country has to offer and to raise its geopolitical profile globally. More than two-and-a-half million tickets were sold to fans, who flew in from across the world and Putin hosted prime ministers and presidents alike.

The games were not marred by violence or terrorism and, despite being the lowest-ranked side, the Russian team performed beyond all expectation. Pictures of fans taking to the streets and celebrations across Russia carrying on into the early hours of the morning were a welcome change from the negative image many have come to associate with the country.

I watched Germany lose against South Korea while I was in Berlin, and the joke doing the rounds was that the only difference between the South African and German sides was that at least South Africa lived up to its expectations. Russia certainly has. The crowning moment will come the day after the final, next Monday, when Putin and US President Donald Trump hold their first summit meeting in the Finnish capital.



It will be five days after the Russian president met with Netanyahu in Moscow – and Israelis proudly boast that Putin invited Netanyahu to watch the the semi final game in his box alongside him. To be fair, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was also invited in what is interpreted as a major diplomatic coup. This goal, perfectly executed by Putin, comes as Moscow continues to assert its diplomatic skills and influence.

This was Netanyahu’s third visit to the Russian capital since the beginning of this year. In addition, he’s spoken with the Russian president six times on the phone. Their friendship and close working relationship is evident, as is the similar rapport between Netanyahu and Trump.

The Israeli leader has repeatedly thanked Trump for his position on Iran, as well as “the defence the US now provides Israel at the United Nations day in, and day out... America has no greater friend than Israel, and Israel has no greater friend than America,” Netanyahu said recently.

And so the Israeli premier is in the enviable position of having his views and concerns, especially with regard to Iran and Syria, well known and understood by both leaders.

Three days before Netanyahu met with Putin, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) is believed to have attacked an Iranian airbase in Syria, near the city of Homs. It’s the third such strike on the site this year alone, and the timing is not coincidental. It clearly sends a message that Jerusalem will not shy away from

protecting its interests, regardless of Russian reservations and/or an Iranian reaction.

As it has done in recent weeks, the Kremlin kept quiet following the attack, despite the fact that Russia controls the skies over Syria. It confirms a widely held belief that Moscow will turn the other cheek each time Israel strikes Iranian targets inside Syria. But this is not enough for Netanyahu. Neither is the indication from Russian officials that they will act if the Iranians come closer than 80km to the Israel-Syria border.

Netanyahu’s argument – and he stressed this in his meeting with Putin, as he has done on numerous occasions with Trump – is that it is not sufficient to draw an artificial line in the sand dozens of kilometres away from the Israel-Syria border. Iran has weapons that can reach further than 80km, which is why, from Israel’s perspective, for as long as there is an Iranian presence in Syria, even indirect, the country feels threatened.

The Israelis worry that Iran is attempting to gain a foothold in southern Syria as a base from where to attack the Jewish state. Netanyahu wants all Iranian forces and associated militias driven out of the country. For him, first prize would be if Trump asks Putin, come Monday’s summit, to curb Iran’s military operations in Syria, but that might be too tall an order for the Russian president to deliver on. He would risk rupturing relations with his allies in Tehran and could leave Russian forces having to do the lion’s share of the remaining fighting in Syria – a burden that Moscow does not want to shoulder. Although Russian (and Syrian) officials seem less keen on collaborating with Tehran than they were in the past, it doesn’t mean they are necessarily on the same page as Israel.

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov recently said it was “absolutely unrealistic” to expect Iran to completely withdraw from Syria. On the table is a proposed ceasefire deal brokered by Russia, Jordan and the US, in which non-Syrian forces will be withdrawn from the Israel-Syria border area and replaced with Syrian troops. It is not ideal for Jerusalem, but it seems Israeli officials have come to terms with the fact that Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad will continue to rule Syria in some capacity in the future.

As for Iran, most observers agree that Tehran is unlikely – at least, any time soon – to launch a retaliatory attack on Israel following its (suspected) strikes.

Jerusalem, and indeed the whole world, will be closely watching the first summit meeting between Putin and Trump. The two leaders could not be more different. Trump’s spontaneous approach to negotiations, compared to the very measured and unfathomable style of the Russian president, make predicting its outcome close to impossible. And yet Netanyahu is happy.

Among the items on Monday’s agenda is Syria and Iran. Whatever Trump and Putin decide, or don’t decide, they are likely to continue to support, or at least not oppose, Israel’s actions in Syria and remain sensitive to Israeli concerns. When Netanyahu smiled at the cameras from Luzhniki Stadium on Wednesday night, he was smiling about more than just front-row seats to the beautiful game.



# SA Jewish community at risk of losing young, skilled immigrants

## OPINION

Dan Brotman



I was very fortunate to have received permanent residency in South Africa in 2013, under the category of “exceptional skills”. I was 26 years old at the time. After some years performing Jewish communal work, I went on to co-found a company that curates sector-specific trips to nine destinations around the world. This is for South African professionals and entrepreneurs who want to take advantage of some of the best technological innovations in their industry. I am proud that my company provides global exposure and expansion opportunities to hundreds of small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and corporates – and proud of the fact that we have created employment for South Africans.

Given that I can access almost 200 countries visa-free, many people could not understand why I chose to apply for South African citizenship in 2016. For me, citizenship is a tangible sign of identity and belonging, and I yearned to ‘belong’ on paper to the country I had lived in for the majority of my adult life.

As my professional and voluntary work have always focused on contributing to South Africa’s social and economic fabric, it felt like the ultimate sign of rejection when my application was refused last year. The High Court in Cape Town recently found that the reasons given were in contravention of the Constitution.

“For me, citizenship is a tangible sign of identity and belonging, and I yearned to ‘belong’ on paper to the country I had lived in for the majority of my adult life.”

It now appears that my application will be finalised next month. However, had this issue not been resolved, it would have been very difficult for me to justify remaining in South Africa. Stéphane Rogovsky is in a much less fortunate situation. The 39-year-old former banker from Belgium arrived in South Africa in 2014. He founded R-Squared Digital, a Cape Town-based influencer marketing agency that has created full-time employment for South Africans. He came here on a four-year, non-renewable Intracompany Transfer visa, which expires on 31 December. A year and a half ago, he applied for permanent residency at the South African

Embassy in Brussels and was informed 10 months later that Home Affairs had lost his application, forcing his attorney to re-submit all supporting documentation. He has still not been issued with a reference number, which means he cannot track the status of his application. With five months left to legally stay in the country, Rogovsky may be forced to close down his company and return to Europe, resulting in job losses for South Africans and lost personal and corporate tax for the South African Revenue Service. Canadian-born Kristy Turest-Swartz, also 39, serves as the director of fundraising strategy and operations at the United Jewish Campaign in Cape Town. She arrived in South Africa in 2003 as a volunteer, married a local, and subsequently had a South African child. She applied for permanent residency in 2008 and waited three agonising years for her application to be approved. It took her six years and four separate attempts to finally get Home Affairs to verify the authenticity of the same certificate it had issued her. She has now been waiting for more than a year to be issued with an



identity number. Without such a number, she cannot access any form of credit normally available to locals, ranging from retail store cards to favourable home loans. Although she is tasked with ensuring the financial future of Cape Town’s Jewish institutions, she is – ironically – unable to build a secure financial future for herself in that same community without an identity number. The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg has lost many members to larger Canadian cities. Because of this, it launched a programme inviting eligible prospective Jewish immigrants, aged 21 to 45, on a seven- to 10-day visit to explore employment, housing, schools and Jewish life. During one’s visit, the federation facilitates an interview with a Programme Officer for the Manitoba Nominee Programme. Successful interviewees then receive a letter of support from the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, which significantly bolsters their chance of being admitted to Canada. The programme has grown Winnipeg’s Jewish community by the thousands and has been particularly popular with Russian-speaking Israelis and South Americans. Last week, I attended a round table discussion with Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba, where he welcomed proposals on how to attract and retain migrants with critical skills. This is an opportune time for the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) to once again play a key role in helping South Africa reform its broken immigration system. The SAJBD was, in fact, founded in 1912 as a result of proposed legislation that would have barred Yiddish speakers from



immigrating to this country. The SAJBD could do this by forming an immigration advisory task team that meets with Home Affairs on a regular basis. This task team could consist of leading Jewish economists, policy experts, CEOs and attorneys. It would advise government on how its immigration policies could be improved in order to stimulate economic growth. A second possibility could be the introduction of a community-based Nominee Programme, in partnership with the department of home affairs and the department of trade and industry. For the Jewish community specifically, this could entail the SAJBD identifying

prospective Jewish immigrants with skills or investments that would benefit the South African economy. Similar to the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, it could invite and host selective prospective immigrants on exploratory visits. “...we should be proactive and attract and retain skilled Jewish immigrants who are willing to take the place of those we have lost due to emigration.” It could then provide special letters of support to eligible candidates in order to fast-track their immigration process. Given South Africa’s low economic growth and high unemployment rate, requirements for such a programme could include job creation for South Africans or investment in struggling local industries. We should not only be reactive to migration issues, such as the ANC’s proposed ban on dual South African/Israeli citizenship and numerous xenophobic riots. Instead, we should be proactive and attract and retain skilled Jewish immigrants who are willing to take the place of those we have lost due to emigration. • Dan Brotman is a 31-year-old American-Israeli entrepreneur based in Johannesburg and an advocate for comprehensive immigration reform.



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# Spreading #dancingisnotacrime in support of arrested Iranian dancer

PETA KROST MAUNDER

People around the world are joining the social media campaign to support the young Iranian gymnast, Maedeh Hojabri, who was arrested for posting videos on Instagram of herself dancing.

While many other women in Iran are now defying Iran’s draconian laws by posting videos of themselves dancing to protest against Hojabri’s arrest, the #Dancingisnotacrime campaign has spread to Israelis and South African Jews as well.

Arthur Lenk, the former Israeli ambassador to South Africa, offered his support on Twitter, saying: “Dance like your life depends on it.’ G-dspeed to these brave Iranians who deserve freedom. Sending a message of friendship from Israel.”

Noa Kadman, an Israeli dance teacher, says she isn’t sure that international pressure will make a difference in Iran, but believes Hojabri should be supported. “Israel is a country that celebrates democracy, freedom of expression and dance. Iran’s arrest of a young female dancer speaks for itself,” says Kadman.

“Free expression of the body and soul through the art of dance is a right that should be afforded to any and every human being,” says Danya Amoils, an HR manager in Johannesburg. “I’m a dancer, and I know that to dance is a magical thing – a G-d-given right that should not be constrained by limitations of the conservative human mind.

“I believe this is a fight worth fighting and I take my hat off to the brave young girls who have posted their own dance expression in protest.”

**“Israel is a country that celebrates democracy, freedom of expression and dance. Iran’s arrest of a young female dancer speaks for itself,”**

After her arrest, Hojabri – and other still unidentified Instagram users who were arrested – was forced to apologise on national television last Friday.

She appeared on Iranian state television with her face blurred, crying and shaking while describing why she made and posted these videos, according to *The Guardian* newspaper.

“It wasn’t for attracting attention,” she reportedly said. “I had some followers and these videos were for them. I did not have any intention to encourage others doing the same... I didn’t work with a team, I received no training. I only do gymnastics.”

Little is known about this teenager or even where in Iran she lives, except that she had about 600 000 Instagram followers and had posted more than 300 videos before being arrested. Since her arrest, her videos have been shared by many more people, alerting the world to her plight. Women in Iran are prohibited from dancing in front of men, except



Maedeh Hojabri, an Iranian teen who was arrested for posting dance videos on her Instagram account

Photo: screen capture : Twitter

if those male observers are close family members, according to *The Washington Post*.

Hojabri appears to have filmed herself dancing to both Western pop and Arabic music in her bedroom without wearing a hijab, which is legally required in public in Iran.

While nobody knows what the outcome of her incarceration

will be, just this week an Iranian woman, Shaparak Shajarizadeh, was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Her crime? She removed her hijab in public at the end of last year. On her own website, she posted that she had been jailed for “opposing the compulsory hijab” and “waving a white flag of peace in the street”, according to *The Times of Israel*.

## Nia creates community through dance

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

Nia dancing has ordinary women from all walks of life doing the unthinkable: Enthusing about an “exercise regimen”.

Johannesburg-based proofreader Kim Hatchuel is one of them: “What I love most about Nia is that it allows me to get completely out of my head and be more in my body.”

Except, it’s more than a workout, she says. “It’s a holistic fitness practice that addresses mind, body and spirit.” Combining dance, martial arts, and the healing arts, and using 52 moves, Nia, she says, “tones the body and mind”.

“It also attracts like-minded people.” Hatchuel says it’s become a lifestyle choice for her. “I have found a community of people who have adopted a certain way of looking at the world, at themselves, and dance.

“My Nia community worldwide have become close friends.”

Developed in 1983, a series of sports-related injuries prompted American aerobics instructors Debbie Rosas and Carlos AyaRosas to re-think the health mantra of “no pain, no gain”. They decided to research an alternative method of exercise. It had to be safe, non-impact, and body/mind based. It had to define a new approach to wellness, one that broke away from high-impact aerobics, repetitive movement, and mind-body separation.

As Rosas explained: “At the height of the Jane Fonda era, when aerobics meant high-impact and bouncing, we had a vision. It was to fall in love with our bodies, to learn to choose pleasure over pain, to take off our shoes, to feel our bodies, to express ourselves. To become conscious of what we do as a way to heal and enjoy life.”

Johannesburg-based Brown Belt Nia teacher, Michelle Raichlin, explains: “Nia is about sensation. I’ve watched as new students get in touch with the joy and power of it, and just relax. It’s deeper than an aerobics class. It’s well-structured and holistic. There are many levels to it, and people pick up on that.

“It’s about plugging into universal joy. There’s form, there’s freedom, and there’s fun,” she says.

Of course, when anything is based on something as intangible – and magical – as “universal joy”, there are unforeseen consequences.

“A connection,” Raichlin says, “seems to occur between all the participants in the class”. This connection, she says, “has helped to build the sense of community.”

Blue Belt teacher Eleni Shatenstein agrees, “Nia is a universal language. Because life, from as early as in utero, is expressed through movement, people dancing together are expressing their innermost essence.

“This language of movement bonds and binds us on the dance floor. I have taken and given classes in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Israel, and I experience that same sense of community, connection and sharing life that crosses all barriers whether its language,

culture, ethnicity, age, or gender. Nia connects me to the people I dance with in a way that defies logic and erases boundaries.”

Across the world in Queensland, Australia, Lisa Silverstone, a Black Belt teacher expresses the same sentiments. Writing a blog on [niaaustralia.com.au](http://niaaustralia.com.au), Silverstone described how she had planned to backpack around the world and drop into an occasional Nia class, but turned her trip into “a Nia tour of the world” instead.

“I really started to get it when taking classes in a language other than my own while in Germany and Switzerland. It was the language of the teacher’s body that spoke to me. It spoke through the bones and muscles, the expression on faces, and the lines and shapes created. The universal dialogue of the body spoke loud and clear, and within moments, any barriers that existed between me and the others in the class dissolved.” Wherever she was, Silverstone was invited in as one of their own, as well as a member of a bigger community.

“The meaning of community as a ‘common unity’



A Nia class in Johannesburg

was revealed to me through the open hearted generosity of the Nia tribe,” she says.

Jo’burg-based Communication Consultant, Janine Simon-Meyer, agrees. “After chatting informally after Nia classes, I’ve got to know many interesting women in fascinating professions,” she says.

“The shared experience, the commonality, the way the class is structured, becomes an inclusive circle. This is far more than just jumping up and down. It becomes a community. It’s not the sort of thing that happens after a Zumba or an aerobics class. Plus the actual classes are more fun than a party or a wedding.”

Black Belt Noa Kadman owns a studio in Kfar Saba, Israel. A former English lecturer, Kadman says that when she started dancing Nia ten years ago, she saw the potential for healing and joy in a group setting.

made their television confessions. They were sentenced to one year in prison, which was later suspended, and 91 lashes, according to *The New York Times*.

In 2017, four Iranian men and two women were detained for teaching a Zumba dance routine and posting it on social media. They were charged for trying to “change lifestyles and promote a lack of hijab”.

As Hojabri’s fate hangs in the balance, support for her is getting stronger and she is taking on heroic status. Wrote one supporter on Twitter: “#Iranianppl want freedom from the barbaric regime. They are the hostages of this regime and all fight for freedom but many of them are not brave like her [Hojabri]. Many men and women in Iran praise and admire her as a leader, we are proud of her.”

Another wrote: “...she is a brave great warrior against the barbaric regime who took a nation in hostage. We praise and admire her as a leader to let our voices for freedom to be heard (sic).”

“When the teacher said, ‘Shimmy, (move the shoulders), then turn around, blow a kiss and smile’, I felt my chest turn to stone and thought, ‘No way, lady!’ Eventually, my body recognised that I had to stop being a control freak, that getting fit was not about self-hate, or whipping my body into shape, but about joy.”

For women “conditioned to self-sacrifice”, the joy they get out of the movement is a “revolutionary concept”, she says.

“Some women who have never experienced joy in their body and mind find a shift happening. They see another option. They want to experience it again and again. An important component of Nia is agility and mobility, and that, along with accessing energy, tends to have an effect on life choices.”

Kadman says she feels totally at home in the global Nia community. “Many of us combine travel with dancing. What is common with women who choose to dance Nia is a desire to nurture themselves on all levels – body, mind, emotion, and spirit.



A Nia class in Israel

“Many have experienced a life crisis and sense that a shift is needed in how they connect with themselves – no more moving from fear and judgement.” The women share a desire for joy and self-growth, Kadman says.

And that develops into an even bigger idea. Kadman puts it this way: “The way we create dance on the floor is an example of how we can create our lives.”



THE ABSA JEWISH ACHIEVER AWARDS 2018

# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

## THE RE-GENERATION

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**The Creative Counsel Entrepreneur Award** - awarded to a Jewish person who has a proven track record in entrepreneurial ventures

**The Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award** - honouring the leadership, impact, achievements, success and the overall contribution made by Jewish women in business or the broader South African community

**The Lifetime Achievement Award - in honour of Helen Suzman** - awarded to a Jewish person who has contributed in an extraordinary manner over a long period of time

**The KIA Community Service Award** - awarded to a Jewish person who has served the Jewish community with remarkable distinction

**The Arts, Science, Sports & Culture Award** - awarded to a Jewish person who has excelled in any of these spheres

**The Humanitarian Award - in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris** - awarded to a Jewish or non-Jewish person who has contributed substantially to the betterment of the lives of the people of South Africa

## Nominations close at 17:00 on 13 July 2018

Nominations are open to the public and all nominations should be sent via email to [nominations@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:nominations@sajewishreport.co.za) or visit [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

**Nominations must include:**

- The nominee's name, telephone number and email address
- The award for which the nominee is nominated
- A short motivation for the nomination



# Mandela’s trip to Israel showed his true passion for peace

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Few South Africans are aware of former president Nelson Mandela’s visit to Israel after he retired as the first democratically elected president in 1999. It is worth noting just days before celebrating Mandela Day on 18 July, as it has become a day for making a difference – however small – in our communities.

This visit is important to the Jewish community because it showed just how much Mandela lived for being a peacemaker. His reason for visiting was to see how he could further enable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Whether it was finding peace with his past oppressors or present enemies; or negotiating for peace on the global stage, Mandela was committed to solving things peacefully, and approached every situation with humanity.

“I once asked him why he wasn’t bitter,” says Marlene Bethlehem, the former chair and past president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). She is currently the president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in New York. “He told me: ‘If I behaved like them [the people behind apartheid], I would be no better than them.’ He was a great human being – with the accent on human.”



Nelson Mandela with Marlene Bethlehem on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

Together with the late Russell Gaddin, who was chair of the SAJBD at the time, and the late Cyril Harris, the then chief rabbi, Bethlehem met Mandela at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, following his trip to Iran, Jordan and Syria.

He was in the region to promote peace. He chose to visit Israel at that time, following the election of Ehud Barak as prime minister, because he believed that Barak and the Israeli Labour party were more committed to the peace process than the previous regime under Benjamin Netanyahu.

“Mr Mandela had received and rejected at least four previous invitations to visit Israel since 1994, and his decision to come now was a clear endorsement of Mr Barak’s revived peace efforts,” *The New York Times* reported at the time.

He crossed the Allenby Bridge that connects the West Bank and Jordan, and met the SAJBD group at the hotel. “The most beautiful thing happened when we arrived,” she recalls. “Mandela said: ‘My rabbi is here. Now I feel at home in Jerusalem.’” He was referring to Harris, with whom he had a close

relationship.

The group had lunch at the presidency with President Ezer Weizman, after which Mandela laid a wreath containing the South African flag at the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin’s grave. From there, it was a short walk to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. But the walk involved many steps, and Mandela was having trouble with his knee.

As Bethlehem describes it, he went slowly down the steps, accompanied by his physiotherapist, only to encounter a number of children at the entrance to the museum. “Mandela

told them: ‘It is wonderful to see you all here. Only by visiting this sacred place will we make sure [the Holocaust] never happens again.’

“We know that Mandela had a great affinity with children,” she says. “As he was shown around Yad Vashem, suddenly we couldn’t find him. Eventually, we found him rooted to the spot in the complete darkness of the children’s section of the museum, where a candle is mirrored infinitely, representing the murder of more than a million children in the Shoah. He stayed there for ages. He seemed

overcome with emotion.”

The next day, the team was required to smooth diplomatic feathers after Mandela wasn’t able to visit the Kotel due to his ailing knee. “The deputy director of foreign affairs phoned Gaddin. He was furious, saying: ‘Your Mandela won’t go to the Kotel!’ But how could Mandela have visited the Kotel, and not the Dome of the Rock or the Via Dolorosa at the same time?”

This visit is important to the Jewish community because it showed just how much Mandela lived for being a peacemaker. His reason for visiting was to see how he could further enable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

He did, however, manage to drive to the Stations of the Cross, which were important to him as a devout Methodist. “He could not do many of the stations because of his knee, but it was poignant to see Israel’s deputy director of foreign affairs explaining the Stations of the Cross to Mandela,” Bethlehem says.

On the way back, he put his arm around Bethlehem. The encounter was snapped by an entourage of photographers, who referred to her as “an identified South African tourist”. Bethlehem jokes that the incident came up in a later meeting with Mandela at which he said: “Marlene, do you recognise me?” To which she answered: “Madiba, I was the unidentified person, not you!”

Thereafter, Mandela visited Barak, and travelled to Gaza. The content of his talks with the prime minister weren’t disclosed to the South African delegation.

Bethlehem mentions that during his visit to Iran, Mandela even went as far as making enquiries about the famous missing Israeli soldier, Ron Arad, on behalf of his family, informing the delegation that Iran had no knowledge of his whereabouts. It wouldn’t be the first time he had interceded on behalf of individuals who were kidnapped and held for ransom.

“He was good at solving problems, but above all, he was a peacemaker,” she said, referring to the fact that later on, he managed to prevent South Africa from selling an important military weapon to Syria after the SAJBD interceded, advising him that it would be used on Israel. “Then vice-president Al Gore arrived a couple of months later, and wanted to talk to him about it. He said: ‘Don’t worry, I have already spoken to the Jews.’ The weapon was never sold.

“I think about Mandela on Mandela Day,” Bethlehem continues. “I love it because the whole world is sharing thoughts of his memory. Ultimately, to be in office at the same time as Madiba was the greatest privilege of my career.”

## Aaron Greenblatt: A young Mandela of the future

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Last year, Aaron Greenblatt founded Aaron’s Rock Your Socks, a charity that collects socks for the needy, and was the youngest ever nominee at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards. A year on, the now nine-year-old powerhouse has been selected as the youngest of News24’s 100 Young Mandelas of the Future.

The 100 people chosen for this honour are showcased on a special Mandela 100 website, created by News24 to mark the centenary of this international icon’s birth on 18 July.

The website reflects on Mandela’s life and legacy, and celebrates the values he embedded in our national psyche: integrity, resilience, compassion and respect. The website also showcases articles written by thought leaders about Madiba’s legacy and lessons South Africans learnt from him.

Aaron – who continues with his nationwide campaign to collect and donate socks for the needy – was chosen among the 100 in the category of compassion. Clearly, the youngster has this quality in bucket loads.

This little boy also has a talent for social entrepreneurship. From the time he was able to walk and talk, he was keen to give away toys and anything he didn’t need to beggars at the traffic intersection near his home.

In March 2017, Aaron noticed the Facebook posts of Sole2Sole, an effort by Lead SA youth hero Dario Gouveia to collect shoes for the needy. His mom, Lee Greenblatt, recalls: “Aaron asked me: ‘How can they have shoes without socks?’” And so began Aaron’s Rock

Your Socks, starting with a Facebook post asking people for sock donations.

The *SA Jewish Report* first got wind of Aaron and his work in June last year. His initial goal was to get 1 000 pairs of socks, but by then, he had already collected 7 000

and organisations which have made contact with us, and one of Aaron’s favourite spots is Dukes Soccer Club from Alexandra township.”

Aaron was then nominated for an Absa Jewish Achiever Award in the young entrepreneur category.

Today, Lee says Aaron’s life is just “socks, socks, socks – it has been a little crazy”.

To date, Aaron has collected just over 30 000 pairs of socks and has handed out almost 28 000. He has handed out 14 000 school socks.

“We have joined the Community Hours team (a programme that matches youth to volunteering opportunities) and Aaron has been involved in some of their great initiatives,” says his mom.

One such initiative is the Redhill School Leadership Summit, where Aaron joined other child-headed charities and spoke about what he is doing. “You are never too young to make a change,” he told the audience.

“I am not fussy about the size or colour or shape of the socks, just as long as they aren’t smelly or holey. Sometimes people give us money and my mom will buy socks,” he

said. Aaron’s aim is for “everyone to be the best they can be and to be happy”.

Lee told the *SA Jewish Repor* this week: “I am not sure of Aaron’s goals now, but he keeps referring to a million pairs. I am not sure he has a room big enough for this. He also mentions that he would like to design bamboo socks for kids.”

pairs and handed out almost 6 000. His goal then became to collect a million pairs of socks and hand out 10 000 by the end of winter.

He collected through family, friends and social media. At the time, his mother said: “We have donated to a wide range of charities



Gil Oved (The Creative Counsel) with Aaron Greenblatt at the 2017 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards



# Tales from beyond Brixton’s Jewish graves

JORDAN MOSHE

With more hats than the Queen Mother, Pamela Solarsh made for a quirky choice for secretary to the mayor of Johannesburg. Never one to miss a social event, she was notorious for popping food from tables into the pockets of her voluminous cloak, and only later was discovered to have distributed it among beggars at street corners.

Chaim Sadowsky, although poor and far less glamorous than Solarsh, visited patients at local hospitals every day of his life. Jew or gentile, he sat with them, kept them company and begged for their needs from wealthier people.

The enterprising Zelda Klass arrived from Lithuania without a penny to her name and took up selling root beer on the street to support her family.

What do these larger-than-life personalities all have in common? They are all interred in the Jewish Cemetery in Brixton. This suburb, the site of the landmark Sentech Tower, is located near Auckland Park and Melville. Once a multicultural creative hub, Brixton is today known for its crime, illicit drug trade and dilapidation. However, nestled at the far end of its decades-old cemetery is the final resting place of countless Jewish personalities, each with their own rich history and story to tell.

Johannesburg initially set land aside for burial from its date of origin in 1886, and its first cemetery was located close to the centre of town, on the corner of Bree and Harrison Streets. Within two years, Braamfontein cemetery was then established. As early as 1905, it was reported that “Braamfontein would be fully occupied within 20 months” and Brixton, located almost 1km west of Braamfontein Cemetery, became the Johannesburg’s principal cemetery in 1912.

This lasted until it reached capacity and was replaced by West Park Cemetery in 1942. However, Brixton includes many family plots, so people continued to be buried there even after West Park was opened.



its ohel was torn down in recent years, the cemetery remains open to visitors and offers a rich heritage to those wishing to delve into our community’s history. From business moguls to humble vendors, Torah giants to social activists, the spectrum of individuals buried in the grounds is certainly diverse.

A few rows away from Pamela Solarsh lies Nathan Kasrils, grandfather of former intelligence minister Ronnie Kasrils. Apart from being recognised as a prominent socialist, the older Kasrils was feted for his service in the Boer War by none other than General de la Rey himself. “He declared that Kasrils was both a good spy and an excellent sharpshooter,” says Bird.

Several other men – many of them young – are similarly remembered on their tombstones for their contributions to war efforts: Zalman Datt, a young air force flying tutor, tragically lost his life in a training exercise while helping pilots prepare for battle in 1941.

The cemetery also hosts famous political names such as Flora Ritch, wife of Lewis Ritch, who had been Mahatma Gandhi’s clerk during his time as a lawyer in South Africa.



Less than a metre away is the grave of Harry Grauman, the first Jewish mayor of Johannesburg. Grauman served between 1909 and 1910. He attended Johannesburg’s City Hall foundation-laying ceremony in 1910 alongside the visiting Duke of Connaught, Prince Arthur William Patrick Albert, who performed the ceremony itself.

Three graves away lies Annie Slovo, mother of Joe Slovo. He and his family immigrated to South Africa in 1934 from Lithuania with almost nothing when he was eight, and his devoted mother established a greengrocer to support her family. She died in childbirth only four years after arriving in the country. Two graves down lies Miriam Distiller, wife of the co-founder of the Hebrew Order of David, Joseph Distiller.

Not too far from these public personalities rest Louis and Rachel Shaer, the couple who took over the running of the Jewish orphanage when it moved from Berea to Parktown, and renamed it Arcadia, after the villa in which it became housed. “As caring as they were,” says Bird, “this couple ruled the orphanage with a rod of iron. Louis was known to prowl the building with a whip to maintain discipline and ensure no children were being rowdy. There are still people alive today who were once under their care, and they remember to this day the fear instilled in their hearts by Matron Shaer.”

Other individuals remembered for their community

involvement include Herman Tobiansky, the founder of Sophiatown (whose wife Sophie inspired the township’s name), Toni Saphra, founder of the Union of Jewish Women, and Rabbi Joseph Friedman, whose funeral was attended by 10 000 people.

Sadly, as Bird points out, there are many people who lie buried in Brixton about whom we’ll probably never know more than their names. Pointing out a grave of a woman who died young, she says: “The inscription there reads: ‘To a beautiful life came a sudden end’. Did she die in an accident? Did she fall from a cliff? Was she a young mother who died giving birth? We’ll probably never know.”

This reality is relevant to the graves of many personalities resting at Brixton, whose rich personal histories we may never be able to appreciate.

“The people buried here played a tremendous role in supporting their communities,” says Bird, “but they also gave something special to wider society. From hospitals to charities, from acts of kindness to the establishment of major companies that exist to this day, their legacies live on and need to be recognised and appreciated by all.”

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# IDF efforts to address the crisis in Syria

YAAKOV SELAVAN

By Saturday afternoon, it was already part of the scenery. Birds tweeting, dogs barking, kids playing, and the Russians and Syrians bombing. Over the past 10 days, as we hear the non-stop explosions, more than 320 000 Syrians on the Syrian Golan Heights have become refugees; hundreds of people have been killed, including many children.

Hearing the world’s concern for the poor people of Gaza, and reading about If Not Now activists (an [American Jewish](#) progressive [activist](#) group opposing the [Israeli occupation](#) of the [West Bank](#) and [Gaza Strip](#)) quitting the Birthright programme due to their worries about the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians, I was sure I would hear a deep concern from Jewish and international human rights organisations, while we watch a bloody massacre just a mile away from Israel.

I guess I was naïve. The only effort made, and moral voice heard, was from the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) – sending in over 100 tons of food, clothes and medical aid for the new refugees, alongside 500 tents. Six wounded Syrians were taken in to Israel, including four children suffering horrible injuries and, worse, the loss of their parents. With these children, we have exceeded the number of 6 000 Syrian civilians treated in Israeli hospitals.

The Golan Heights border’s skyline has been changing dramatically, as every day more and more tents are built by refugees on the security fence. The people of Syria, who were taught for decades that we are the devil, are coming to our border, understanding we are the only ones they can trust.

Last week I had a rare

opportunity to visit the headquarters of Operation Good Neighbor, the IDF unit established two years ago to handle the humanitarian crisis across the border in Syria. The trucks were loading constantly, soldiers running around, and I had a chance to speak with key figures of the operation.

Although I myself took part in this unique effort as an operations officer serving in the Golan, and although I have addressed hundreds of groups regarding these matters, nothing prepared me emotionally to hear the horrifying stories first hand.

Together with the tourists I was hosting as part of the Slingshot awareness programme, including a key figure in the Hollywood entertainment industry, we asked one of the operation’s officers to share with us the most emotional moments he has experienced.

“Four months ago, I had a night home, and I sat with my eight-year-old daughter, who is in second grade,” he began. “I asked her what she wanted to be when she grows up. ‘Daddy, I want to be a dancer,’ she said.”

The people of Syria, who were taught for decades that we are the devil, are coming to our border, understanding we are the only ones they can trust.

A day later, he was called to the border and was taking care of a 12-year-old Syrian, who was brought into Israel for medical treatment. “I was trying different ice-breakers to make him feel comfortable, and so I asked him the same question: ‘What is your dream when you grow up?’



“Sir, your question is not relevant. I do not have dreams since I won’t grow up. I have a year, maximum two, to live and then I will end up dying in the war.”

The absurdity of it cries out! While Russia is hosting the World Cup, the Russian army – alongside Syria and Iranian militias – are committing mass murder.

The residents of the Syrian Golan are mostly uninvolved in the war. They shy away from terror and focus on trying to live a normal life. Israel reaches out and offers them much-needed help. I ask myself why are we the only ones who care. Where are all the human rights organisations we’ve been hearing yelling about Gaza? Where is the famed Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)?

Well, maybe we should say a word about Gaza. Hamas was elected in democratic elections by the people of Gaza; they participate in terror acts against Israel; they squander billions of dollars in world aid to fund a terror infrastructure, while terrorising the Israelis living behind the internationally recognised border. And the best part – Israel’s acts of self-defence are constantly being

condemned by the “deeply-concerned” human rights, caring international community. I would laugh if it was possible, but I am too busy choking from the smoke as once again, hundreds of acres of farmland and nature reserves are burned to the ground all around Gaza.

What is the message we are imparting, dear human rights organisations? Yes, JVP, the question is aimed at you too.

Choose terror – we will support you! Stay uninvolved – go to hell?

As Israel reaches out and does its best to protect the innocent victims while managing to keep

out of the bloody civil war without taking sides, it is time to call upon world Jewry to stand up and demand a humanitarian solution for the people of Daraa and Quneitra!

Darfur attracted worldwide attention at the beginning of the millennium, a lot of it thanks to the strong moral Jewish voice which was heard worldwide. It is time that world Jewry once again speaks out for those who are in need.

“For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples... And nations shall walk at thy light, and kings at the brightness of thy rising.” (Isaiah, 60:2-3) (*Times of Israel*)

• *Capt. (Res.) Yaakov Selavan is a strategic affairs expert and IDF motivational speaker for soldiers and draftees. A Golan resident and an IDF Tactical Command College alumnus, Selavan is an experienced lecturer in Israel and abroad. Following a decade of service as an Armored Corps Combat Commander, he founded Slingshot Israel, which aims to educate and inspire by offering a unique insider’s look into the IDF.*

## Last chance to nominate your Jewish Achievers

JORDAN MOSHE

With nominations closing on Friday (13 July), you have just hours to enter Achiever names (depending when you read this) to ensure that those who have made a difference stand a chance of being honoured for their contribution.

“We reiterate that nominations for this year’s Absa Jewish Achiever Awards close at 17:00 on Friday,” says Howard Sackstein, board chairperson of the *SA Jewish Report*. “This is the very last opportunity for people to submit their nominations, so we urge them to do so as soon as possible.”

Sackstein expressed his excitement at the number of nominations which have poured in over the past few weeks. “So far, we have had in excess of 400 nominations come in,” he says. “It’s wonderful to see that people want to recognise those who have made a special contribution to our community and country.”

Four different judging panels have been established, and they are tasked with sorting through the many nominations received. “These panellists are the ones who sift through everything we’ve received, and it’s for them to determine who our finalists will be,” says Sackstein. “They will not only look through documents, but will also carry out independent research of their own and interview candidates in order to reach a conclusion.”

Dani Kedar, CEO of the *SA Jewish Report*, explains that the theme of this year’s event, Re-Generation, highlights the fact that a new era of hope is upon us. “The Re-Generation speaks of our triumph as a nation in having emerged from a bitter winter of state capture and economic downgrades, and the general gloom of hopelessness,” he says. “We celebrate the new dawn, a season of new leadership which has brought with it a more positive outlook.

“We are all too aware of the remnants of our harsh winter, though, and not naive to the huge challenges we are facing, both as South Africans and as the Jewish community.

“However, we are confident that as market leaders, captains of industry, humanitarians, entrepreneurs and community leaders, we can achieve a rebirth and realise our vision of South Africa as a beautiful and prosperous country, experienced this way by all who live in it.

“We are the Re-Generation, a generation that can emerge from its challenges reborn, transformed and triumphant,” he concludes.

Sackstein agrees. “Today, people talk about us being the ‘we’ generation, one marked by selfishness and self-concern. However, at this year’s ceremony we want to celebrate the people who contribute to our community, our country and our world. This, in order to prove that this is not the ‘we’ generation, but the Re-Generation of care, support and devotion.”

### World News in Brief

#### German Jews call on government to confront anti-Semitism

Nearly 40 Jewish organisations in Germany have called on the government to confront anti-Semitism, following a series of anti-Jewish attacks in the country.

The open letter, which was signed on Monday by groups such as the Jewish Forum for Democracy and Anti-Semitism, calls for Germany to adhere to the International Alliance for Holocaust Remembrance’s definition of anti-Semitism and to take seriously the experiences of attack victims.

It also calls for recognition that anti-Semitism is an “an attack on the inviolability of human dignity and on the foundations of the entire liberal democratic community”.

“Anti-Semitism cannot be successfully fought as a mere sub-category of racism,” the letter says. “Anti-Semitism, racism and Islamophobia cannot be equated.”

The statement, written in German, also says that civil and religious groups which have requested, or already receive, public funding should only receive the funds if they have publicly distanced themselves from all forms of anti-Semitism, including Muslim organisations.

The German government has not publicly responded to the letter, according to the Deutsche Welle news service.

Over the weekend, a Jewish-Syrian man was assaulted in a Berlin park by a group of young adults and teens after they noticed he was wearing a Star of David. Days earlier, a Syrian man, 19, was found guilty of an attack conducted in April against an Israeli man who was wearing a kippa on a Berlin street.

On Friday, the German government increased state benefits for the Central Council of Jews in Germany for the first time since 2011 while noting “the rise in anti-Semitism in our society”. (JTA)

#### Germany increases funding for Holocaust survivors by \$88 million

Germany has agreed to increase its funding for social welfare services for Holocaust survivors by \$88 million (R1.19 trillion).

Announcing this on Tuesday, those attending the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany said the increase brings global allocations by Germany for 2019 to \$564 million (R7.6 trillion).

The Claims Conference and representatives of the German government negotiated the increase in Washington, DC. During the negotiations, the German officials were taken on a tour of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and heard from survivors about their personal experiences.

“The significant increase for social welfare services, secured by our negotiating team, will lead to more home care, food support, medicine and transportation services for Jewish Holocaust survivors around the world,” said Claims Conference president Julius Berman.

Also as a result of the negotiations, 55 000 Holocaust survivors in Central and Eastern Europe will see an increase in pensions, and more child survivors who were living in hiding or under a false identity will be eligible to receive payments. (JTA)



# NHI won't have immediate impact on medical aid

MIRAH LANGER

The National Health Insurance (NHI) is unlikely to have much of an immediate effect on medical aid schemes or even public hospital care, according to various experts in the health sector. However, it does raise very concerning key issues about the state of healthcare in South Africa.

**"...if you are able to afford a medical aid scheme, you will still be able to remain a member and to get all of the healthcare services that you require covered by your medical aid, as you do today."**

As for changes to medical aid schemes, Dr Jonathan Broomberg, the CEO of Discovery Health, told the *SA Jewish Report* this week: "As we read the legislation now, it seems that very little will change in the short- to medium-term future. "[Once the NHI is implemented], if you are able to afford a medical aid scheme, you will still be able to remain a member and to get all of the healthcare services that you require covered by your medical aid, as you do today."

fund a significant part of the public healthcare system, and a second time for medical scheme premiums," Broomberg said. "This situation is very similar to the situation for citizens who pay taxes, and then pay again for private schooling, security, etc." He said that if new taxes are introduced for the NHI, these are likely to be quite far in the future and at a very low level, as the economy cannot sustain the impact of material tax increases. "Our economy does not have the capacity to materially increase either personal or corporate tax rates, and there are also many other priorities for government tax revenue." The *SA Jewish Report* spoke to Professor Martin Smith, the academic head of surgery at the University of the Witwatersrand and the clinical head at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, as well as to Dr Michael Klipin, who serves as chairperson of the Association of Surgeons of South Africa. Both spoke in their personal capacities. Klipin supports the theory behind the idea of the NHI, saying that "ideologically, every country should have a catch net of healthcare that it can afford". However, he remains concerned about its long-term success. Smith, too, said that his "first impression is of being completely in support of the concept of some



as there appears to be a lack of detail in the bill on how money for the fund would be raised. Furthermore, said Klipin, a key concern was over how a new fund of money would be administered. "The major concern about the NHI as a funding model is: Do we really want a really huge stash of cash for the government to administer?" Beyond funding and logistics there were also political considerations, said Klipin: "The big concern regarding the NHI is: Is there the political will in government to run a healthcare system and not a political

the theft, the poor management makes it impossible for us to implement across the board some form of NHI. Until you fix the system, pouring more money into it – to take money from the national fiscus to pour into a dysfunctional system – you may as well burn it." Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi told the media in Pretoria on 21 June that the plan was to implement the NHI "in a phased-in approach", with an immediate focus on primary health care. During the last budget, R4.1 billion was allocated to the NHI programme and this would be used for primary healthcare projects. Motsoaledi said the focus areas would be on school health, mental health, assisting pregnant women facing complications in 22 highly affected hospitals, and assisting with oncological care – especially in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. He explained that the health department had already screened 3.5 million schoolchildren, "testing to find their needs in terms of physical barriers to learning, be they to do with eyesight, hearing, oral health and speech". Motsoaledi said about a third of students from the poorest schools were found to have at least one of these four problems – and would now be assisted. In preparing for the NHI, the government was assessing how private service providers could be incorporated to provide care in the public sector: "Here we were testing how private GPs can be integrated into the healthcare system to provide services... For HIV and Aids, we are going to decant 50 000 patients to be under the care of GPs," said the minister. Smith told the *SA Jewish Report*

that he welcomed this focus area: "The NHI can make a difference to primary healthcare. If we can improve the base of the health sector, then I think everything else will follow." Both Smith and Klipin agreed that the issues that the NHI raised about health care in South Africa were also a reminder that the private sector, too, had significant problems.

**"The NHI can make a difference to primary healthcare. If we can improve the base of the health sector, then I think everything else will follow."**

Motsoaledi addressed this during his media briefing, saying the "existing cost of private healthcare" and the "poor quality of care in the public health system" were the "terrible twins of the healthcare system". Said Smith: "The private sector is a resource that certainly needs to be changed." However, he did not think "that trying to force the NHI on that system is going to bring them in line". He said: "I think other ways need to be put in place." Klipin reiterated this stance, saying the public sector had "service delivery and financial constraints". On the other hand, he said, in the private sector, issues centred on "cost containment and sustainability from a cost point of view". He concluded: "There are significant problems in both; different problems but significant."



He said medical aid members shouldn't worry about paying twice if compulsory payments to the NHI were enforced by government, as the truth is, they already are. "In reality, members are already paying twice – once through taxes that

kind of national health insurance, which will enable universal health coverage". Yet he remained apprehensive. "The question is not so much about the principles as it is about the ability to implement." In particular, funding of the NHI was a concern, he added, especially

franchise?" When it comes to public hospital care, Smith did not believe this sector could offer better care through the NHI as its current problems were not just about funding. "The quality, the dysfunctionality, the corruption,

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# In first, Israeli spacecraft set for trip to the moon

STUART WINER AND SHOSHANNA SOLOMON

Save the date. On 13 February 2019, an Israeli-built unmanned spacecraft is expected to land on the moon, having blasted off from Earth two months earlier, project managers said at a news conference on Tuesday.

If all goes well, the SpaceIL spider-like craft will give Israel entry into the exclusive club of just three nations which have so far achieved a controlled landing on the moon’s surface.



Morris Kahn (L) speaks to journalists in front of a Israeli Aerospace Industries spacecraft during a press conference

The probe will be launched sometime in December from Cape Canaveral in Florida, USA, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, officials said during the media event, held at an Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) space technology site in Yehud. It is scheduled to land on 13 February 2019.

The project, begun seven years ago as part of a Google technology contest to land a small probe on the moon, was conducted together with IAI.

“We will put the Israeli flag on the moon,” said Ido Anteby, the CEO of SpaceIL, a non-profit organisation dedicated to landing the first Israeli spacecraft on the moon.

“As soon as the spacecraft reaches the landing point, it will be completely autonomous,” Anteby said. “The motor will brake the craft, and it will reach the ground at zero speed for a soft landing.

“In the first stage, the Israeli flag will be put on the moon. During the landing, the craft will photograph the landing area with stills and video, and will even record itself.”

The spacecraft will carry out a Weizmann Institute of Science experiment to measure the moon’s magnetic field, finishing its mission within two days.

SpaceIL’s vehicle is just 2m in diameter and 1.5m tall standing on its four legs. It weighs 600kg, making it the smallest craft to touchdown on the moon.

Israeli billionaire philanthropist and SpaceIL president Morris Kahn, who donated \$27 million (R361 million) to the project, told a gathering of journalists: “We are making history.”

The idea, he said, is to inspire youth in Israel to take up science studies and to have the same impact that the Apollo lunar mission had in 1969, when astronauts landed on the moon, with people remembering forever where they were on that day.

“This is a tremendous project,” Kahn said. “When the rocket is launched into space, we will all remember where we were when Israel landed on the moon.”

The Israeli government has promised to fund 10% of the project, he said, but the money still has to come. “The government

should recognise that space is very important for the future,” he said.

“This is national history,” said IAI director Yossi Weiss. “The path to the moon is not easy. It is a very complicated route.

“The co-operation between SpaceIL and IAI is an example of the amazing abilities that can be reached in civil space activities – activities that combine education, technology, industry, knowledge and a lot of initiative.”

Whereas other previous moonshot spacecraft have taken just days to reach their target, SpaceIL will be fired into an elliptical orbit to gradually bring it closer to the moon, a journey that will take two months but will save on carrying the fuel needed for a quicker passage.

Even so, the craft will travel at a speed that is 13 times faster than the maximum speed of an F-15 fighter jet, steering itself to the moon, which is 384 000km from Earth – about 10 times the distance between Earth and communication satellites orbiting it. Through its elliptical journey, the Israeli spacecraft will cover nine million kilometres, the project managers said.

The Falcon 9 launch rocket’s primary load will be a much larger communications satellite.

The craft itself – the same one that will land on the moon – was displayed in a so-called “clean room” on site. Journalists and visitors had to don white robes and hats and cover their shoes before accessing the space. Shiny gold insulating paper covered its spider-like legs. The gold paper will cover the whole of the craft once it is finally ready, the creators said.

The spacecraft’s design and development is all Israeli, the organisers explained.

The fuel is contained in balloon-like devices within the lightweight metal frame of the craft, with one engine at its centre and smaller engines on the side. The craft is equipped with solar panels, avionics, electronics and a control system – all of



which were developed in Israel. It is also equipped with cameras and communication equipment so it can continuously be in touch with its operators on Earth.

The project is making “the moon reachable, which it never was before”, said IAI’s Weiss at the event. “Going to the moon was a hugely expensive government-run mission. And this is going to be the first privately run mission to the moon.”

This is the first time an enterprise, not a country, has gone to the moon at a reasonable cost, and it is “going to show the way for the rest of the world on how space is much more than just satellites”.

Humanity is looking for ways to make it easier to get to the moon and other planets, he said, and this mission paves the way for

that. In the coming months, the spacecraft will undergo a series of intensive checks and tests at IAI, including with the use of simulators, to prove that it will withstand the launch, flight and landing conditions, said SpaceIL’s Anteby at the event. In November, the spacecraft will be sent to Cape Canaveral to ready it for the launch in December.

SpaceIL began in 2011 when engineers Yariv Bash, Kfir Damari and Yonatan Winetraub decided to compete in the Google Lunar XPRIZE, an international contest with a \$20 million (R268 million) prize for the first privately funded team that puts a small, mobile craft on the moon.

Although the Google contest was eventually scrapped in March 2018 after none of the teams managed to launch their probes before the

deadline, the SpaceIL group kept going with its project, gaining funding from various donors, including Kahn and the Adelson family.

In total, the project has cost \$95 million (R1.3 billion).

Only three countries have made soft landings of craft on the moon: Russia, the US and China. The Russians were first in February 1966 with their Luna 9 probe, followed by the US in June 1966 with Surveyor 1, and then the Chinese with the Chang’e 3 craft in 2013. Other countries have succeeded in crashing scientific probes into the surface.

Only the US has landed people on the moon, with the first human steps on the surface taken by Neil Armstrong on 21 July 1969, when he famously declared: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

## Brinjals so abundant in Israel, it could be Jewish



Grilled eggplant with chermoula

Photo: Alt Ali

ALI ALT

From bulbous and egg-shaped to small and thin, the brinjal or eggplant (or if you’re British like me, the aubergine) is a staple fruit within Sephardic Jewish cooking.

Originating in India or perhaps even China, eggplant seeds are thought to have travelled along the Silk Road into the hands of Jews and Arabs as early as the 18th century.

From there, eggplant has been used so often in Jewish cooking, some refer to it as the “Jewish apple”.

Eggplant is now enjoying a wonderful resurgence, particularly in Israel, where it is enjoyed in countless salads or served whole and roasted, topped with meat, tabbouleh, and often gobs of nutty tahini. No meal in Israel seems complete without a portion of smoky, roasted eggplant.

It’s so incredibly versatile: Eggplant can be stewed, stuffed, pickled, roasted or grilled. Historically known for its bitterness, the modern varieties don’t necessarily require salting, although I always do just in case any bitterness remains – especially when grilling, as this reduces the amount of oil that is soaked up.

In this recipe, I serve eggplant with a North African spice paste called chermoula, which is herb-filled, rich, and pungent. This fantastic sauce is begging to be made when the weather is warm and the plates moved outside.

Chermoula – a marvellous mixture of coriander, parsley, chilli, paprika, garlic, cumin and olive oil – is a Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian mainstay. While it is traditionally served with fish, I love it with grilled meats, fish, veggies, or even couscous.

**Ingredients**

*For the eggplant*

- 3 medium eggplants
- 2 tablespoons fine sea salt, plus more for sprinkling
- 1/4 cup olive oil

*For the chermoula*

- 1 cup packed coriander leaves
- 1/2 cup packed parsley leaves
- 1/2 cup mint leaves
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup preserved lemon juice or 1/3 cup of regular lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 2 teaspoons harissa paste
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Sea salt, to taste
- Good pinch of crushed saffron strands

**Directions**

- Preheat the oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit (93 degrees Celsius).
- Next, cut the eggplant lengthways into half inch (10cm) thick slices. Cover with salt, layer in a strainer, and leave to drain for 40 minutes.
- While the eggplant is draining, make the chermoula. Put all the ingredients with only four tablespoons of the olive oil into a food processor with a good pinch of salt. Blend to a thick paste, and stir in enough of the remaining oil to make a sauce.
- Pat the eggplants dry and in batches, brush with oil. In a griddle pan, grill over a medium heat for five to six minutes each side, until golden. Keep warm in the oven while you cook the remainder.
- When all the slices have been grilled, lay on a platter, and dollop with chermoula, a sprinkling of coriander, and pinch of sea salt. *Serves 8-10.* (JTA)



# Jo'burg Jewish boy makes it big on Broadway

**TALI FEINBERG**

**I**t is not often that a Jo'burg Jewish boy packs up his life to move to New York in pursuit of a dream, and wins a top music award in the Big Apple. This is the story of Greg Borowsky, who recently won the Off Broadway Alliance Award for Best Family Show in New York.

Borowsky and his team won the award for the musical *Polkadots*, a show for children about embracing difference and standing up against injustice.

Standing on that stage was “pretty surreal”, Borowsky says. “It’s an incredible honour. We wrote the show in the hope of combating bullying and racism, so the reward for us is really just to have the show performed around the world, to spread the message and have an impact on those who see it. Winning the OBA is the cherry on top.”

Borowsky relates his journey to this point. “I grew up in Johannesburg, went to King David Victory Park, performed in the school shows every year, and had piano lessons with my favourite honorary bobba in Houghton, Bernicia Livingstone,” recalls Borowsky. After school, he studied to be a chartered accountant, but two weeks after passing his final board exam, he signed his first record deal with David Gresham and decided accounting and auditing were not for him.

Borowsky is grateful for the love and support he has received from the community back home and the South African Jewish community around the world.

“After jumping out of my tie at banks, and into my slippers at recording studios, I soon realised I wasn’t making a lot of money as a songwriter and producer, and I was given the opportunity to start a cellular business with some friends while pursuing music on the side, until eventually, I signed with Sony/ATV as a songwriter.”

In 2013, he visited New York and met the Sony/ATV New York office with a view to moving there. “On my flight back, I sat next to an 85-year-old man from Chicago named Jerry Jaffe. After telling him I was hoping to move to New York to pursue a career in music, he told me two things that would change my life. First he said ‘I’ll tell ya kid, I’ve lived in 17 countries around the world, and if it ain’t happening in New York, it ain’t happening’. Secondly, he said,

## Duarte insults original 702 owners

**>> Continued from page 2**

something for which she alone can speak, and there is no use in speculating.

“Although the comments made by the deputy secretary-general did relate to our sister company 702, Manyathela was asking her for clarification on behalf of EWN. While we cannot know why she made those remarks, the fact is that she was asked for elucidation of previous comments attributed to her, and it is unfortunate that she chose to respond in this way. There was simply no basis for her statement.

“Clement approached her for clarification... Why she chose to say that we have taken a political stance is bizarre. Our ownership and management has always been open, never politically aligned nor partisan.”

Morais' bafflement over why Duarte made this remark is shared by Kirsh. "I don't know why she would make such a statement," he said. "She has no right to say such a thing and is naïve if she believes it. This was an absolutely stupid remark."

“702 is a platform for the opinions of others. It reports fairly on what people say and any views we share are not ours, but those of other people.



**Greg Borowsky (second from right) and his team with the Off Broadway Alliance award**

"If you never go, you'll never know'. With that, I packed up my life, and returned to New York a year later on a one way ticket with two suitcases and absolutely no idea what was next."

He started working on his album the *Greg Dean Project* and within six months, “met two actors who asked me to write a family musical called *Polkadots* with them. A year later, we recorded an all-star album with Sony Masterworks Broadway, and a year after that, we were opening Off Broadway. It all happened so fast and feels like a blur. I didn’t have the technical knowledge like all the other Berkeley or Juilliard kids, but I had some experience in working with a multitude of different artists from pop to RnB to jazz to hip hop, so I just wrote what I knew. Luckily, it turned out to be the sound the other writers were looking for”.

Looking back, moving to New York to pursue a career in music, “seems riskier in hindsight. While most of my friends were getting married, having kids and moving into beautiful homes in Sandton, I came to New York and moved into a tiny apartment with the shower and the fridge arms-length apart. I quickly realised that everyone in New York is incredibly talented, ambitious, and hungry. The level of competition is so high, but I just tried to meet as many people as possible, and learn as much as I could, until the opportunity presented itself to me and I grabbed it. Everyone comes to New York with their own dream, but I think the turning point for me was saying yes to someone else’s dream. *Polkadots* wasn’t my dream when I arrived, but I took the advice to open myself up to whatever opportunities New York presented. It became my dream soon enough.”

Borowsky explains that *Polkadots* is inspired by the story of Ruby Bridges and The Little Rock Nine students, who were the first African-American kids to be integrated into an all-white school in America.

“It’s about the hardships they encountered

and had to overcome in order to make history.

As a South African growing up during the transition from apartheid to democracy, the parallels struck me. I knew it was an important story to tell. We're certainly living in one of the most divisive times in America and the world, and the more children, parents, and teachers we can reach with this story, the more we can remind them never to forget, and never to repeat."

The reactions to the musical have been “mostly tears”, Borowsky says. “We’ve been blown away by the responses from all ages – the kids, teachers, parents and grandparents, mostly thanking us for telling this story, and for spreading a message of love, tolerance, and acceptance. We’ve even seen a college football player break down, as it struck an all-too-familiar chord of being bullied as a child.

“One of the highlights for me is the talk backs we’ve had with audiences after the shows

around the country, hearing the impact the piece has had on them. There's nothing more inspiring than seeing a child condemn notions of hatred, racism and bullying."

Borowsky says he would not have been able to move to New York to chase his dream if he hadn't grown up with the tools and support of the South African Jewish community. "It really is a unique and beautiful thing you don't see all over the world. The values and confidence instilled by our close-knit community certainly gave me a practical platform from which to dream. I may not have received the same technical training as other musicians arriving in New York, but growing up in the South African Jewish community gave me a Masters in chutzpah, and that you can't get at Juilliard or Berkeley!"

His advice to anyone wanting to follow the same path is, “If your family and friends are anything like mine, you’ll have enough love and support to follow your calling. Don’t be afraid to take a chance and fail. If you never go, you’ll never know...”

Borowsky is grateful for the love and support he has received from the community back home and the South African Jewish community around the world. "I love telling people about all the little customs that are unique to the South African Jewish culture, and hope to keep representing [the community] proudly. Also, if anyone is coming to New York anytime soon, please bring me a sloppy joe with Big Korn Bites from the KDVP tuck shop. You can take the kid out of King David, but..."


- *Polkadots* makes its premier in Johannesburg at Redhill's Redfest, from 28 September to 6 October.

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# Michael Meyersfeld – the liberated eye

MATTHEW KROUSE

When one thinks of photography of a personal nature, what springs to mind is the ability to share images online with a relatively unconfined group of “friends”. It leads one to wonder: How personal is personal really?

The hazards of socialising in the 21st century have led to an ongoing crisis of privacy, mainly in photography. We’ve gone beyond the personal as merely political. In the war of images, one can be condemned for what one chooses to share.

In this way, photography as a pastime, journalistic device or art form has become an event. As the renowned (read radical) Israeli academic Ariella Azoulay has noted: “One needs to stop looking at the photograph and to start watching it.”

It’s a piece of advice that could assist one greatly in approaching the new works of Michael Meyersfeld, even though his recent photography does not attempt to be politically or socially relevant. Which is not to say that he hasn’t in the past made statements through his work.

His first book, titled *Gaze* (2003), was quite an event – at least in my life. I remember paging through his portraits of unclothed gays and lesbians with a mixed sense of wonderment and wondering why the “community” needed to be portrayed in its nakedness. At the time, I was exploring Jewish identity and I remember thinking how contentious it would be to present a book of only naked Jews.



But that influential and highly visible gays and lesbians allowed Meyersfeld to “gaze” upon them with his camera did mean something – primarily because he is a starkly individualistic image maker who knows where to draw the fine line between voyeurism and timeless artistic construction.

It’s important to say at this point that this is not what his latest series of images is about. But as background it’s interesting to know where Meyersfeld has come from. He is one of the country’s most senior commercial

photographers and you’ve probably seen his photography in countless adverts, including for Vodacom and Mercedes. So, his work forms a part of our collective unconsciousness.

His creative projects have included remarkably large nudes in his series, *12 Naked Men* (2005), and the fabulous dramatic tableaux of *Guests at the Troyeville Hotel* (2010), among many others. Some of it is sexy, some tends towards dramatised documentary (if there is such a thing), but none of it is depressing. In his artist’s statement about his

life’s work Meyersfeld gives us a clue to his overall motivation: “As it is not rooted in fantasy, this allows me to avoid the ugly underbelly of reality.”

In other words, his constructed visual dramas are rooted in experience.

Which leads us to his current exhibition, entirely in black and white, aptly named *Accessing the Encoded*. It’s probably the most sombre series of images he’s done. In contrast to his previous work, he says, “the images on show are not representational; there is no defined narrative, nor have they been staged

or planned. They are intuitive and could be read as abstractions, requiring an eye liberated from the dominant quest to find and attach a defining narrative.”

There’s a photograph of the tiled end of a swimming pool (titled “Retreat”) and various types of foliage. One is textured in such darkness that it seems like ancient wallpaper. There’s a large and pale photograph of the most gigantic scaffolding construction in a mysterious scale (titled “Hive”), and ripples around a leaf in a puddle (titled “Echo”).

This is the result of a slow percolation by the photographer; time spent alone ruminating on the state and quality of things beyond human.

In his introduction to the exhibition, critic and curator Johan Myburg said: “We are so used to seeing things and attaching labels and meaning to them that we seldom look deeper and do not see things in their specificity.

“One function of art is to make the familiar strange. And this where we enter the world of semiotics, the world of the signifier and the signified, the world of ‘Accessing the Encoded’, the title of Meyersfeld’s exhibition.”

By making the familiar seem less so, Meyersfeld is using photography as a sort of meditation. It seems he is returning to the essence of creativity as a process of looking outward, in order to look inward.

• *The exhibition runs at Gallery 2, 138 Jan Smuts Avenue, Rosebank, until 28 July*

## What you can do on Mandela Day

Mandela Day – Wednesday, 18 July – is around the corner and while you may want to do something meaningful, you haven’t had time to figure out what you can do. Here’s our list of suggestions for you:

### MANDELA DAY CUPCAKES UJW JOHANNESBURG’S MANDELA DAY CUPCAKE APPEAL

The Union of Jewish Women Johannesburg will be spending two days preparing for Mandela Day, with the aim of distributing more than 2 000 cupcakes to homes for the elderly, hospitals and children’s homes. Volunteers are invited to attend an ice-a-thon at Norwood Mall on Monday, 16 July. It will be held throughout the day, and you can make cards to go with each of the cupcakes. These cupcakes will then be individually packed and sent out with volunteers over the course of Tuesday and Wednesday.

You can get involved by either donating un-iced cupcakes by this Sunday, 15 July, by making a monetary donation towards the ingredients or by attending the ice-a-thon at Norwood Mall.

Pre-registration is required for the ice-a-thon and a suggested donation of R10 per person is requested. Please call 011 648 1053 for more information.

### LUNCHBOXES FOR THE NEEDY

Yad Aharon & Michael’s Mandela Day project is called Ohr Natanel, which is a school lunch box project aiming to provide 220 Jewish children with school lunch box snacks and healthy treats. The recipients’ parents rely on Yad Aharon & Michael for their families’ nutritional well-being throughout the year.

Come and help pack healthy lunch boxes at 21 Main Road, Rouxville from 09:00 on 19 July, the day after Mandela Day. Bring along a chesed mate or two, knowing that this will go a long way in helping children get through the school day. Donors are also

welcome to contribute R270, which sponsors a child for a month. Contact Jody on 011 485 2076 for more information.

### CODING AND LEARNING

ORT South Africa, in partnership with the Sage Foundation, will be hosting a Mandela Day event at the Curtis Nkondo School of Specialisation in the heart of Soweto, where ORT SA runs one of its Coding Clubs as an extramural activity.

Taking a cue from Mandela’s quote, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart”, volunteers and ORT SA staff will be interacting with pupils in their classrooms in a fun way. They will touch on topics such as Learning to Listen and Empathy, which are crucial skills for young individuals who are developing not only their IQ but also their EQ.

Drawing, sports and lunch will also be incorporated into the event. All volunteers are welcome and should contact Marcelle on 084 355 0826 for details on what they can contribute to the day.

### MAKEOVER MAGIC

King David Linksfield School’s Mandela Day project – in conjunction with parent organisations and the Linksfield-Senderwood Hebrew Congregation – is giving back to the 130 SkeemSaam Urban Mine Workers, who recycle the city’s waste, with a full-on makeover.

On Sunday, 22 July “makeover stations” will be set up for these people, who sort through all our rubbish bins, collecting recyclable items and selling them in order to make money to support their families. Their work reduces landfills and helps to preserve our environment.

The aim of this project is to give each of the men the small things in life that we take for granted.

Each person will get a hot shower in mobile

shower vans. They will also get a haircut and a shave.

They will then be treated to a braai and will be given clothing packs.

At the event, recycle bins will be on sale, with the proceeds going to the SkeemSaam Urban Mine Workers.

King David is requesting that the community collect blankets and clothes for this worthy cause.

Donations are welcome as well as clothing for men, women and children.

For details please contact Lee-Ann Jackson at 082 820 3017 or Melaney Maloon on 082 785 7674.

### KIDDIES HOSPITAL PARTY

Little Givers are providing a party for children at the Surgeons for Little Lives clinic at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg. It takes place on Mandela Day from 10:00 to 12:00.

And in Cape Town that day, primary school kids are joining the Chief Rabbi at Afrika Tikkun’s Zolile Malindi Community Centre from 10:00 to 11:30.

To join in or donate goodies, email [info@thechiefrabbi.co.za](mailto:info@thechiefrabbi.co.za).

### YOGA AND FUN FOR R67

On Sunday, 15 July, The Mensch Network and Earthchild Project will host a fabulous Mandela Day which will include fun activities such as yoga, kids games, Dani Dreidel scavenger hunt, arts and crafts, an African dance class, a robotics workshop, a cook-a-thon and a storytelling workshop. There’ll also be a knit-a-thon. You can also attend various talks, including one by journalist and producer Lisa Chait, who will be interviewed by Dr Orly Stern on the topic, “A Woman’s Journey – From Cape Town to Iraq to Nigeria”. Dr Adam Mendelsohn will speak on the topic, “Jews and Social Justice –

Continued on page 18>>

Sunday (15 July)

• Second Innings hosts psychiatrist Dr Jonathan Moch on *The Seven Adventures of Wellness – How to Live Well*. Time: Tea at 10:00. The meeting starts at 10:30. Venue: Arcadia, entrance is opposite Glenwood Lodge in Long Avenue. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors includes tea and light refreshments. Contact: Linda Fleishman on 011 532 9701.

• Open Ongoing Nechama – Growth from Grief Support Group. Time: Tea at 09:30. Group starts at 10:00 until 11:30. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Men and women welcome. Contact: Linda Fleishman on 011 532 9701.

Monday (16 July)

• JHGC hosts an educator workshop on *The Living Heritage Museum*, exploring connecting Holocaust education to stories of vibrant Jewish life. Time: 15:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP to [dawi@jhbholocaust.co.za](mailto:dawi@jhbholocaust.co.za) or phone 011 640 3100.

• JWBS invites you to breakfast with Stephen Koseff on Tuesday, 17 July. Time: 07:00. Venue: Investec Sandton. Cost: R613 per person or R6 000 for a table of 10. All proceeds go to purchasing new shoes, socks and slippers for those in our community in need. Call 011 485 5232 or 083 680 7524.

Thursday (19 July)

• A WIZO forum, *Between the Lines*, is taking place featuring Kathy Kaler, the CEO of ChaiFM and Peta Krast, the editor of *SA Jewish Report*. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Venue: Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Donation: R70 includes tea and refreshments. Contact: Jenny on 011 645 2515 or email [wizojhb@beyachad.co.za](mailto:wizojhb@beyachad.co.za).

• Hebrew speakers meets from 11:00 until 12:00 on the second floor of the Beyachad building.

• Join WIZO every Thursday for a *Lunch and Learn* shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz. Time: 13:00. Venue: Beyachad. Contact: WIZO office at 011 645 2515.

WHAT'S ON



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# The backlash from an earnest column about conscription

The time between submitting a column and it being published, is for me an anxious period. Because I pride myself on writing with authenticity, it often means that there is a good chance that someone will be offended by what I have written. In most cases I have made peace with that prior to submitting, but sometimes I am taken by surprise by a reaction that I didn't see coming.

Last week, I wrote an article for *The Times of Israel* about the Haredis' resistance to serving in the Israel Defence Forces. I began with a brief history of conscription in South Africa and how many people were uncomfortable about being part of the army. I gave examples as to how some managed to have themselves classified as being of poor health, and some (like me) managed to get a deferment for academic reasons.

The purpose was to show how vastly different the situation in South Africa is to Israel and to encourage the Haredi community to rather focus on concerns about serving in the army, rather than offering a blanket

refusal. I didn't anticipate the angry reaction to the article. Not from the Haredi world, but rather, from South African men who had apparently served in the South African Defence Force (SADF) with immense pride. I was called names that nearly made me blush and words like "weasel" tripped off pens with an ease that shocked me.

Was I really a disgrace for having found a way to avoid the South African army? And was I guilty of denigrating the past of those who had served in it?

How had I missed this? To me, it seemed clear that although there were many who served because of conscription, there were also those who not only muddled through but who also used the time to gain experience and to even excel in service.

But that didn't mean that they would have chosen to support an army who had the role of suppressing fellow South Africans. I was simply giving them the benefit of the doubt, something they apparently didn't want

from me. I had assumed that people served because they were forced into it. The SADF was notoriously difficult to evade, and serving didn't mean in any way that one supported an apartheid government.

Which makes it all the more perplexing. Could I have been wrong in this regard? Was it possible that there were Jews who, like other white South African men, were not unhappy about subscription? Or was it simply that the army had become part of their identity and narrative to the extent that separating it and seeing it as anything other than an achievement might be too painful?

I again choose to give the benefit of the doubt and suggest that it was not the ideological support of the SADF at that time that instilled the sense of pride, but rather, the achievement of having not only survived the two-year conscription, but in some cases having actually thrived in what was an Afrikaans-dominated environment which viewed Jews with suspicion. Any other explanation is too troubling to contemplate.

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



Men love army stories. We all do. Far be it from me to change the narrative of what might have been the most interesting chapter in anyone's history. That said, the language with which we visit and speak of the past is important.

It is one thing to be proud of one's own accomplishments during conscription, but quite another to be proud of serving an army that was the strong arm of a racist regime.

The reaction to my article has highlighted yet another uncomfortable conversation that South Africans need to have. White males were forced into national service. They had very few options in this regard. How this has impacted on them today, how it has impacted on their families and on the country, is something that we should probably be chatting about.

----- A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies -----

## Let's celebrate our 'Yes we can' attitude

Over the past few weeks, this column has unavoidably had a negative focus, having reported mainly on recent acts of anti-Semitism and how the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has gone about dealing with them. Certainly, this is a serious issue that can hardly be swept under the carpet. However, we must avoid becoming overly focused on it, to the extent that it comes to overshadow the many positive things about living as Jews in South Africa.

South African Jewry is widely regarded by its counterparts in the Diaspora as a model Jewish community, whether in terms of the high levels of Jewish identification and involvement of its members, or the reach and effectiveness of its communal infrastructure. Amidst all the stresses and strains of everyday life, we sometimes forget how much we have to be thankful for, and indeed, proud of.

One of the institutions that helps bring our community together and keep it informed is Johannesburg Jewry's very own community radio station ChaiFM, which this year marks 10 years of broadcasting. How ChaiFM came into being and how it has survived and carved a niche for itself, despite the many difficulties that have confronted it, is testimony to the dedication of its personnel and the generosity of its supporters.

The SAJBD has been involved with the station from its inception, and for the past six years has had its own weekly slot, an interview programme called "Jewish Board Talk" (JBT) first launched by Steven Gruzd and now hosted by our head of communications, Charisse Zeifert. In addition to reporting on some of the work that the Board is involved in, JBT looks at a wide range of activities that members of our community are involved in, including social outreach,

business innovation, arts and culture, and education. Charisse's programme helps to show SA Jewry as a "Yes we can" community whose members are continually finding new and interesting ways to succeed and contribute.

Earlier this year, Israel celebrated 70 years of statehood. Accordingly, the upcoming Rosh Hashanah issue of the Board's journal, *Jewish Affairs*, will have a special Israel focus, with a particular emphasis on how South African Jews were involved in the founding and early years of the state.

Following a call for contributions, some exciting material has already come in, including memoirs of serving in the Israeli War of Independence, working on kibbutzim in the early years of the new state and how South African Jewry celebrated Israel's formal Declaration of Independence. Those interested in contributing to this special issue, whether in the form of personal memoirs, photographs or original essays, can

write to the editor at david@sajbd.org.

One of the longest-serving members of the editorial board of *Jewish Affairs* is former SAJBD national chairperson Marlene Bethlehem. We were delighted to learn last week that Marlene has been re-elected president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, an organisation which, for more than 50 years, has been at the forefront of promoting the regeneration of Jewish culture around the world, together with training, supporting and developing successive generations of talented young leaders. We congratulate her on this latest vote of confidence and wish her further success in heading up this prestigious body.

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



Above Board  
Shaun Zagnoev

## Are we friends and comrades if I look the other way?

Remember the Hebrew writing on South African weapons during apartheid's war against its enemies in the 1970s? Israel needed whatever friends it could get; so did South Africa. Together, they became a leading weapons developer and force in the international arms trade. That was realpolitik.

Realpolitik has again guided Israel recently, on an issue with roots that go back to the Holocaust and the ground-breaking 1985 film, *Shoah*. This was a nine-hour documentary about the Holocaust made by Claude Lanzmann, who died last week.

The film contains interviews with survivors, witnesses and perpetrators conducted during visits to German Holocaust sites across Poland, including extermination camps. Its approach was radical in that it included no archival footage, but relied on first-person engagement. French writer Simone de Beauvoir hailed it as a "sheer masterpiece".

However, the film was badly received in Poland, which said the film accused that country of complicity in Nazi genocide. This view still simmers among Poles, and six months ago the government passed a law intended to stifle discussions of Poland's role in the Holocaust. Anyone suggesting that it participated in the Jewish genocide could be charged with libel and imprisoned. Outrage emanated from Holocaust survivors, intellectuals and governments worldwide, who demanded the law be revoked.

For Israel, the situation was difficult because Poland is a strong ally. The two governments entered into discussions, and on 27 June announced an agreement to amend the law. Poland removed the aspect of the law that criminalises anyone who says Poland had a role in Holocaust guilt. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he had protected the "historic truth of the Holocaust". It was realpolitik in action.

Where should the diplomatic line be drawn? Others slammed Netanyahu, saying the agreement gave Israel's stamp of approval to a cover-up about Poland's Holocaust role.

Diplomats defend realpolitik because in this dangerous world, a country must balance moral values against pragmatic interests, which constantly change.

Lord Palmerston of Great Britain is credited with putting it thus: "In international relations, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only

## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



permanent interests." Most world leaders have faced this dilemma. Israeli leaders say that since Israel's security is constantly endangered, its fundamental interest must be its security – whatever the demands of realpolitik.

It is seven decades since the Holocaust. For many, it is a vague memory, not reality, which allows Israel more diplomatic flexibility. Nevertheless, it boggles the mind that the Jewish State's prime minister stands accused by scholars of aiding Holocaust revisionism, which is only expected to come from rabid Jew-haters.

Israel is criticised for other recent examples of realpolitik, of turning a blind eye to both immoral regimes and anti-Semitism for other interests. On 4 June, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, praised Hungary, saying it was Israel's friend and had a "zero-tolerance policy" towards anti-Semitism. But Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, is regarded as one of the new crop of populist European neo-fascists.

European Union monitors of his campaign in Hungary's recent elections reported "intimidating and xenophobic rhetoric" against migrants and others. His politicians use time-worn anti-Semitic tropes and blame Jewish philanthropist George Soros for Hungary's problems.

Realpolitik has long tentacles. Netanyahu's warmth towards US President Donald Trump, with his "America first" mindset and attack on liberal internationalism, is hazardous. It seems convenient in the short term, but in the long run, Israel will pay for this.

Israel justified embracing racist South Africa during apartheid, including large-scale military co-operation, as realpolitik, while the Palestine Liberation Organisation supported South Africa's liberation movements.

How does history judge it? Some South African Jews say this was correct at the time. Others are ashamed. Today's dilemmas question again where the red lines are.

## What you can do on Mandela Day

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what role have Jewish values played?" There'll also be a film launch and panel discussion with US academic and prison reform activist Dr Baz Dreisinger on the topic, "The reality of incarceration in SA and how education can help".

Bring your R67 activity ticket donation, which will help

Earthchild Project deliver yoga to disadvantaged kids all year round.

Book on Quicket: QKT.10/MANDELA-DAY. Your identity and purchased ticket will be required to gain entry.

At the same event, Mensch Network and Bnot Zion WIZO Cape Town are holding a knit-a-

thon from 11:00 to 14:00. Join in the fun while doing good as you knit for the children of Bulelani Creche in Delft. There is no charge, but please book a ticket on Quicket using the same link as above: QKT.10/MANDELA-DAY. For more details, email jodi@mensch.org.za



# Swimming through ice to challenge human limitations

Johannesburg personal trainer Troy Mayer swam through the ice last month simply to prove that we are limited only by what’s in our head.

Mayer went to the Afriski Mountain Resort in the Lesotho Highlands to do the ice swim because he wanted “to push my body to the ultimate limit of human endurance and survival”. The event was done in water so cold, it “would kill the average human in a matter of minutes”.

When Mayer (46) and others planning to swim arrived at the resort, the lake was frozen, so a path had to be cut for them to achieve their goal. They did a 500m qualifying swim and then the 1 000m event the following day. Mayer did his qualifying swim in 8.57 minutes, and the 1 000m in 18.27 minutes.

“It is impossible to explain to anyone what two degree water feels like. It is one of the most painful things I have ever experienced,” he said.

“The day we got there, we had an acclimatisation swim at 17:15 in the afternoon. The water had dropped from 2.5 degrees in the afternoon to 1.9 degrees. We got into our Speedos, caps and goggles, and swam for a few minutes. Nothing I have done could prepare me for what I experienced in that short six minutes, but it felt as if my hands had exploded. The pain was so intense, I had to stop at one stage to look at my hands to see if they were still attached to my arms.

“I got out, got dressed as quickly as I could, and tried to warm up.

“I got very little sleep that night, as I knew that I was in for a hard and painful 500m qualifying swim



the next day. A million thoughts were rushing through my head. I had to drive out the negative thoughts. By the time we got down to the lake, I had decided that it was going to be roughly 10 minutes of hell, and then it would be over. I got in the lake, we were given the command to start swimming, and I told myself, just keep moving, and it will soon be over.

“My arms and hands went completely numb after about 200m, and the swim went well. I was extremely happy with my time, and my recovery from the cold was good.

As the swim gets longer, the cold and altitude begin to slow you down the longer you are in the water. The next day, I was expecting to be in that environment for roughly 22 minutes. The swim started off well, but because of the high altitude [3 222m above sea level], I found it hard to breathe, and I had to concentrate on not passing out.

“I began to do breaststroke to get oxygen into my lungs and carry on. At 800m, I began to feel strong again. By this time, my arms had gone completely numb from the extreme cold, and I was hypothermic. I knew I had 200m left, and that I was going to make it.”

And he did. To prepare for the extreme swim, he trained outdoors in a pool, swimming up to 5km per day in 10 degree water. He would also have ice baths for 40 minutes in three degree water at least twice a week for the six weeks leading up to the swim. It allowed his body to acclimatise to the cold and shock that it would experience in such extreme conditions.

Mayer, was not always a swimmer. In fact, until five years ago, he had not swum since primary school. Within a year of getting in the pool, he did his first of three Robben Island crossings. He has since done two 20km swims, and a host of 10km events.

His next challenge is to swim the English Channel, described as “the Everest of open-water swims”.

# Selwyn Segal Eagles get World Cup fever



Maccabi South Africa brought the FIFA World Cup alive for a group of residents from the Selwyn Segal Centre in Sandringham recently in a morning of football training.

Maccabi hosted the Selwyn Segal team at the Sandton Action Sports Arena in Kramerville in collaboration with Forwardzone, whose team of coaches put the players through their paces with a variety of football drills. These skills will help prepare the team for the third annual Discovery Disability tournament to be held in August. The residents proudly wore their new Selwyn Segal Eagles kit donated by Forwardzone. They also all went home with a new soccer ball, water bottle, and boot bags.

“Residents enjoy watching and playing soccer. It gives them a great opportunity to be active and stay healthy, while also providing a way to have fun” says Lara Milner from Selwyn Segal. “Earlier in the year, they went to watch Bidvest Wits play in the Premier Soccer League.”

Social responsibility and outreach is an integral part of Maccabi SA. “Maccabi has an important role to play in developing sport in the community, and utilising sport as a vehicle for social cohesion,” says Cliff Garrun, the Chairman of Maccabi SA. “Initiatives like this reflect the power of sport, and the value of partnerships.”

The relationship between Maccabi and

Selwyn Segal started last year, with the U18 Maccabi Football team that went to the Maccabiah in 2017. The group of youngsters hosted several activities with the Selwyn Segal Eagles, and this will hopefully continue to grow into an important partnership for both organisations.

## Provincial colours for martial arts



Daniel Dosson, 10, a Grade 4 pupil at The Sinai Academy Jewish International School of Blouberg in Cape Town, has achieved Western Province Colours in Jiu-Jitsu, after just two years of practicing the sport.

## Letters

### JANNA JIHAD MAY BE UNAWARE OF THE REAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL

I write in response to last week’s article about Janna Jihad Ayyad (“Palestinian child’s personal jihad is effective propaganda”, 6-13 July). The mention of Palestine and the conditions for a child living there reminds me of an encounter that I had at Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1944. A young, attractive German girl of about 18 years old was brought to our barrack.

I was Jewish and 13 years old. My father and 40 close members of my family had been murdered by the Nazis, I was later to discover. We took to each other and became friends. In the course of our many conversations, it became clear that she was an ardent Nazi.

It was not appropriate to ask the reasons that had placed her in a concentration camp where 50 000 women and 20 000 men were to die without there being a gas chamber at that time. German nationals were sometimes incarcerated as hostages for the loyalty of family members or even if they were not sufficiently accommodating to their Nazi boyfriends.

She was most enthusiastic about Hitler and would relate the many “miracles” that he had performed to put Germany back on its feet after World War I. And all the while she was expounding these beliefs in a concentration camp, where, under the prevailing torturous conditions of work, food and treatment, the lifespan was measured in months.

I remember standing with her at one of the windows of our barrack, looking out over the camp and deciding to risk a question: What would Der Führer (Hitler) have said if he had seen what we were looking at? She stared at me. “Why,” she said, “he would never have allowed it!”

This brings us back to Janna Jihad Ayyad. As her second name, Jihad, implies, she has also been brought up to see nothing wrong in her indoctrination. Jihad means armed insurrection, and in the Middle East can include


the murder of children, the suicide bombing of youths at a discotheque and of people attending religious gatherings, or driving vehicles into pedestrians.

She may be quite unaware that when the State of Israel was declared in 1948 in territory that had had a Jewish population for thousands of years, the local Palestinians – aided by five neighbouring Arab states – attacked their Jewish neighbours, resulting in 6 000 fatalities and 30 000 people wounded, according to the British Encyclopaedia. Five major wars were to follow, all of which the Arabs lost.

Gaza had been occupied in one of these wars and a flourishing export trade developed from there with Europe. In 2005, Israel withdrew all its troops and settlers from Gaza, abandoning its infrastructure, synagogues and trained Palestinian workforce, who were thus able to continue their commercial activities. The grateful and jubilant Gazans responded by destroying the hothouses and synagogues abandoned by Israel, and instead, switched to the manufacture and import of missiles, 14 000 of which were then launched across the border at civilian settlements in Israel.

We are constantly reminded of Palestinian losses and suffering blamed on Israel. Where are the statistics and the losses/damage reports due to the bombardment by 14 000 missiles at civilians? My home was destroyed by bombing during World War II and I know what it is like to be bombarded day and night. It was only after the number of launched missiles reached 80 a day that Israel sent in its army to Gaza.


Israel sent its troops to the border to protect the civilian settlements behind them. How do you expect them to react when confronted by masses of howling, stone-throwing youths, intent on overrunning them and breaking through to the civilians? – **Don Krausz, chairperson of the Association of Holocaust Survivors Johannesburg**



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# Marcus rewrites history and wins July for Kantor

JACK MILNER

Jockey Anton Marcus is rewriting the record books of South African horseracing. Last Saturday, when he rode Do It Again to victory in the Vodacom Durban July, he became the first jockey to have won South Africa’s premier race on five occasions. Going into the race, he was one of only four jockeys to have ridden four winners. The other three were Harold “Tiger” Wright, who retired some 50 years ago, Piere Strydom and Anthony Delpech. Delpech was injured so he did not ride, but Strydom also took part in the R4.25 million race over 2 200m at Greyville Racecourse.

“This was more about luck than anything else. It was jockey Grant van Niekerk’s decision to take (favourite) African Night Sky around the field and into the lead that won it for me.”

Marcus’s other winners are Dancing Duel (1993), El Picha (2000), Dunford (2005) and Hunting Tower (2007). Do It Again ran in the colours of Investec’s Bernard Kantor (who steps down from his managing director post in October). Kantor

has had winners of big races all over the world. He recently had a horse compete in the UK Derby, which was sponsored by Investec. However, this is the first time he has managed to win the Durban July. Kantor owns Do It Again with Nick Jonsson and Jack Mitchell. This horse was a strapping individual at the National Yearling Sales of 2016. Jonsson made him his pick of the sale, but bloodstock agent John Freeman had also selected him in unison with Mitchell. Kantor was also interested in the horse as he is a shareholder in Klawervlei Stud farm where Twice Over, the sire of Do It Again, stands. Instead of bidding against one another, they agreed to go in as a partnership and secured the colt for R1.1 million. They recovered their outlay in one swoop as the winner’s cheque for the Durban July is R2.5 million. Do It Again is trained by Justin Snaith in Cape Town, and he ended up with the amazing achievement of having trained the first three horses past the post. Kantor was still enjoying the victory long after the race was over. “What an experience,” he said. For Marcus, this victory was more than just a record fifth Durban July. He also believed that his Durban July win brought up his 100th Grade 1 victory. Every feature race is categorised, with the highest rated being Grade 1. Every horse is given a merit rating



Anton Marcus and Bernard Kantor with their trophies

based on its performance, and for a race to be declared of Grade 1 standard, the average merit rating has to be of a particular level. If it drops below that level, the race will be reclassified as Grade 2 or Grade 3, depending on how far the average merit ratings go down. However, Marcus discussed all the Grade 1 races that had been demoted to Grade 2s and 3s. “I just remembered,” said Marcus, “that I also won the Gold Cup in 1991

on Icona. That was a Grade 1 race at the time and I never included it. So, I’ve actually ridden 101 Grade 1 winners.” That means his 100th Grade 1 winner came in this year’s L’Ormarins Queen’s Plate horseracing event at Cape Town’s Kenilworth Racecourse in January, when he rode Legal Eagle to victory for the third time over the 1 600m track. While the record for Grade 1 victories of 393 is held by riding

legend Lester Piggott in a career spanning almost 50 years, Ryan Moore, who is currently rated the world’s best jockey by most pundits, has only ridden 116 Grade 1 winners. Speaking about his record fifth Durban July victory, Marcus said he never really thought about it, maybe because he believed he was lucky to win the race. “This was more about luck than anything else. It was jockey Grant van Niekerk’s decision to take (favourite) African Night Sky around the field and into the lead that won it for me.” “Had he not done that, Jeff Lloyd, who was riding Made To Conquer, would have been able to control the pace and probably could have gone clear in the straight and won the race by five lengths. Had Grant not gone, I doubt I would have been able to run a place because the pace was so slow.” For the record, Marcus’s first Grade 1 win came on Blue Cossack, which he rode as an 18-year-old in the Mainstay International at Durban’s Clairwood Racecourse for Cape trainer Alan Higgins. Three of his Grade 1 wins were achieved overseas. Marcus injured his wrist in May and battled to get fit in time for the Durban July. “I’m now going to give my wrist more time to heal and I doubt I will ride before the Gold Cup meeting on 28 July at Greyville.”

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1 Cup sugar  
1 1/2 Cups self-raising flour  
1 1/2 Cups flavoured yoghurt  
1 Egg  
2 Heaped tablespoons cinnamon

Melt the butter. Remove from the heat. Add the sugar and self-raising flour. Take two tablespoons of this dough out of the bowl and set aside. To the balance of the mixture add the egg, the yoghurt and the cinnamon. Place the mixture in a greased pie dish. Crumble the reserved two tablespoons of dough over the yoghurt cake mixture. Bake at 180oC for 1/2 hour.

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