



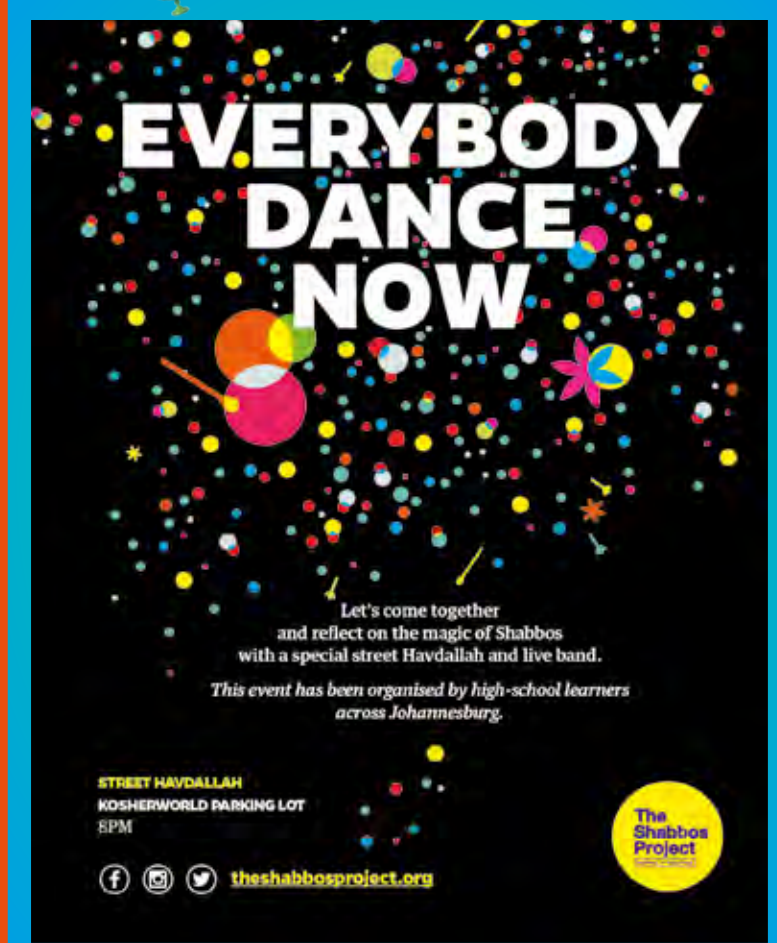
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Volume 22 - Number 37 ■ 26 October 2018 ■ 17 Cheshvan 5779

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Incoming Wits student leaders aligned with BDS

JORDAN MOSHE

The ANC-allied Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) that won 13 of 15 seats on the University of the Witwatersrand’s Student Representative Council (SRC), are unquestionably aligned with the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Taking the reins from former majority leader, the Economic Freedom Fighters’ Student Command (EFFSC), the PYA candidates featured on the PYA election poster are pictured sporting the same black and white checked keffiyeh draped around their necks. This keffiyeh is a symbol of Palestinian nationalism or solidarity and a clear nod to BDS.

The PYA is a coalition made up of the South African Student Congress (Sasco), the Young Communist League (YCL), the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), and the Muslim Students Association (MSA). While the YCL contributes a small percentage, the other constituent groups account for sizeable presences within the PYA.

Former SRC leader and student activist, Jamie Mithi, says, “Given the BDS’s aggressive stance on Israel, this certainly seems alarming. Moreover, after the ANCYL and Sasco, the MSA is the largest constituent group of the coalition, and according to some, a markedly one-issue-oriented entity. This group lobbies for an academic boycott by the university of Israeli institutions. It funds many of the ANCYL programmes to that effect.”

He continues, “A significant number of the students on the SRC are also members of the MSA. The MSA secures funding for the ANCYL, contributing money for t-shirts and the like, in part from BDS.

“Figures like Muhammed Desai [BDS-SA Co-founder] and Tasneem Essop [former Wits SRC Secretary-General and former leader of the Wits Palestinian Solidarity Committee] have been very involved in shaping the policy of the SRC in respect of Israel when it is a PYA SRC. Students of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) can expect more aggressive posturing from the SRC when it’s time for Israel Apartheid Week (IAW), simply because it is a predominantly PYA SRC, and therefore one that will put this issue front and centre as before.”

The ascent of the PYA marks a significant shift from last year’s EFFSC-dominated university space. Effectively the student

branch of the EFF, it was the dominant voice in student politics, able to win the SRC elections resoundingly with 12 of 15 positions. In spite of its electoral success, however, the movement faced issues as the year progressed, says Mithi.

“While the group was in office, certain challenges arose around its administrative capacities and ability to communicate any victories it achieved. This led to many students feeling that it was ineffective, and a loss of considerable support.”

Meanwhile, the more energised party throughout the year was the PYA. “It had an agenda to reclaim the university for students,” Mithi says. “It has been a dominant party in student politics since 2008. It always maintained a majority, the exception being last year.”

According to Mithi, the EFF’s loss of support also coincided with the infamous

Mcebo Dlamini’s return to politics [See page 3]. “Dlamini used Wits as a platform for his candidacy in the ANCYL national party, where he hoped to be nominated from the floor,” says Mithi. “That convergence of a resurgence of the PYA and Dlamini’s campaign for national candidacy caused a significant show of support amongst students for the PYA.”

The political shifts seen at Wits are not true of the University of Cape Town (UCT). While Jewish students were concerned that the university’s Sasco branch (the members of which also frequently sport BDS scarves) would win the SRC election, the EFFSC maintained a majority at that university.

As for Wits, Mithi says the bond between the BDS and the PYA has much influence in this year’s SRC. He claims that the anti-Israel lobby funded about 2 000 shirts for this particular group of student leaders.

BDS has confirmed its ties not only with

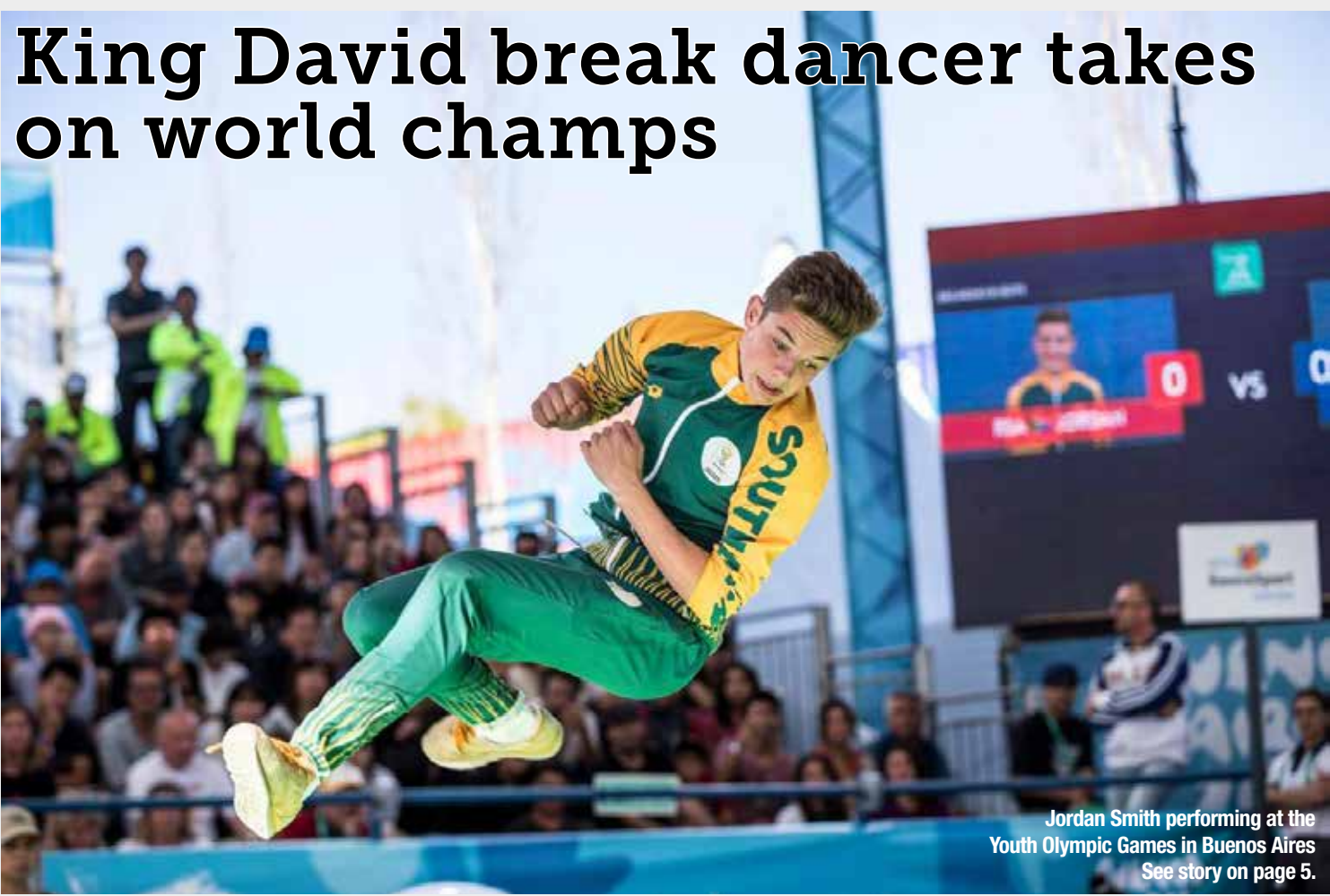
the PYA, but also with the EFFSC. “The overwhelming majority of student movements from the PYA to the EFFSC support the Palestinian struggle against Israeli apartheid,” says Kwara Kekana, BDS-SA National Spokesperson.

“This is a reflection of the mood on campuses. Students from South Africa to San Francisco are increasingly supporting the BDS boycott of Israel. We thank the outgoing leadership for their backing of Palestinian solidarity and BDS campaigns, initiatives, and activities.”

If past trends are any indication, the bond between the BDS and the PYA could have tough consequences for pro-Israel students and SAUJS. The last time a significant amount of funding went to the PYA-led SRC was in the 2012 elections. During the course of IAW the following year,

Continued on page 8>>

King David break dancer takes on world champs



Jordan Smith performing at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires
See story on page 5.

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🔥 JHB 6:02 PM 🔥 CT 6:51 PM 🔥 DBN 5:55 PM



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2 SA JEWISH REPORT

26 October – 2 November 2018

Zimbabwe in chaos, but community stands strong

TALI FEINBERG

“Zimbabwe is experiencing fuel and food shortages. There is a critical lack of basic medication, and my family in Harare have experienced days and days without electricity or water. The crisis is growing to 2008 levels, as goods prices increase, and shop shelves remain empty,” says activist Alana Baranov, who monitors democracy and human rights in the country.

While our northern neighbour has experienced a long period of relative stability, over the past few weeks, there have been massive fuel and food shortages, rations, panic buying, and chaos in the streets. In the middle of all this, the tiny Jewish community battles on.

“Things are difficult in Zimbabwe with another round of hyperinflation and currency chaos,” says ex-Zimbabwean Dave Bloom, who lives in Israel. “I do know of a few cases in the Zimbabwe Jewish community of people struggling to purchase their medicines because payment has to be in genuine US dollars, which are hard to get.

“I also know that the little income that the community receives and uses for welfare has dwindled due to inflation, so there are retirees and welfare cases that are battling to make ends meet,” says Bloom.

“Remember, the community is tiny – about 80 souls in Harare, and 50 to 60 in Bulawayo. They are, on the whole, much better off than the vast majority of Zimbabweans where there is close to 90% formal unemployment, and most government services have almost collapsed. I have received offers of help from around the world which is very gratifying. We are trying to identify specific areas we can help with, but the logistics are a nightmare as the banking system is in total chaos.”

Why is this happening now? Says Baranov, “Many point to the political turmoil following the recent Zimbabwean elections, which included political violence and intimidation, as well as an election that has been questioned as truly democratic.

“Loss of hope after the transition from Mugabe to Mnangagwa has created panic buying as people try to stock up for the growing economic crisis. There is also political and social instability

Empty shelves in a grocery store in Harare

in the wake of a perceived lack of leadership and questionable government appointments.”

Dennis Murira of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) explains the situation: “Government is overburdened with foreign and domestic debt of about \$18 billion (R255 trillion). A number of austerity measures were introduced by the desperate government, including a 2c tax per dollar per transaction made by every Zimbabwean.

“Prices in shops sky rocketed, and imports dried up because of the shortage of foreign currency. Consumers panicked and bought everything in the shops, while business people raised prices and started hoarding products, unsure of prices. So, in short, there is no fuel, no basics, and shocking prices.”

On Tuesday, the government lifted the ban on basic food imports, “and obviously South African products will flood the market. The few remaining local industries might actually cease production as they fail to compete. It’s scary. We are trying to come out of the crisis that we created as a country,” Murira says.

But others remain hopeful. Arnold Joffe, the President of the Harare Hebrew Congregation, says that community members are not panicking, and they have experienced no real disruption besides crowded roads and some

shortages in supermarkets.

Country Communities Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft says that all elderly Jews in old-aged homes have the food and supplies they need, but if the situation gets worse, international assistance may be called upon. However, he believes that the current chaos is temporary, and that President Emmerson Mnangagwe wants to make a name for himself and turn the country around by creating opportunities for investment.

How can the South African Jewish community help? “Besides supporting non-governmental and humanitarian organisations that are assisting the most vulnerable on the ground,” says Baranov, “South Africans can also pressure local media to raise awareness about the situation in Zimbabwe, and lobby political leaders to take real and effective action against the deteriorating political and human rights situation in the country.”

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:02	18:54	Johannesburg
18:51	19:45	Cape Town
17:55	18:48	Durban
18:13	19:06	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:16	Port Elizabeth
18:11	19:05	East London

Torah Thought

Time for ourselves

The past few weeks have been replete with Jewish holidays. From days of awe to days of joy, we experienced mega doses of holiness, joy, and inspiration.

Looking forward, nearly every month on the Jewish calendar has some kind of festival or official auspicious days. Next month, we’ll be celebrating Chanukah and then Tu B'Shevat followed by Purim, Pesach, Lag BaOmer, and Shavuot. Then, we have the sombre days of introspection before returning to the high holiday season once again. Festivals abound in our calendar.

Except the present month of Mar Cheshvan. A month devoid of feasts or fasts. Tedious five-day work weeks, devoid of days-off for shul.

The Torah portions we are presently reading describe

the journey of our first patriarch and matriarch, Avraham and Sarah. What was the first message that G-d Almighty told them? “Go to yourself.” So, we follow their journeys first to the land of Canaan and then, due to famine there, proceeding down to Egypt. The turn of events there leads them to tremendous prosperity.

Torah isn’t just history, its messages are instructions for our life-story. So it is with us that sometimes, we need to leave our comfort zones to experience our truest self. It starts with our soul, dispatched from the heavenly realm to enter a life on earth. As lofty as its existence was basking in spirituality, it is instructed to leave that scene, and is sent to the world charged with a mission.

It is when we embark on such a voyage that we discover our true identity, and indeed realise what a difference we can make. The present month may not be as saturated with holidays as the last one was, but it is when we leave the spiritual cocoon and journey into mundane ordinary time that we discover our true selves. As in marriage, this month is the post-honeymoon phase when we

learn to really make it work without the theatrics. There’s no external inspiration this month. It’s time to stop doing, and start being.

One kind of festival that we’re fortunate to have every week, regardless of the month, is Shabbos, “an oasis in time”, when we can leave the external pressures of life and tune into our inner rhythm. On this Shabbos, thousands of Jewish people around the world will proudly strive to properly observe the sacred day of rest and celebrate Shabbos in global unity. Join this worldwide wave of Jewish joy, sacred serenity, and traditional tranquillity by participating as best you can to keep it according to Jewish law.

Our sages say that if all Jews were to observe one single Shabbos, then redemption would come for the world. The Shabbos Project is another building block toward finalising our ultimate goal, the Moshiach Project. Let’s keep it together and bring Moshiach speedily.

Rabbi
Ari Kievman,
Sandton Central
Shul

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Hitler-loving activist in ANCYL leadership race may apologise

NICOLA MILTZ

Former student leader Mcebo Dlamini, who said “I Love Hitler” and made other inflammatory remarks three years ago, is the frontrunner in the race to find a new African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) leader.

Talking to the *SA Jewish Report* this week, he said he was willing to apologise because “it’s time to move on”.

The #FeesMustFall activist was stripped of his presidency of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and academically excluded for a year from the University of the Witwatersrand. This follows him making numerous hateful comments and other disciplinary indiscretions at the university.

“Haha, he slaughtered more than 5 million Jews that man”. To this, Dlamini replied, “jews have slaughtered how many Palestinian children? For me, it means one thing – jews love Adolf Hitler. If they didn’t why would they be emulating him?”

In response to objections lodged against his original post, Dlamini wrote, “Hahaha my photo has been reported for containing graphic violence... shame nxaaaaaaa fok am not removing it... truth hurts... face it murderers.”

At the time, Dlamini defended his remarks, saying that he “admired Hitler’s organisational skills”. He responded to the criticism, by saying, “I’m looking at the good Hitler stood for. He rebuilt the country, the economy, the infrastructure, and he uplifted the spirit of Germany.”

Dlamini acknowledged that ignoring the fact that Hitler murdered millions of people would be ignorant. “I’m not saying he did not commit terrible atrocities, but not everything he did was bad. I’m admiring his ability to organise a nation, and get the people to rally behind him.”

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) was quick to lodge a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission (HRC).

National Director of the Board, Wendy Kahn, said this week, “Unfortunately there has been little movement on this case at this time, but we are certainly pursuing it.”

Dlamini said this week that he had received an email requesting a meeting. He had not read it fully, and did not know where it came from. “We are at that stage to set a date to sit down and iron out the issues,” he said.

Said Kahn, “There have certainly been attempts at conciliation. This is part of the HRC process. Unfortunately, no conciliation has actually taken place.”

She explained that since the complaint was made to the commission, all conciliation and mediation processes must be arranged through it.

whole thing out of proportion.”

His comments and other disciplinary issues at Wits resulted in him being expelled as a member and president of the SRC.

Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Adam Habib, labelled Dlamini’s Hitler remarks as “racist and offensive in the extreme”.

According to the SAJBD, this was not the first time Dlamini made inflammatory and discriminatory comments. In a letter to the

uncircumcised in heart.”

Commenting on his slurs, Dlamini told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that, “Certain things were said in that particular time... now those sentiments are irrelevant. If we repeat them, it would be shocking.

“Let’s sit down and engage. There are ways of dealing with this. We are learning... part of growing is realising the mistakes you’ve made, it is part of growing up, this is part of leadership.



HRC, Mary Kluk, then National Chairperson of the board, said Dlamini had made other comments.

On 20 November 2014, it was reported in the *Beeld* newspaper that Dlamini, in the course of giving evidence at HRC public hearings on university transformation, charged that Jewish students at Wits received preferential treatment because of the alleged financial clout that Jews exercised at the university.

On or around 20 December 2014, a further case of anti-Jewish hate speech by Dlamini was recorded. This was a Facebook comment which said, “To the Palestinian Government, thank you for allowing the girls access to education. I can smell victory against the racist Zionist Jews.”

Further comments surfaced on 28 February 2015, when Dlamini claimed in a Facebook post that Professor Habib had used “the racist zionist controlled” Wits Legal Office to find him guilty of misconduct, and sentence him to one year’s expulsion from the university.

The SAJBD included in its complaint to the HRC that Dlamini had made further comments when being interviewed on *Power FM* radio station on 23 June 2015. He referred to the Jewish community as “devils”. He went on to say, “They are good for nothing. They are hypocritical, just like Adam Habib. They are

People must assist us to grow.”

He spoke about mediation and used the analogy of when a father gently approaches his son and explains to him why he was wrong. “If he comes to you to brutalise and attack you, you will become defensive.”

He stressed that he would welcome mediation, and would consider apologising.

“We all want this thing to pass. I feel I have a responsibility to lead my people, and to champion the interests of my people. This is hanging over me. It is an unnecessary distraction,” he said.

He stressed he would “definitely apologise” for the comments he had made as long as the process followed engagement with affected parties.

Dlamini recently confirmed that he would contest the league’s leadership race, coming up against longer-serving opponents KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Secretary Thanduxolo Sabelo, and outgoing Treasurer General Reggie Nkabinde.

Though the ANCYL was expected to hold its 26th national congress to elect new leadership at the Nasrec Expo Centre in Johannesburg last weekend, it was postponed for the umpteenth time. National Spokesperson for the league, Mlondi Mkhize, told the *SA Jewish Report*

Continued on page 8>>

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Theodore Yach’s passing leaves shockwaves in its wake

TALI FEINBERG

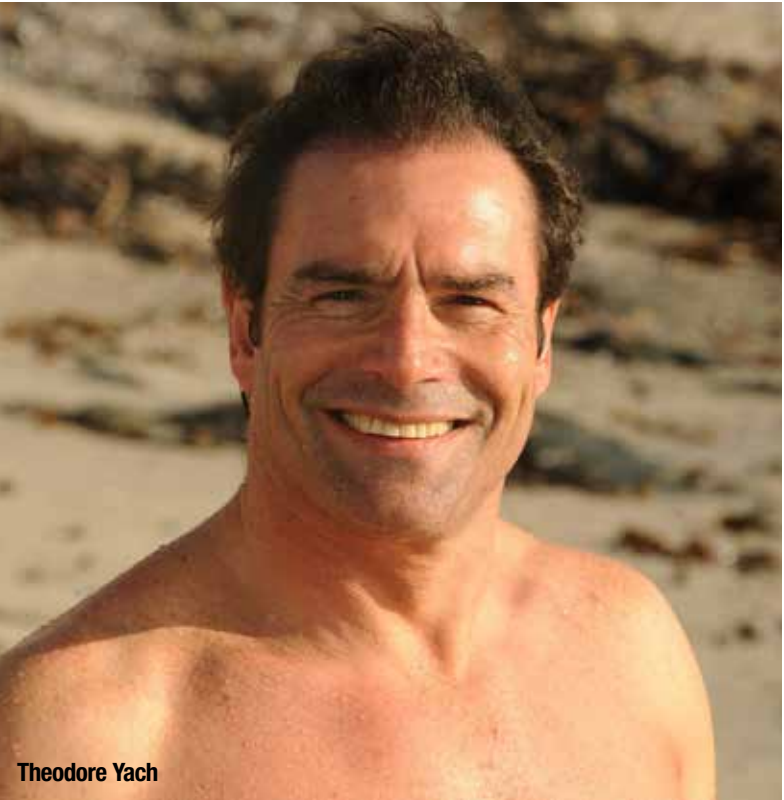
Theodore Yach defied the odds for most of his adult life. He had a record for swimming the icy Atlantic to Robben Island more times than anyone else. He also revived the inner city of Cape Town when most thought it was a lost cause, and still found time to be a devoted family man and successful businessman. But last week, this Cape Town man was struck down by a pulmonary embolism (PE), which is when one or more arteries in the lungs become blocked by a blood clot. About 25% of people who have a PE will die suddenly, and that will be the only symptom. This is what happened last Wednesday to the 60-year-old extreme sportsman, businessman, community leader, civic activist, and philanthropist. His passing has left many people in Cape Town, South Africa, and around the world reeling. “He had been admitted to hospital for tests as he had been battling chest infections for a couple of months, despite being extremely fit and healthy,” says his heartbroken wife, Michelle. The two had been married for 33 years, and met just before his first swim to Robben Island. She planned to spend the day with him at the hospital on Wednesday, but at the last minute, he felt it wasn’t necessary, so she dropped him off. That would be the last time they would see each other.

An hour later, he told nurses he wasn’t feeling well, and the next moment, his heart stopped. He was put on life support as doctors battled to restart his heart, but by the end of the day, they told the family there was nothing more they could do – he had been felled by an undetected clot in his lungs. A gentle giant of a man, Yach was famous for his feats of open-water, cold-sea swimming. He crossed the English Channel in 1996, and conquered the 10.8km swim between the Cape Town coastline and Robben Island 108 times in just a Speedo and goggles. This is more crossings than any other human being, and his contemporaries said they expected him to continue well into old age. He completed his 100th swim in 2016 to raise money for a number of charities. It was a landmark moment for him and the city he held so dear. “Being in 13 degree water without a wetsuit is a mental adventure,” he said at the time. “I swim more than 22km a week to train my body. It is the mind that holds the power. The cold is just one factor. There’s also the threat of sharks. You never know what’s coming with the next wave or swell.” But he felt that anyone could push through if they believed it possible, and if they prepared properly, a philosophy that guided his sport and his life. In addition to his superhuman strength at sea, Yach was a legend on land. He was the Cape Divisional Head of Zenprop, a commercial property development company, and the founder of the Cape Town Partnership, which led a R25 billion rejuvenation of the city’s CBD. “He said we cannot let the city centre degenerate... It was his driving force that put the Central City Improvement District together.

He really was a nation-builder, a cohesive social force across all kinds of boundaries,” said Western Cape Premier Helen Zille this week. Indeed, at his funeral on Sunday attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life, his sons Daniel and David spoke of his “relentless pursuit of altruism”, and said they wished all children could have a father like him. As the men and women in the crowd wept openly, they shared how, “we were the centre of his universe, but his universe was huge”. His universe included mentoring younger swimmers, raising millions for charity, and being deeply involved in both the Jewish and wider communities. His connection to youth was evident in the number of young pallbearers at his funeral – part of four sets altogether. There, Rabbi Dovid Wineberg of the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation described his passing as a true tragedy, telling the family that he had no easy answers. He shared that Moshe Rabeinu was given the name “Moses” by the women who found him as a baby floating on the River Nile, and that it means “from the water”. But what was Moshe’s name before that? It was Tuvia – Yach’s Hebrew name. The rabbi also described how Yach loved his Yiddishkeit – going to shul every week and having a deep affinity with Israel. One of his toughest swims was the 22km stretch across Lake Kinneret in 2016,

which Yach found difficult because he was more accustomed to the icy temperatures of the Atlantic. He was also an active user of Twitter, where he unashamedly defended Israel at every turn. Yach came from a deeply philanthropic family, and he carried this through in his own life. In a column about Yach’s passing titled “The King is Dead”, blogger David E. Kaplan describes how Theodore’s grandfather, Morris Mauerberger, established the Mauerberger

Foundation Fund in 1938, which his son-in-law and Theodore’s late father, Solm Yach, went on to head. His mother Estelle chaired the foundation for more than twenty years, thereafter passing the reins to his sister, Dianna Yach. Theodore was a past director of the foundation and a key player in his family’s philanthropic work. He has also been a trustee of Highlands House Jewish Aged Home since 2011, and Rabbi Wineberg spoke about his deep care for senior citizens.



Theodore Yach

PA and Hamas ‘use systematic torture to crush dissent’

Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Tuesday accused both the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas of routinely engaging in “systematic” unwarranted arrests and torture of critics, suspected dissidents, and political opponents, and of developing “parallel police states” in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively. In a 149-page report based on interviews with 147 witnesses, HRW detailed a common method of abuse and torture known as shabeh – used by both the PA and Hamas – in which detainees are placed in painful physical positions for lengthy periods of time. Such practices cause distress and trauma to detainees, while often leaving “little or no trace on the body”, the report said. The widespread occurrence of such brutality indicates that “torture is government policy for both the PA and Hamas”, HRW stated. Shabeh techniques include forcing detainees into squats, powerfully stretching their arms above or behind them, and leaving them standing or sitting in child-sized chairs for hours on end. In one example from Gaza, “a PA civil servant, arrested after a friend tagged him in a Facebook post calling for protests about the electricity crisis, spent most of his days in the Internal Security’s Gaza City detention centre subject to positional abuse... causing him to feel ‘severe pain in my kidneys and spine’ and as if his neck would ‘break’ and his ‘body is tearing up inside’,” the report said. In the West Bank, a detained journalist had his hands tied by rope to the ceiling of a holding room while officers “slowly pulled the rope to apply pressure to his arms, which caused him to feel so much pain, that he had to ask an officer to pull his pants up after he used the toilet because he could not do it himself”. According to the report, “Palestinian forces in both the West Bank and Gaza regularly use threats of violence, taunts, solitary confinement, and beatings, including lashing and whipping of the feet of detainees, to elicit confessions, punish, and

intimidate activists.” The report, titled “Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent”, cited more than 20 cases in which activists were arrested for critical news articles or social media posts, as well as membership of certain groups or movements frowned upon by authorities. Hamas and the PA regularly abuse each other’s activists in the territories they control, it added. Saying the systematic use of torture could amount to a crime against humanity under the United Nations’ Convention against Torture, HRW called on the United States, the European Union, and other international powers to halt all aid to the Palestinian agencies responsible for persecution and abuse “until the authorities curb those practices and hold those responsible for abuse accountable”. These agencies include the PA Preventive Security Forces, General Intelligence Services, Joint Security Committee, and the Hamas-run Internal Security. “Twenty five years after Oslo, Palestinian authorities have gained only limited power in the West Bank and Gaza, but yet, where they have autonomy, they have developed parallel police states,” said Tom Porteous, the Deputy Program Director at HRW. Both Hamas and the Fatah-led PA denied the accusations. The two Palestinian factions split in 2007 after Hamas violently seized the Gaza Strip from forces loyal to PA President Mahmoud Abbas. For more than a decade, Hamas has maintained an iron grip on power, and suppressed any signs of public dissent, including street protests and on social media. In spite of having Western backing, Abbas has also silenced dissent in the areas of the West Bank he administers. Last year, he clamped down on social media and news websites with a vaguely worded decree that critics say allows his government to jail anyone on charges of harming “national unity” or the “social fabric”. Mohammed Khatib, a 20-year-old law student

and activist with Hamas’ student branch in the West Bank, told Associated Press he was arrested last month and held for 19 days at a Palestinian intelligence centre in the West Bank city of Ramallah. He said he was forced to stand for hours at a time, and hung by his handcuffed hands to a door for 15 minutes, a stress position meant to cause pain but leave no sign of injury. HRW’s report also highlights other tactics used to silence Palestinian dissent and punish activists, among them the seizing of phones, leaving investigations and charges open, and coercing detainees to promise to stop any further criticism. In Gaza, Taghreed Abu Teer, a 47-year-old journalist, told *Associated Press* that she was held by Hamas authorities for 11 days and interrogated under “humiliating circumstances” for her activities with the rival Fatah movement. She said she was kept in a dark cell for days at a time, and forced to stand for lengthy periods. Although she was not physically beaten, she said she could hear the screams of men being tortured nearby, and that at one point, a man with a whip threatened to beat her as well. More than a year and a half later, she still cries when she recalls the “unforgettable experience”. Abu Teer said interrogators threatened to charge her with collaboration with Israel, widely feared as a stigma, and that most of the questions focused on a three-day trip she made to the West Bank, where she met senior Fatah officials and briefed them about the situation in Gaza. She said the interrogators accused her of inciting the PA to make financial cuts and other punitive measures against Gaza, a tactic meant to squeeze Hamas. She denied all the allegations, saying she had only led protests and lobbied for ending the Hamas-Fatah split. While she was never charged, Hamas officers advised her “to be quiet” and focus on her home and family, “which I considered a veiled threat rather than advice”. (*Times of Israel* and *Associated Press*)

King David teen breaks international dance ceiling

JORDAN MOSHE

When Jordan Smith, a 17-year-old pupil at King David High School Linksfield, took up break dancing at the age of 10, it was simply for fun. He did not expect that seven years later, he would compete in the Youth Olympic Games and be ranked amongst the top 10 young break dancers in the world.

Since its inception, break dancing has been a sport that has mostly remained underground. However, the International Olympic Committee announced at the end of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games that break dancing would be added to the Youth Olympic Games at this year’s event in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Held between 6 and 18 October, the games featured 239 events in 32 sports, with a total of 206 countries competing, among them South Africa. Smith was one of the 29 young South Africans on the team, and the only one competing in the dance sport category.

Smith started dancing at the age of five. “I always loved flipping myself over,” he says. “When my mom saw that I could do it without injuring myself, she suggested I take up gymnastics. I went to lessons, but it was too hectic for me. I was also always breaking into dance, so I went for hip-hop instead, and it was a good fit.”

Smith has always had a natural



Jordan Smith performing at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires

sense of rhythm, and so took to hip hop with ease. It was not until the age of 10 that he considered break dancing, and even then, he didn’t take it seriously. However, when renowned break dancing instructor and dancer Bashimane Basetloa noticed him at a local dancing competition, all this changed.

“I was 13 when Bashimane saw me competing,” says Smith. “He just came up to me and said, ‘You need to train with me’. That was it. I had been dancing in a group until then, and had never thought about focusing on solo dance with an instructor, but ended up going to his studio the next week. It was he who made me realise I could achieve something special with breaking.”

Training regularly, Smith began participating in more and more local competitions and gaining experience. He says that in spite of the seriousness he began to attach to the sport, few others really

understood what he was doing. “I had to put up with ignorance and some mockery. Other boys asked me why I didn’t play soccer or rugby like them. My school didn’t really understand it either. While they mentioned me at assemblies, they didn’t recognise what I was doing as an actual sport.”

Still, Smith remained committed to his passion, and continued his training. In 2017, he came across an opportunity called Breaking For Gold, a call for youth looking to compete in a break dancing event at the Youth Olympics. Smith submitted a short video of himself dancing, and was selected to compete with four South Africans in a local break dancing battle. His prowess landed him second place, and got him to the second round in Germany in October last year.

One of 130 people competing in break dancing battles between European and African entrants, Smith was sceptical about making it

through and ranking as one of the top 32 who would move on. He says, “I saw the standard of dancers around me, and didn’t expect to go through. They were all really talented.”

It turned out that he stood more than a chance. Not only did Smith land one of the 32 spaces for that round, he also earned a position in the next round with 19 others, all of whom qualified to move to the last qualifying round in Japan, before moving on to the Olympics in Argentina.

When he arrived in Japan, Smith says he expected to dance and go home shortly thereafter. “I met one of my biggest break dancing heroes, B-Boy Shigekix [Nakari Shigeyuki], while there. He was absolutely incredible. I couldn’t believe I was meeting him. Alongside him, I thought I was really only going to dance a bit, and then go home. I didn’t think I had a chance there.” When he didn’t make the top 12, Smith thought that his prediction had come true.

However, because this group could include only one representative from each country, certain participants were disqualified. Smith was the best dancer from the African continent, and so took up the 12th spot in this group. Although he didn’t feel he deserved it, he committed himself to strenuous training, devoting late nights and early mornings to practicing. On 1 October, he and his mother, Stephanie, set off for Japan,

and a few days later, Smith competed in the first event of the games.

Despite his obvious talent, Smith says he felt self-conscious while dancing, especially in front of his mother. “I wouldn’t let her watch me where I could see her,” he laughs. “I also felt shy when I saw a stand full of my friends watching me compete. But when the music started, everything around me disappeared, and I could only see the dance. When I came out of it, I suddenly noticed my mom on the side, waving and encouraging me. It meant so much.”

Smith competed against Japan’s top-ranked young dancer, and in spite of losing to him, felt no resentment. “He destroyed me,” says Smith. “But it didn’t matter. All I wanted to do was show that I could be one of them, dance on their level, and not come last.” He did more than that. Smith’s performance ranked him 10th in the world, proving just how great his talent really was.

What Smith is most proud of, however, is that he is part of the movement that will result in break dancing being recognised as a sport.

“It encourages more kids to take up something very different, and for the sport to gain traction in South Africa,” he says.

“The experience has taught me that anything is possible,” he says. “I am now able to see myself as among the greatest, not just striving to be one of them.”



CLUB 360NE
Do the extraordinary

Your support will give them a meaningful December holiday

When a person is born with intellectual and physical disabilities - as our residents at **Selwyn Segal** are - pushing themselves beyond their recent accomplishments to set ever-new records of achievement, becomes a daily reality. Their successes, although tiny, are inspiring and humbling and that's why the concept behind Selwyn Segal's **Club360NE** annual raffle fundraiser is so appropriate. 360° is a perfect circle. **R361 - the cost of each raffle ticket** - is just that tiny degree more! It's all about pushing the boundaries, even R1 at a time.

Based upon the huge success of previous years, Selwyn Segal has once again decided to use the raffle profits to provide our residents with a great December holiday - fun outings, entertainment and exciting activities.

For further info:
LaurieG@jhbchev.co.za | 011 532 9758

Follow us on Facebook @ chevrahkadisha|hb
to learn more about our residents' holiday wishes

TO ENTER
visit www.jhbchev.co.za

Draw takes place on
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Selwyn Segal

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Let's come together
and reflect on the magic of Shabbos
with a special street Havdallah and live band.

*This event has been organised by high school learners
across Johannesburg.*

STREET HAVDALLAH
KOSHERWORLD PARKING LOT
8PM

   theshabbosproject.org

The Shabbos Project
KEEPING IT TOGETHER

The Jewish world spending Shabbat together

When this community sets its mind to doing something, magic happens. We are powerful people, who are strong-willed – some may call us stubborn – and determined. We don’t do things in a small way, despite being, on the scale of things, a tiny community. We make ourselves and our voices heard, come what may. But when we set out to do something, we go all the way. So, it is with the Shabbos Project, the brainchild of our Chief Rabbi, Dr Warren Goldstein. I don’t know about you, but I feel the excitement in the air this week as we work toward this weekend’s Shabbos Project. This isn’t a *chag* or a memorial, it is Shabbos, and it comes around every week no matter what. But there is something different about this coming weekend. I guess there is something about more than one million people in more than 1 400 cities in the world buying into the Shabbos Project. In other words, they are all observing Shabbat, and their shuls and communal leaders are going all out to make it special.



For those of us who don’t usually observe Shabbat, it’s about not going about your usual Saturday chores. Not switching on lights and cooking. Not checking Facebook, Twitter, emails, and other online media. Instead, it is taking that time for family, one-on-one communication, time out, prayer, and other spiritual pursuits. For many of us, this is what we do every Shabbat, but for the rest of us, it is pretty extraordinary. And for those of you who do it every weekend, it becomes special in that you are sharing it with people who don’t regularly observe Shabbat, and you get to show them the magic. Interestingly, nobody is forcing or coercing any of us to participate. It is a choice. And yet, so many of us are buying into it.

I understand why. I love the idea of spending quiet time with my family, not competing with a tablet or a cellphone. I am not going to rush out and do the things I need to do for the following week. Instead, I am going to walk to shul with my family, have some quiet time, or perhaps a few animated discussions. I am going to share my Shabbos with my extended family... and create memories. For me, the Shabbos Project is just that. Time for undivided family time, and time out of the norm. However, while I am buying into this, I am aware of all those naysayers out there. I can’t help but hear them going on about all the money spent marketing this project. “What a waste! It could feed so many for so long!” Then, there are those who insist the Shabbos Project is “so last Saturday”, and that they have “been there, done that, and already worn out the T-shirt”. You know what, I love this community because even when there is something great happening, there are some who will put their hearts and souls into it and others who will find only the negative in it. That’s who we are, I guess. As for the money spent, nobody has been forced or tricked into putting money into it. It is open and honest, and there is nothing sinister about it. This is not communal money we are talking about either. As for it being old hat, perhaps it is... for you. But as this project keeps growing, it is clear that so many people around the world love the fact that one million Jews from almost every nook and cranny are making this Shabbos special. I don’t even recognise the names of some of the towns and cities where people are doing the Shabbos Project. Did you know that in the United Kingdom, though, there are only a few events happening? The UK’s Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, who by all accounts is a forward-thinking and ground breaking rabbi, has chosen not to buy into South Africa’s Shabbos Project this year. He says it is too close to the *chaggim*, and not a great time for “the organisers”. So, the British Shabbos Project, or what is known there as “ShabbatUK”, will be held at the beginning of March next year. It is such a pity, because they will not be a part of the international endeavour, but are doing it on their own. Is this the Jewish Brexit, or what? How come it is more complicated and difficult for the Jews of the UK, but the rest of the world is managing this time? Apparently, Mirvis isn’t stopping anyone from participating, but he is not putting his weight behind it. It is a sad for ex-South Africans and British Jews not to be a part of this amazing world event. It is clear that Mirvis is also doing very impressive things, and he doesn’t go for what is necessarily popular, but what he believes is important. So, while I find the decision on the Shabbos Project strange, and wonder what is really behind it, I respect many of his other moves. (See page 7.) I must admit to thinking when the Shabbos Project started six years ago that it wasn’t going to work because those who observe Shabbat every week are going to do it anyway. And those who don’t, are not going to change their ways for one weekend. I was wrong. The events that take place around the world beggar belief. There are a few that are mentioned on page 10, but they are just a pinprick in the number of events planned for this weekend. So, for all my initial cynicism and my buy-in now, I leave it up to you to decide how you are going to spend this weekend.

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Khashoggi’s murder and its impact on Saudi-Israel ties

The story of what happened to Jamal Khashoggi changes by the day. But by all accounts, it seems the 59-year-old Saudi journalist, who was once a powerful insider in his home country, was tortured, beheaded, dismembered, and his body disposed of. This happened after he entered the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, to pick up papers.

There are those who suggest Israel could have been involved, with some pundits having gone so far as to say this is a valid avenue of enquiry for investigators to pursue. However, the implications of the murder definitely have an impact on Jerusalem, Washington, Iran, and the broader Middle East.

First and foremost, it’s pushed American President Donald Trump into a corner. His much touted “deal of the century” between Israelis and Palestinians seems to have rested on the powerful Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, bringing the sides together. Although Israel and Saudi Arabia have no formal diplomatic relations, for years, albeit in secret, Israeli officials have hinted at a growing closeness between them. Trump deliberately made his first overseas trip in May last year, first to Saudi Arabia and then to Israel – the two pillars of his foreign policy in the region. The Saudi prince – who is commonly known as MBS – denies being behind the gruesome murder, and was reportedly shocked by the international outrage. He is said to have phoned Trump’s son-in-law and adviser, Jarred Kushner, who heads the American administration’s Mideast team, to ask what all the fuss was about.

On numerous occasions, Washington has referenced the “close relationship” between the two young politicians. At first glance it might seem strange, especially as Kushner is an orthodox Jew and bin Salman, a Muslim, who lives in a country where being an orthodox Jew is illegal. But they are both about the same age, ambitious, and the hidden “sons” in their respective “dynasties”.

But that close rapport has now become a liability as the Saudi prince faces serious questions about the Khashoggi murder.

Most people just don’t buy it that MBS didn’t know about the hit squad of 15 people who arrived in Istanbul on the very same day that Khashoggi was murdered. This, in a country like Saudi Arabia, where power is concentrated entirely in the hands of the king, who has delegated most of it to his son, MBS.

Trump tried to help the Saudis by giving them time to conclude an investigation, or at least come up with a good excuse about what had happened in their consulate on 2 October.

It’s not just the peace deal he was trying to save. He was also trying to rescue the billions of dollars of arms contracts signed between Riyadh and Washington, resulting in hundreds of thousands of jobs for Americans.

What’s more, in less than two weeks, United States sanctions on Iran go into effect, following the cancellation of the P5 + 1 nuclear deal. Because of this, Washington needs oil from Saudi Arabia to fill the gap now left open by Tehran. By increasing production, the Saudis will also help keep gas prices down in America.

Trump was also banking on an Israeli-Saudi alliance that would have served as a regional

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



counterweight to Iran. If there is a country that Iran hates more than Israel, it would be the Saudi kingdom. The two are regional rivals, with the Saudis being the epicentre of the Sunni world, while Iran is that of the Shias.

However, among those criticising this policy was Khashoggi. He was deeply skeptical that Israel could really help the Saudi kingdom rid the region of Iran’s growing influence. He was also outspoken against rumours that Saudi Arabia was considering closer ties to Israel.

Some depict Khashoggi as a Saudi reformer and advocate of free speech, who contributed to the *Washington Post* newspaper. Meanwhile, there are also an increasing number of accusations surfacing that paint him as an anti-Semite. According to some reports, he was seen to be a radical Islamist. In part, these efforts could be to lessen the pressure on Trump to punish Saudi Arabia, and help give him a way out.

In searching his official Twitter account, the Simon Wiesenthal Center discovered tweets in which Khashoggi denied any Jewish connection to the land of Israel, and claimed the Western Wall was a Muslim construction.

Josh Block, the Chief Executive of The Israel Project, said he was a “frontman” for Islamists, and a paid spook for Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi politician Turki al Faisal, whose journalism was a cover for his real work, saying, “Just as he wrapped his Islamist ideas in the flowery language of human rights, he praised Hamas and called for Israel to be destroyed by violence.”

Khashoggi frequently tweeted about Israel’s role in Syria, pointing out that Jerusalem acted in its own self-interest. He argued that Israel “kills innocents every day in Palestine”.

There has been little Israeli and Palestinian official reaction to his murder. Both sides are wary of antagonising the Saudis. But some Israeli commentators have suggested that Jerusalem may find itself having to support Riyadh more openly as it faces increasing pressure on the international stage.

Ironically, others feel that if the US loosens



its ties with Saudi Arabia, the country, finding itself isolated, might look to Jerusalem for closer relations.

Right now, no-one knows what will happen. Certainly, there’ll be a lot of chest-thumping and declarations of indignation. However, as politics often reveal, what happens in the public arena is a far cry from the quiet reality.

One thing that is unlikely to change is the American administration’s hard-fist policy towards Iran. But aside from this, Trump might need to rethink some parts of his Mideast strategy. And then, again, this could all blow over, and he won’t.

In memory of the late Yitzhak Rabin



OPINION
*Israeli Ambassador
Lior Keinan*

This week, we’re commemorating 23 years since the murder of then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

There is not a single Israeli who does not recall vividly the moment he heard the news of Rabin’s assassination during a peace rally in Tel Aviv on 4 November 1995.

I remember the unravelling of that evening precisely. I recall feeling sheer disbelief at how a politically-motivated murder could take place in our Israel.

We had heard of plenty such murders around the world throughout history, yet no one could quite believe such a murder could ever happen in Israel.

The assassination was, and is, one of the few breaking points in the life of the young Israel in its brief modern history. Israeli democracy faced a concrete threat, just as Rabin outlined throughout his last speech: “Democracy can and must accommodate differences in ideology and belief, yet can never allow itself to resort to violence that eats away at its foundational core.”

Much to our collective relief, Israeli society valiantly overcame the crisis, and has never had to, and hopefully

will never have to, deal with or witness another politically-motivated murder in our country.

It is my sincere hope that Rabin’s murder serves as a painful lesson in the minds of Israelis. This will ensure that our democracy can persist in being a beacon of light and inspiration to neighbouring nations.

Since that fateful day, many have contemplated Rabin’s legacy, and his personal, historical importance as an Israeli leader. In Rabin’s case, particularly in comparison to other Zionist and Israeli leaders, it is slightly more complex to do so.

Rabin did not leave behind many books, memoirs, speeches, or opinion columns articulating his state or military doctrine. Rabin was reputed to be a man of action, preferring his behaviour and decisions to do the “speaking” on his behalf, rather than promises and big statements.

Consequently, and not so surprisingly, he was perceived to be representative of the “Tzabar” Israeli identity – direct, few in words, a man of action with a burning drive to succeed at any price.

There is no doubt that Rabin was a major influence in two of the most momentous historical events in Israeli history. First, Rabin served as commander-in-chief of The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) during the six-day war in 1967. That defensive war resulted in our biggest military achievement to date, and the recapturing and union of Jerusalem. Second, this time as prime minister, was the signing of the Oslo Accords together with The Palestinian Authority in 1993, and the peace treaty with Jordan a year later, cementing his status as a leading statesman.

In a country like Israel, which since its re-inception has been forced to strike a careful balance between security and state needs, it is crucial that its leaders reflect that balance through experience in the field of national security and a pioneering statesmanship. Rabin was a refined embodiment of such ideals, a unique fusion of a daring military commander leading his army to victory coupled with a brave and trailblazing statesman securing security and peace for his nation and his people.

There is still progress to be made in bringing to life Rabin’s efforts, in reconciling our differences with our neighbours, and ensuring security for all of Israel’s citizens. Nevertheless, undoubtedly, Rabin advanced his noble plight significantly through quiet leadership and uncompromising persistence.

Today’s Israel, an island of democracy, a pluralistic society, and a thriving economy, remains heavily indebted to him. May his memory be blessed.

Who will follow in the steps of Chief Rabbi Mirvis?

The South African-born Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth and the UK (United Kingdom) Ephraim Mirvis is leading the charge against prejudice and homophobia in orthodox Judaism. Now is the time to challenge our own communities and leaders to follow his example.

When he was first appointed in 2013, Chief Rabbi Mirvis urged orthodox synagogues to welcome LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other) Jews into their communities. Now, he has gone much further by co-creating guidance for religious, orthodox schools on how to relate to LGBT+ children (see <https://chiefrabbi.org/lgbtwelfare>).

It’s the first such guidance to be issued by any chief rabbi, and will hopefully become a template for tackling gender and sexual identity issues in religious communities.

Chief Rabbi Mirvis writes in his introduction to the report, “Our children need to know that at school, at home, and in the community, they will be loved and protected regardless of their sexuality or gender identity.” Who among us would deny this?

He goes on to explain that a priority for every school should be the well-being of its students, and that “numerous professional and lay leaders



OPINION
Adam Sachs

of our schools and many rabbis have shared” with him “their view that there is an urgent need for authoritative guidance which recognises the reality that there are young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in our schools to whom we have a duty of care”. These students are struggling with their identities, and are often marginalised, bullied, even left with no choice but to leave their schools and communities. It doesn’t have to be this way.

As author Naomi Alderman wrote in an early response published in *The Guardian*, this LGBT+ report is “clever and pragmatic” because it “speaks the language of religious people” and does not seek to contradict Torah verses about homosexuality, or Talmudic attitudes to transgender people. That would have achieved nothing, for obvious reasons. The social progressives may long for conservative religious people to agree with their attitudes about gender and sexuality, but they won’t.

Rather, this report talks about the prohibition on bullying in Judaism,

with humiliating someone considered as serious as murder. It discusses the Jewish obligation to do anything to save a life in the context of high rates of suicide among young LGBT+ people. It reminds readers that Judaism considers Leviticus’s injunction to “love your neighbour as yourself” to be the most important principle of the Torah. Essentially, this report says something very obvious and very important: whether or not you think the Torah forbids gay sex, you’re still obliged to be kind, thoughtful, and compassionate to all people.

It’s a reality that LGBT+ issues are a major fault line in nearly every religious community, including our own. Religious prohibitions against homosexuality cannot be wished out of existence, so it is not particularly surprising that orthodox Jewish leadership has seemed utterly helpless and incapable of bridging the divide, and making real progress when it comes to LGBT+ inclusion.

But perhaps that doesn’t need to be the case, and Orthodox Jewish communities can treat LGBT+ Jews with respect and love... officially. This is the message from Chief Rabbi Mirvis, and we need the same from South African religious leaders.

Not so very long ago, affirmation and approval was exactly what I needed and

Continued on page 12>>

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Pieter-Dirk Uys on discovering his Jewish roots

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

When apartheid ended in 1990, Pieter-Dirk Uys thought his career was over. But with the wealth of satirical material presenting itself on an almost daily basis, is he ever going to retire?

“I can’t spell the word,” he answers simply.

Uys was speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* on the eve of the launch of his book, *The Echo of a Noise: A Memoir of Then and Now*.

Uys has been a performer since his early childhood, from singing at weddings and in his father’s children’s choir and, he adds, “playing the piano very badly”.

Originally, he wanted to be a teacher and completed the first year of his degree, but a trip to Europe, “a life-changing experience”, put paid to those ambitions. “When I went back to my second year, I saw a very glamorous lady in the canteen with a beret and sunglasses and a long cigarette-holder and I thought, ‘Gosh, that’s quite nice!’ I said, ‘What do you do?’

“She said, ‘I’m an actress.’ So, I went with her to drama school, and then she said, ‘Why don’t you sign up?’, and I did!”

The book, he says, is about the small signposts in his life, of which this incident is but one.

The greatest denials in his history are the truths about his mother – her life remains shrouded in mystery. Uys did not know until after her suicide in 1969 that Helga Bassel was, in fact, Jewish, though he says he sensed it.

“I think it’s in your soul – your soul has fingerprints,” he surmises.

Her paternal grandfather was a rabbi in Hungary, and the

accomplished pianist had left Nazi Germany in 1937 – accompanied by her Blüthner piano. “There was no discussion. When we were children, nobody said to us that six million people were murdered by the Nazis.

“It was only after I left school that I realised there was far more to it,” he recalls. But, still, he is tormented by the fact that he didn’t ask more questions, both of his mother growing up and of his father after her death.

asked. She laughed, and ruffled my blonde hair.

“Why don’t you call it, and see who answers?” My first hint of that concentration camp hell – with humour, writes Uys.

“There was no discussion about anything that would have terrified [his sister] Tessa and me,” he reflects.

One of the things his mother brought with her was the telephone book from 1936, he relates. “There was a hole in the cardboard cover

mothers. His first female character, Nowell Fine, is in fact a composite of some of the 70s kugels.

“[Family friends] Charles and Lucy Kreitzer [like Uys’s parents] were musicians, and their children were our best friends – we loved them.

“They lived in Sea Point, and we used to love going there because the food was fantastic and there was just such fun! There was much more fun in Jewish families than in Afrikaans families – a lovely camaraderie which

Uys.

“It was protection,” he now says, “of herself, but also of us. I was called names all my life. I was called a Nazi at school because I had a German mother, a Boer because I had an Afrikaans father, a moffie because I sang in a choir, so I think one tried to be very careful not to open oneself up to more.”

Did his mother’s denial of her roots and submerging them in a new life contribute to her bipolar disorder, I ask Uys. “Oh I’m sure,” he replies.

“Leaving your culture, your life...



Outside the State Theatre in Pretoria in 1984, Ambassador Evita Bezuidenhout – Uys’s alter ego – finds time to sign autographs for her fans in her state limo

“I know more about Sophia Loren’s family than my own,” he says wistfully, referring to a pen friendship that has spanned over 50 years.

All his mother spoke of was the “laughter, music, and happiness” of the Berlin of her youth. Even when her best friend from those days turned up at the Uys home in Pinelands with numbers tattooed on her wrist, there was no explanation.

“Is that a telephone number?” I

where she had cut out the swastika.

“Tessie took it to London, and to this day, there are people who come and look up their families who were killed. But again, that wasn’t something we talked about when my mother was alive – it was just there,” he says.

Uys relates in the book how he loved going to his Jewish schoolfriends’ homes, how he loved the food, and fell in love with their

we found extremely exciting.”

In his book, Uys relates a particularly poignant incident when his sister, today an internationally renowned concert pianist, was being driven to a music eisteddfod. She had said to her mother that her best friend would win the medal.

“She’s so musical because she’s Jewish. Oh, I wish I was Jewish!” Tessa had said. “Ma just gave her little skew smile, and said nothing,” writes

• *Uys is staging a rerun of “When In Doubt Say Darling” at The Fugard Theatre in Cape Town from 27 November to 15 December.*

Hitler-loving activist in ANCYL leadership race may apologise

>> Continued from page 3

this week that the “League is facing many challenges”, including among many things “the issue of liquidation”.

Dlamini faces numerous charges including public violence, theft, assault, and violating a court order related to the #FeesMustFall protests at Wits University in 2016.

A defiant Dlamini appeared at the Johannesburg Magistrates Court last Friday, where his case was postponed again to April next year.

According to Gareth van Onselen, the Head of Politics at the Institute of Race Relations, the ANCYL suffers from three problems.

“First, on a grand scale, it has been rendered somewhat redundant by the Economic Freedom Fighters, which is essentially the ANCYL in an external guise. Second, it is bankrupt, and has been for some time. Third, it now has a well-established recent history of poor leadership.”

Said Van Onselen, “Dlamini’s prospects of victory are unknown, but as far as his style and beliefs go, his candidature is in keeping with recent trends. He is highly divisive, peddles hate, shows scant respect for the law and, ultimately, parades an intellectual wasteland not hinterland. He is in this way the inevitable result of the devolution of ANCYL leadership.”

Van Onselen said there was Julius Malema, “a hate monger and organisational disaster”, who was ultimately expelled. Then Collen Maine, “a semi-literate buffoon”, who called for the rand to fall and suggested that Minister of Public Enterprises and former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan be “necklaced” to death.

“So, it makes a certain amount of sense that one of the contenders to the throne boasts an affinity for Hitler. Dlamini represents the end point of the road the ANCYL has been travelling on for some time: the epitome of hate and incompetence.”

Incoming Wits student leaders aligned with BDS

>>> Continued from page 1

members of the PYA were among those who disrupted a piano recital by Israeli pianist Yossi Reshef on campus.

Mithi asserts, “This is therefore almost a complete return to 2012 student political dynamics in respect of the Israel-Palestine issue. SAUJS students should expect a hostile SRC next year, one that is closely affiliated with BDS, and that will definitely have a more aggressive IAW campaign.”

SAUJS’ leadership says that in light of the many very real issues affecting students such as student debt, it hopes that the SRC’s stance on Israel will not be the focus of its year. It has affirmed its commitment to its Jewish and pro-Israel constituents.

Says SAUJS Political Officer Ariel Goldberg, “Despite the differences in beliefs between the PYA and SAUJS, we are strong enough to continue standing up for what we believe in. Our fight is never an easy one, but no matter who is in power, we will continue to ensure that our Jewish students feel safe and protected on campus. SAUJS has worked

very hard to establish a voice on campus, and we will ensure that we continue to stand firm in our beliefs.”

Wits’ management states that while SRC candidates do have external political affiliations, it will not permit them to be brought to bear on campus in a discriminatory way. “It is important to note that SRC candidates run in their individual capacity as per the electoral rules,” says Senior Communications Officer

Buhle Zuma, “however, in most instances, these candidates tend to group together and many have political affiliations.

“Wits values diversity, and believes that its student and staff body should reflect a multiplicity of race, gender, socio-economic background, urban and rural geographic origin, culture, ethnicity, disability, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. However, the university does not tolerate any form of

discrimination or intimidation on its campuses.”

Jewish community leadership says it will stand behind SAUJS and Jewish students, addressing any issues that arise.

Wendy Kahn, the National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, says, “This is certainly not the first year that the PYA has dominated the SRC. Over the years, our students have had varying interactions with it. No doubt, SAUJS students will continue to engage with the new leadership going forward. We always have and always will engage with all leadership.”

Ben Swartz, the National Chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, agrees. “Our most important aim is to ensure that the Jewish students and students who support Israel feel safe at all times,” he says. “We applaud SAUJS, and the work it does. It has our full backing.”

In spite of multiple attempts to contact various members of the PYA, the *SA Jewish Report* received no response to any of its questions, even when certain individuals responded to initial contact.



The woman behind the national anthem is part of a power couple

MIRAH LANGER

“I have a metronome inside of me – it tells me what is in time, and therefore also in tune, and that is how I relate to the world... through my ears.” So explains Professor Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph about the music that has flowed through her since the time she was a piano prodigy at the age of four.

It is a passion that saw her become the first woman in South Africa to obtain a doctorate in Music Composition and has resulted in her becoming recognised as one of the most acclaimed composers of our time.

It was the passion that caused her to be directly responsible for the national anthem as we now know it. As for her husband, Professor Michael Rudolph, his passion took him to growing urban food gardens. “All I knew about gardens was the lawn and how to play rugby or cricket on it,” he says. “I didn’t know one flower from the next, but for whatever reason, I came across this idea of urban gardens and it resonated...

Rudolph’s journey took him from being a local dentist to becoming one of the founders of the University of the Witwatersrand’s School of Public Health – and a pioneer of community outreach work, including gardening.

The couple, who have been married for 42 years, might have very different interests, yet both

have created works of beauty within their respective realms.

For Zaidel-Rudolph, her involvement with the national anthem started with a call in 1995 from the then minister of arts and culture, Dr Ben Ngubane, requesting her to attend a meeting to produce a composite new anthem.

“Up until then, with the advent of democracy in 1994, President Mandela had said that *Die Stem* and *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika* should be sung side by side at state occasions.”

However, the downside of this was the five-minute, 20-second anthem ceremony which ensued.

“So, the directive from Mandela to the ministry of arts and culture was to form a committee of language and music experts to try to find a way to merge the anthems. The anthem was to be made singable by the general public and it needed to incorporate as many languages as possible.”

At the first meeting, members of the committee were asked to find a way to “merge the anthems musically and ideologically... so as rather to reconcile people than offend people”.

By the next meeting, Zaidel-Rudolph had brainstormed and come up with a plan, which she introduced to the committee.

“My idea was to put *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika* first and then to bridge into *Die Stem* – while cutting out all the repetitions. This made the most sense ideologically and musically!”

While her idea was well received,

it was still quite a long process until finalisation.

One of the first cuts, recommended by political activist and Mandela’s close friend, Fatima Meer – and whole-heartedly supported by Zaidel-Rudolph – was to remove the lyrics *Woza Moya* that when translated mean “Come, oh Spirit”.

Meer suggested that this seemed to reference the Christian holy trinity, which could alienate South Africans of other faiths – and Zaidel-Rudolph, as a proud Jewess, concurred.

In terms of the musicality needs, it was Zaidel-Rudolph who introduced a key modulation – bridging between the different keys of *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika* and *Die Stem*.

It was also Zaidel-Rudolph’s suggestion to include English words into the anthem. In fact, the lyrics of the final stanza were written by her, but not before they had gone back and forth for some adjustments according to Cabinet’s requests.

For example, one version included the lines: “We can hear the land rejoicing, with a voice not heard before; let the people of our country, live in peace forever more” and another read: “Let us live and fight for freedom” instead of the final version’s declaration to “strive for freedom”.

Originally, Mandela had requested that the anthem be no longer than two minutes.

By the time she had finished,

Professors Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph and Michael Rudolph



Zaidel-Rudolph had reduced it to one minute and 50 seconds: “So that was it: chop, chop, chop!” she quips.

While the anthem might be Zaidel-Rudolph’s most widely known work, her full repertoire is vast and full of intricate technical expertise and experimentation.

In particular, she loves combining African rhythms and melodies with Jewish themes.

One of her favourite pieces is the Sefirot Symphony. This orchestral composition is based on Kabbalistic concepts of heavenly and earthly spheres.

“For [the sphere of] Beauty, I used the idea of David’s Harp, and so that section’s instrumentation is with a harp,” she explains as an example of the blending of Judaica into her music.

For her husband, Judaism too has been a core inspiration in his work. “Tikkun olam is a fundamental

tenet of Judaism – of identifying things in life that need repairing by helping others who are in need and by utilising available resources and sharing skills,” he explains.

The couple cite a meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1981 in New York as being a defining moment in guiding them towards the kind of contributions they hoped to offer through their work.

“This beautiful man... looked right through me and he said: ‘Continue with your work as a musician.’ I hadn’t said a word,” reminisces Zaidel-Rudolph.

“He said: ‘I will give you a blessing to continue to write music to bring great joy to people.’”

At the time, Rudolph did not know whether he should continue being a dentist in private practice or go full time into public health. The Rebbe gave him a blessing to pursue the latter.

Continued on page 15>>


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2

You will need a lawyer who specializes in real estate, and speaks English, your lawyer will be responsible for conducting the due diligence on the property, including title searches and guide you through the process. Your lawyer should also assist you with the very difficult task of transferring funds to Israel.

3

If you plan on taking a mortgage to finance the property. You will need to obtain principle approval from the mortgage bank prior to the signing of the contract.

4

Discuss with your lawyer proe and cons of hiring an engineer and/or appraiser prior to the signing.

5

The Payment terms in the agreement are a commercial term that can be negotiated however the standard practice is between 20-30 % at signing and a customized payment schedule with the last payment being at the closing when you receive possession of the property.

6

Your lawyer will finalize the T&C of the agreement and schedule the signing.

7

If you can't fly in for the signing you will need to sign a specific power of attorney (including for the mortgage bank).

8

Your lawyer will discuss with you the security you shall receive against your payments. This varies when you buy from a contractor or second hand.

9

Before the signing plan the movement of money to your Israeli account or trust account- remember in Israel everything can be negotiated even the bank fees and exchange rate.

10

Enjoy your NEW home in Israel and don't forget to let your lawyer know if you plan on making Aliya in the near future, this can have a large impact on your purchase tax.

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 Ahuza 137 B Ra'anana

Sixth Shabbos Project to reach more than 1 400 cities

SIMON APFEL

This year’s global Shabbos Project will include a group of mountaineers summiting Kilimanjaro; a musical Kabbalat Shabbat on a Sydney beach; and a lone Jew in Larkana, Pakistan, keeping Shabbat with the rest of the Jewish world.

In San Diego, more than a thousand Shabbat meals have been arranged at private homes across the county, with people hosting neighbours, friends, colleagues, even perfect strangers. They’re calling it “radical hospitality”.

In New York, Long Islanders will enjoy the spectacle of Kabbalat Shabbat (receiving shabbat) services and singing in the streets, followed by a “Dark Tisch”, a Friday night meditative gathering with singing and snacks, held in near-complete darkness.

While in Spring Valley, a diverse group of women, many new to the Shabbat experience, are embarking on a weekend of “meditation, prayer, Torah teachings, massage, and movement” led by qualified yoga instructor, Bracha Meshchaninov.

Los Angeles is one of ten cities across North America decking out their challah bakes in striking pink decorations, and offering screening and testing services to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

And in Detroit, there is an unlikely partnership between the BBYO (Bnei Brith Youth Organisation), a pluralistic Jewish teen movement, and Aish HaTorah, for a full 25-hour Shabbaton.

These are just a few of the thousands of initiatives being rolled out around the globe as part of this week’s sixth Shabbos Project.

“Our objective this year, as in previous years, is simply to enable as many people as possible to keep one Shabbat together,” says South African Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, the founder and Director of the Shabbat Project.

“Ultimately, through mass participation in authentic Shabbat experiences, we hope to shift the cultural perception of Shabbat, and forge unity among all Jews, regardless of background.”

In Israel, where the Shabbos Project is being endorsed by members of the Knesset, including the Minister of the Diaspora, Naftali Bennet, *Voice of Israel* presenter Menachem Toker has extended a live-on-air invitation to fellow national TV and radio host, Didi Harari, to join him at his house for Shabbat.

More than a thousand Tel Avivians are sitting down to a Friday night dinner in a shipping hangar at Namal port, while Jerusalem will host a city-wide *seudah shlishit* (third meal of Shabbat) at a bar adjoining the Machane Yehuda shuk, and a Batmitzvah girl has extended an open invitation to the entire city.

Meanwhile, Kochav Yair in central Israel is running a Shabbat-themed, two-day treasure hunt for the town’s kids, followed by a Friday night kiddush laid out on 30 neighbourhood streets. Givat Shmuel is hosting the biggest *seudah shlishit*

in the country, with more than 500 people expected to attend.

The action is not limited to the United States and Israel.

In Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, the owner of a local backpacker’s lodge is offering free accommodation and meals to anyone who keeps Shabbat, while down south, in Bariloche, a local teacher is organising a Kabbalat

for an evening of Shabbat-themed improv theatre.

In Essex, England, 25 families – few with any prior experience – are preparing to keep a full Shabbat together.

And in Florence, Italy, two local professors will be leading an exploration of the city’s Jewish architectural wonders.

mountaineers summiting Kilimanjaro are pausing for 25 hours to keep Shabbat 4 000ft (1 219m) above sea level.

And Zuriel Solangi, a lone Jew in Larkana, Pakistan, will join compatriot Faisel Benkhald, a lone Jew in Karachi, in keeping Shabbat with the rest of the Jewish world.

Naypyidaw (Myanmar) is

affords people to lay down the demands, distractions, and devices that dominate modern life, and devote one day to the truly important things that might otherwise get lost in the maelstrom.

“The unfortunate reality,” says Goldstein, “is that in our modern age, as a result of the lives we live and lifestyle choices we make, we end up not having the time or the emotional space to devote attention to the things that really matter – personal growth, our families and relationships, our spiritual well-being. Shabbat gives us that time and that space, and the results of that can be truly transformative.”

He describes Shabbat as “an island in time”.

“Crucially, it is the things we cannot do on Shabbat which free us up to do the things we can. Because of the so-called ‘restrictions’ of the day, we actually get a chance to re-engage as families, and revisit and reinvigorate our most important relationships.”

For the past five years, says Goldstein, stories have poured in of people transforming their lives as a result.

“There are many families and individuals that have so fallen in love with Shabbat – with the stillness, the relaxation, the sense of being instead of doing, the sense of space and time it affords – that they’ve incorporated it into their lives on a weekly basis. It has been a privilege to see it unfold; to witness the magic of Shabbat take hold in cities across the world.”

For Goldstein, the Shabbos Project is about more than unity and celebration. Yet the appeal, for many, lies in its pure simplicity.



Last year’s Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony at Bondi Beach, Australia

Shabbat and Shabbat dinner for the entire community.

More than 30 apartment buildings across Santiago, Chile, will be hosting Friday night dinners in the lobby to help neighbours get to know each other.

And in Cancun, Mexico, organisers have booked a hotel near the city’s synagogue, so everyone can keep Shabbat.

In Sydney, Australia, thousands are expected at a musical Kabbalat Shabbat on Coogee beach.

A popular cigar lounge in Grenoble, southeastern France, is gearing up

In Cape Town, events include guided Shabbat walks, and a student-led Havdallah (end of Shabbat) concert on Camps Bay beach, with supper, a celebrity DJ, and fire poi (dancing), while their fellow high schoolers in Johannesburg are running a street Havdallah concert in Glenhazel.

Both are among hundreds of cities worldwide taking part in the Let’s Chalk Shabbat initiative, with Shabbat candle-lighting times drawn in neon chalk all over inner-city pavements.

Meanwhile, a group of intrepid

participating for the first time, as is San Luis, Argentina; Hobart, Tasmania; Accra, Ghana; and Curaçao, a Dutch Caribbean island.

They will join about 300 cities and neighbourhoods in Israel, more than 500 cities in the US, and a combined one million Jews in more than a thousand cities in 98 countries around the world.

Stop doing. Start being

The campaign theme for the 2018 Shabbos Project is “Stop doing. Start being”. This is a reference to the unique opportunity that Shabbat

Shabbos in Jerusalem

HANNAH MIDZUK

I’ve always found Shabboses at home in Johannesburg to be a suspension in time – a moment to exhale after the nonstop bustle of my week. These rest days are always decorated with quality time with my family, a couple of visits to my local shul, and my mother’s tasty homemade food.

But, as soon as the twenty-five-hour hiatus is up, the clock begins ticking once again, and the chaos of the week resumes – as if Shabbos didn’t even pay us a visit.

In Jerusalem, however, Shabbos isn’t merely an interruption; it’s the climax of the week. Living in Israel for the year, I can feel it. I sense the magnificence of Shabbos approaching when the Jerusalem Central Bus Station is abuzz with people rushing to get to their destinations on a Friday afternoon. I begin to smell the familiar aroma of fresh challot rising out the windows of every bakery in Shuk Machane Yehuda. And I hear the Shabbos songs begin to echo through the walls of the Old City.

This year, I have had the greatest privilege of having the most popular synagogue in my backyard – the Western Wall. People from all over the country and around the world flock towards this sacred site to witness for themselves the welcoming of the splendour of Shabbos. To be there for Kabbalat Shabbat is to feel a part of Am Yisrael (the nation of Israel). Soldiers holding M16s, men in striemels (fur hats), women in sheitels, tourists with Nikon cameras, children carrying siddurim can all be heard singing “Am Yisrael Chai” together as one.

Every uplifting Friday night, Tefillah is joined by hundreds of feet that are swept away in dance. Throughout the evening, the sweet melodies of zemirot (hymns) and tisches (informal Shabbos gatherings) emerge from houses alive in the pure joy and happiness

of this holy day.

Saturdays are no different. Many Israeli communities, rather than sitting silently and unamused while listening to a select few in the choir, are united in song under a single voice. The tunes are upbeat and vibrant, and they never fail to awaken my soul from the sleep of the week. Being in Israel means Jews of all ages are found in shul praying to G-d – in their mother tongue – singing, feeling, and deeply understanding every word.

The serenity of the day is overwhelming, especially when visiting religious yeshuvim (settlements) such as Alon Shvut. Streets become a playground on Shabbos.



The view of the Kotel from Hannah Midzuk’s bedroom

Young toddlers are free to run around outside, without a hint of fear of a car speeding past. Groups of teenagers are scattered around playfully on the same roads, gathering for late night catch ups with their neighbours and childhood friends.

As Shabbos begins to draw to a close, its holiness is

reflection, appreciation, and connection.

- Hannah Midzuk matriculated last year, and is in Israel this year on Bnei Akiva’s MTA programme, a modern orthodox post-matric year in Israel spent learning, touring, and mastering leadership skills.

Five living generations pass on family legacy

TALI FEINBERG

It is a unique and precious blessing to have a family with five living generations. We spoke to some families who enjoy this rare phenomenon.

Five generations of women
Timor Lifschitz, 28, is blessed to be part of a family with five living generations of women – her great grandmother Safta Nina (90), her grandmother Safta Bracha (70), her mother Anat (50), herself, and her daughter Ella (now almost three).

Her grandmother and great-grandmother live in Israel, while her mother, her daughter, and Timor live in South Africa. “My daughter met her great-great grandmother when she was six weeks old,” Lifschitz says. “I remember how we put her in Safta Nina’s arms, and the joy that radiated from her face as she held Ella. We were so pleased to have five generations of women, we took many photos to commemorate the achievement.”

Much has changed over the generations. “As a Jewish woman, Safta Nina had to work at the age of 12 in a Russian factory that made guns for the army. She didn’t have a normal childhood, and had to run from place to place to escape the German soldiers. Today, my daughter is safe, and

has a normal childhood. She will go to school and be able to make choices without fear of loss of life. She is not in a war zone. It’s something we take for granted,” says Lifschitz.

The elder women in the family experienced tragedy and witnessed historical events. “Safta Nina lost her brother, who was killed by the Germans, and she had to run away due to World War II. She also lost her husband quite a few years ago. Both Safta Nina and Safta Bracha witnessed Israel’s development into [the country] it has become today.”

In terms of heirlooms and traditions, the four adult women wear the same necklace, and “one will be made for my daughter”, Lifschitz says. “I received mine on my wedding day.”

Lifschitz’s hope for her daughter as the youngest generation in the family is “to remember her roots. I want her to remember that because Safta Nina went through so many hardships and survived the war, we are all here. I hope she gets to see her many more times. I also just want Ella to be happy and healthy, and to walk the path that she chooses”.

A family ranging from 102 to 14 months
Robyn Koff, 29, is blessed to have her great grandmother, Esther Epstein, 102, in her life. She is



Nina Oren, Bracha Meir, Anat Broide holding Ella Lifschitz, and Timor Lifschitz

the great granny of her little boy, Tyler, aged 14 months. In between is her father, Jonathan Koff (55) and her granny, Ethne Koff, (75).

“Having a great granny is very special. Unfortunately, she lives in Johannesburg, and I live in Cape Town,” says Koff. The oldest and youngest generations met two months ago at a family Batmitzvah. “It was a beautiful moment,” she says. “It was much harder for my grandmothers to be traditional Jews, while today, it is easy with the availability of kosher products.”

Great Granny Esther witnessed World War II and survived the Holocaust, the establishment

of Israel, and the Six-Day War, while her father and grandmother witnessed the release of Nelson Mandela.

The family spends as many *Shabbatot* and *yontavim* together as possible. Esther used to crochet doilies, and all of the children have been given them as keepsakes.

Koff’s hope for her son as the youngest generation is that “he will continue to be blessed with family around him, to celebrate simchas, Shabbat and *yontavim* together”.

The multi-faceted family
“My mother was the second

youngest of seven children,” says Sharon Klugman, who is part of a large family of five generations. Her mother, known to all as Topsy, is 94, she is 75, her daughter Shelley is 55, her granddaughter Cami is in her 20s, and Cami has two sons, Tal (6) and Dylan (4). Cami is married to an Israeli, Roei, and the young family live in Sydney. Topsy met Tal when he was five months old, and it was a very meaningful moment, says Klugman.

Topsy’s brothers all fought in World War II and survived, but all her siblings have since passed away. She has had a colourful

Continued on page 16>>

Nisha was born in prison.

And unless you act now, Nisha will die in jail.



She was jailed by the court of Public Opinion, the Court which says that people with leprosy have no rights – no right to attend school, no right to light a candle in church, no right to play with other children and no right to fetch water from the well used by the rest of the village.

Yes, you read that right. Leprosy.

Nisha has leprosy. Nisha’s Mom has leprosy. Nisha’s cousin has leprosy. As do many millions of people around the world. Each year, a quarter of a million people get leprosy and many of them are ‘in prison’ – the prison of isolation imposed by their friends and family, who are terrified of leprosy.

Leprosy patients are jailed behind the bars of fear and ignorance.

There’s nothing to dread about leprosy if it’s treated early. But if you leave leprosy long enough, there’s plenty that will go wrong. You’ll get numb hands and feet and you won’t feel pain. Without pain to warn you of danger, you’ll injure your hands, feet and eyes and you’ll have hands without fingers, feet without toes and eyes without sight.

Leprosy treatment is free, but many people like Nisha don’t get tablets because they’re afraid of being

hounded out of their villages when word gets out about their disease.

They’re sentenced to lives of increasing deformity because they don’t have advocates to defend them. Life becomes a downward spiral of disability, unemployment and poverty. Which is where the Leprosy Mission steps in. The Leprosy Mission gives free tablets to Nisha and helps her to look after her hands and feet. We pay for her to go to school. We help her Mom find work. We give shoes to her cousin whose feet are numb.

But beyond that, we take time – time to speak to Nisha and her family about the love of God. Time to speak to them from the Scriptures. And time to speak to her village, teaching them the truth about leprosy. It’s a long process. Ideas change slowly, but village by village, people are starting to welcome children like Nisha into their classrooms, Sunday Schools and at the village well.

People are being cured of leprosy and people with leprosy are being welcomed home because in the Leprosy Mission, they have an advocate – someone to speak up for them.

But the Leprosy Mission urgently needs your help to carry on speaking up for people like Nisha – people who have no voice of their own.

Please help us to free Nisha from prison. She was born into the prison of leprosy, but there’s no reason for her to die in that jail. Your gift of R200 will smash the chains of leprosy by sending a Leprosy Mission instructor to Nisha’s village, where they’ll patiently explain that leprosy isn’t a curse and that it can be treated and that the prison doors behind which Nisha has been banished should be flung open.

Please send your gift today. The longer we wait, the worse Nisha’s hands and feet become.

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Two men and a baby – building a family in a new way

TALI FEINBERG

When Willow Markovitz-Levin came into the world in early October, it was the end of an extraordinary journey and the start of an incredible new beginning. She is the daughter of two Jewish fathers who wanted to build a family of their own, and were fortunate enough to find a way.

“Like any couple deciding to have a baby, this was a decision that came from the heart,” says Ross Levin, who lives in Cape Town with his husband Nicholas Markovitz.

The couple’s path has been anything but ordinary. Ross “came out” after a long marriage and two children, and the two men got engaged on stage at an Adele concert. They followed this with a surprise wedding, and the decision to have a baby together was the next obvious step.

While they may have followed an unconventional road up to this point, the Jewish values of the centrality of family, a loving home, and being part of a community, are an essential part of their outlook.

Looking back, Levin recalls, “After having two children who are now teenagers, I never thought that having more kids was part of my future path. But Nic hadn’t had children, and it was something he really wanted, so we investigated the prospect even before we got married, and after more thought, our desire to start a family came from the same place.”

Levin’s greatest fear was how his two teenage children would react to their decision, and to the rollercoaster ride of creating a baby in this way. For these reasons, he told them he was having a baby only once the surrogate was pregnant.

“My ex-wife gave me good advice – that we are on this earth for only a short time, and the more we leave behind, the better.” This is the approach

he took to telling his children. His daughter was thrilled, while his son took a little longer to come around to the idea. “Since then, they have embraced and supported my decision, and it has brought us even closer.”

So how does one start such a journey? “With an attorney,” says Levin, explaining that a High Court order is put in place to define who the parents are, and the rights of everyone involved. “Previously, one had to formally adopt the child after birth, and that created a lot of problems,” he says.

Then it was on to an egg-donor agency, where one can choose a donor as if from a catalogue. “You get to see their school reports, their family background, everything! It can get overwhelming and drive you mad. So, we asked the owner of the platform to make the choice for us, just ensuring that the donor had a healthy background, and looked similar to us,” says Levin.

The couple found their surrogate easily, and felt an immediate kinship with her. Although she did not live in the same city as them, they flew her to Cape Town for scans and were in close contact with her throughout the pregnancy.

The question the men are asked constantly is which one of them is the sperm donor. “To this, I often answer, well it’s not yours!” quips Levin. Legally, one has to know who the father is, so the couple do know, but they prefer not to share it as they feel that they are equally her father.

Levin points out that most straight couples are not subjected to such curious questions, and that there were many similar indignities on this road.

“For example, the hospital didn’t know whose name to put on the baby’s wrist. It wanted to use the surrogate’s surname, but we reminded

it that there is a High Court order to use our names. It played out on every form we had to fill in asking for the mother and the father, and at every appointment when there were two chairs instead of three [for us and the surrogate], to everyone who asked who the mother is. Surprisingly, Home Affairs didn’t blink, and gave us the birth certificate with no questions.”

Thankfully, their surrogate became pregnant on the first try, and with only a small scare, it was a smooth pregnancy. Levin at first feared the reactions of family and friends, “But like everything we have done, it has been a unifying, not a dividing experience. We feared judgement, but everyone proved us wrong, and we have received nothing but support and excitement. Some people asked why we didn’t adopt as there are so many children in the world who need a loving family, but you could ask the same question to a straight couple. It was a ‘heart decision’, and to have our own baby was first prize.”

The support the couple received from Orthodox Jews and rabbis throughout their journey continued, and they have experienced no backlash. “They may not open their arms, but they don’t turn their backs,” says Levin, who recently spoke at a Cape Jewish Board of Deputies event on being gay and Jewish. Events like these, he feels, demonstrate that the community is introspecting on how to embrace all Jews.

Levin and Markovitz plan to raise their daughter with a strong Jewish identity as they are proud Jews, and they feel it is an essential part of family life.

They know she might have questions about her family being different, and they plan to answer these questions with age-appropriate, honest, and open discussions, and with the many children’s books that are now available on the topic. At the same time, the situation feels



Nic Markovitz and Ross Levin with their daughter Willow

natural for them, and they hope Willow will feel the same way. “We will explain what it takes to have a child, but that the most important ingredients are love and care.”

In spite of the distance between them and their surrogate during the pregnancy, both men bonded instantly to Willow when she was born, as if they had always known her. They chose her name because they loved the symmetry of the letters, and because the tree provides gentle shade, calming light, and deep roots.

Markovitz has taken a few months off work to care for their daughter at home, and Levin has found it incredibly meaningful to see him as a first-time dad. For his part, he has enjoyed being an older parent, panicking less, and enjoying it more. The couple has a lot of support, including their helper Blessed, who they hope will be a strong female figure in their baby’s life.

Reflecting on the moment Willow came into their world, Levin shares that she was born via a natural birth. “It was much grittier than I expected,” he says, as his other children were born via caesarean section. “It showed me that even at the beginning of life, we are challenged. Birth is messy, painful and tough, but it is also a miracle, reflecting the cycles of life.”

Who will follow in the steps of Chief Rabbi Mirvis?

>>Continued from page 7

sought. Don’t we all? I remember what it was like to be an impressionable child attending an orthodox Jewish school (King David Victory Park), that while not particularly religious, still carefully toed the orthodox party line when it came to LGBT+ issues.

And what was that line? I suppose it was to pretend that gay people did not exist in Jewish communities, and especially not within the schools. Heaven forbid! Whilst we did not have homophobic leaders railing against the evils of homosexuals, there was no positive encouragement and support for LGBT+ students when I was at school.

A decade ago, King David schools practiced what amounted to a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy when it came to all things LGBT+. The more religious, more conservative schools were – and are – naturally even less inclined to provide any home for LGBT+ students or teachers.

It is hugely encouraging and inspiring to see an office of a chief rabbi join forces with an organisation like Jewish gay rights organisation KeshetUK to bridge what seems like an intractable rift that could never be healed.

I’ve no doubt that Chief Rabbi Mirvis will come in for much criticism, if not outright

attacks from many quarters. At the time of writing, he already has. For many social progressives, he won’t have gone far enough, and for many amongst conservative orthodoxy, he will have gone much too far. You can be sure that Chief Rabbi Mirvis has already been branded a blasphemous heretic who is endangering Jewish souls.

It’s easy to forget that great things can be achieved with the language of compromise. In this polarised age of identity politics and the outrage economy that is the modern media, it’s all too rare to see a middle ground emerging between two opposing camps. But real change is forged on the middle ground, when you don’t try to strip people of historical beliefs and practices overnight, but rather help shape those beliefs and practices into something less hurtful. This is what real leaders understand: that sometimes you have to speak the very language of those who hold different, even offensive views.

I’m waiting for our own leaders to follow Chief Rabbi Mirvis’ example of compassion and good sense and show official support for LGBT+ Jews. This would really give South African Jewish communities something to be proud of.

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The myths and misconceptions about Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

We’re all familiar with the typical stereotypes people peddle about Jews. From miserly to murderous, myths of all kinds have been attributed to the Jewish people, some of them dating back centuries.

The urban legends about us could fill a library, and have been compounded over time by fear and lack of education. While some amuse and some shock, their origins are equally fascinating, and may help us to understand why such myths have proven so popular.

Jews have often been likened to the devil, and we have also been said to possess a pair of horns, kept well-hidden beneath our kippot.

If you look at certain classical artworks based on biblical figures, Moshe is often portrayed with two small but noticeable horns atop his head. This is the case with Michelangelo’s Moses sculpture which depicts a stern-faced man dressed in a white robe, sporting a flowing beard... and horns.

This widespread image of the Jew was based upon a misinterpretation of the Torah. Moshe was often depicted in Medieval and Renaissance art with two horns on his head as a result of the Latin mis-rendering of the phrase in the verse “sent forth beams” (*karan*) as “grew horns” (a horn being a *keren*). This image, which was invoked frequently by artists at the time, including Michelangelo and Donatello in Italy, led to the widespread notion that Jews had devilish horns.

Another feature over which anti-Semites have and continue to obsess is the supposedly “typical” Jewish nose. In Europe in 1940, Jews were depicted as having hook-noses on posters, pamphlets, newspapers, even children’s books. Because many Jews did indeed possess such noses, it was said that this was a defining feature of Jews, and attributed to Jewish people around the world, a trend which continues today.

However, despite the claims of 19th and 20th century pseudo-science, the “Jewish nose” is not a genuine characteristic, nor is it uniquely Jewish. In the Encyclopaedia Judaica, anthropologist Harry Shapiro maintains that while the “convex profile with a depressed nasal tip is not infrequent among Jews, this is not surprising since the same nasal character is common enough in the general region from which they originate, not to mention that it also occurs in non-Jewish European people”.

So, why has this feature been attributed to Jews? According to historian Sara Lipton, until 1 000 CE, there were no easily distinguishable Jews of any kind in Western imagery. This applies even in the case of nefarious Jewish characters, such as the religious leader who can be seen urging Pontius Pilate to crucify Christ in images found in the *Egbert Codex*, an illustrated gospel book. They were visually unremarkable and required labels to identify them as Jewish. Jews sported many different kinds of “bad” noses – some tapering, others snout-like – but the same noses appeared on many “bad” non-Jews as well, and there was no single, identifiable “Jewish” nose.

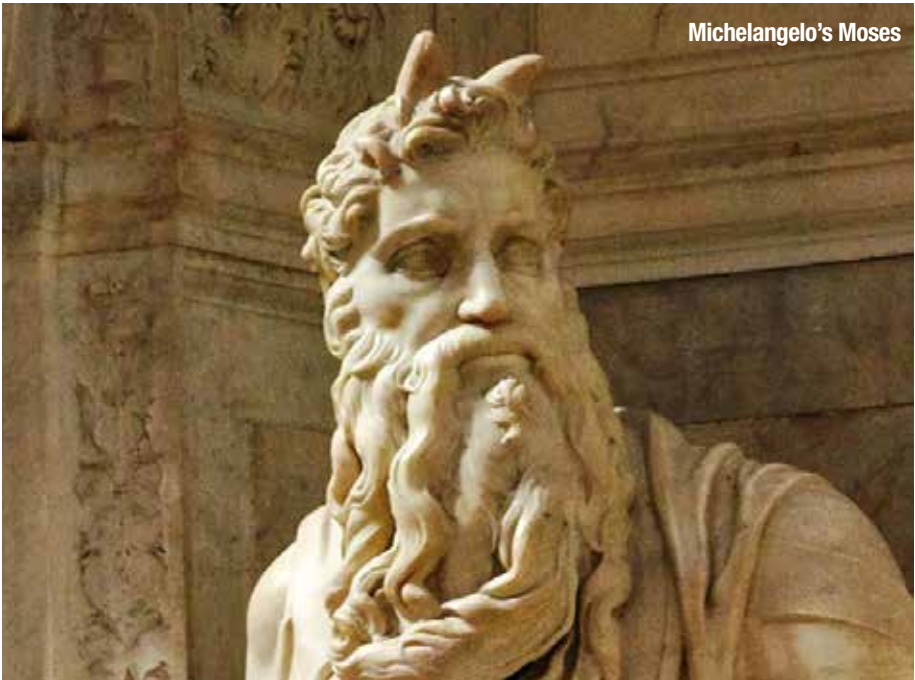
By the late thirteenth century, however, a move toward realism in art and an increased interest in physiognomy resulted in artists turning to visual signs of ethnicity. According to Lipton, the range of features assigned to Jews consolidated into one fairly grotesque and naturalistic face, and the hook-nosed, pointy-bearded Jewish caricature was born.

Perhaps one of the most popular myths is that which links Jews to ill-gotten money. In truth, Jews have been associated with moneylending for at least a millennium. One of most common explanation for this is the exclusion of European Jews in the Middle Ages from various professional guilds, their confinement to ghettos, and restrictions preventing them from owning land. These restrictions led to Jews earning a

living in one of the only areas left available to them – finance.

Medieval Christian theology held that charging interest (known as usury) was sinful, which kept many Christians from becoming financiers. The field therefore became dominated by Jews. Historian Howard Sachar estimates that in the 18th century, as many as three-fourths of the Jews in Central and Western Europe were limited to the precarious occupations of retail peddling, hawking, and “street banking” or moneylending.

By the time Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice* in 1605, Jews had been providing commercial



Michelangelo's Moses

credit to Venice itself for almost a century. Based some distance from the city centre, Jewish moneylenders would ply their trade seated on benches known as *banci*, hence the eventual creation of the word “bankers”.

The fact that Christians regarded such occupations as incompatible with their religious principles fuelled the belief that Jews were morally lacking and willing to engage in unethical business practices that decent people had rejected. This led to a rise in the opinion that all financial transactions carried out by Jews were immoral, self-serving, and aimed at harming non-Jews.

Even among ourselves, myths about other sects of Judaism abound. Many believe, even today, that ultra-Orthodox Jews are so concerned about modesty, that they have marital intercourse through a hole in a sheet. This would ensure that they are modestly separated from one another, and incapable of seeing the other while engaged in marital relations.

Jewish moneylenders would ply their trade seated on benches known as *banci*, hence the eventual creation of the word “bankers”.

This is a total myth. “There has never been a group of Jews anywhere in the world that has advocated having sex through a hole in a sheet,” says David Ribner, the founder and director of the Sex Therapy Training Program at Bar-Ilan University “That has never happened. It doesn’t happen today, it never happened in history. It’s not advocated in any text within the Jewish community.”

Rabbi Yisroel Bernath of Chabad Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Canada, says the myth might have originated from the “tallit katan” – a very wide, rectangular shawl with four knotted strings (*tzitzit*) hanging from each corner, worn by Orthodox men under their shirts. He says, “To make the garment simple, they cut a hole in the garment to put their heads through. Cleanliness is a big thing in Judaism, so they wash their tallit. Non-Jews in old Eastern European villages would see large ‘sheets’ hanging from the clothesline to dry. The ‘sheet’ had a hole in the middle, and active imaginations made up the rest.”

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Escape of Denmark’s Jews – a happy story at a very dark time

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

At the bleakest time in the history of European Jewry, the evacuation of more than 7 000 Danish Jews – or 95% of the population – to neutral Sweden was a ray of light for humanity. This occurred on the eve of their deportation to Nazi concentration camps.

The fact that the mass and speedy evacuation took place with the assistance of many ordinary Danish and Swedish citizens, as well as one very connected German diplomat, makes it all the more extraordinary.

In just one week in late September 1943,

the Danish Resistance Movement, with the assistance of ordinary Danish and Swedish citizens, managed to get 7 220 of Denmark’s 7 800 Jews and 680 non-Jewish family members to Sweden by sea.

They were ferried across the North Sea or Øresund (the strait that forms the Danish and Swedish border) in small fishing and sailing boats. One of the resistance groups was named the Elsinore Sewing Club, formed among friends in Elsinore, a town just 3.2km from Sweden. Its members combined their skills and resources to find vacant housing, fishing boats, and rationed gasoline to help Jewish refugees escape Denmark.

They primarily used small fishing boats, with occasional successes in using a mining ferry, a stolen larger boat, and a speedboat the club purchased with donations.

The last-minute rescue was made possible by the complicity of a German official, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, a diplomat and attaché based in Copenhagen. On 28 September, Duckwitz leaked plans about the impending deportation of Denmark’s Jews to Hans Hedtoft, the chairman of the Danish Social Democratic Party. Hedtoft contacted the Danish resistance movement and the head of the Jewish community, CB Henriques, who in turn alerted acting Chief Rabbi, Dr Marcus

Melchior.

At the early morning services, on 29 September, the day before Rosh Hashanah, Jews were warned by Rabbi Melchior of the planned German action. They were told to go into hiding immediately and to spread the word to all their Jewish friends and relatives.

Jews began to leave Copenhagen, where most of the almost 8 000 Jews in Denmark lived, and other cities, by train, car, and on foot. With the help of the Danish people, they found hiding places in homes, hospitals, and churches, before being spirited across the Øresund.

When the Nazis conducted the raid on 1 October, they found fewer than 300 people left. Of these, about 258 had just arrived and did not know about the evacuation, and 30 had been forgotten in an old-age home, according to the Swedish Ambassador to South Africa, Cecilia Julin.

Ultimately, about 500 Danish Jews were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. Yet, of these Jews, all but 51 survived the Holocaust, largely because Danish officials pressured the Germans with concerns about the well-being of those who had been deported.

It is a story of heroics on both sides of the border, involving diplomats, policemen, and ordinary fisherman, often at great cost to the individuals involved in the underground, some of whom were tortured, executed, or sent to concentration camps for their efforts.

The daring rescue made Denmark famous as a nation that would go to extraordinary measures to protect its minority Jewish population, whom it considered to be Danish citizens. One of the reasons Denmark protected its Jews compared to other European countries was the fact that they had long been almost completely integrated into Danish society. Consequently, most Danes perceived the Nazis’ action against Denmark’s Jews as an affront to all Danes.

Another reason is the unique culture of the Danish people. According to a recent article in *The Guardian*, “The harming of Denmark’s Jews went against everything most Danes believed in, especially their concept of the rule of law. Even injustice needs a semblance of law. That is hard to find when the entire society denies the right of the stronger.”

A third reason was that as a “model protectorate” and agricultural power, Denmark was allowed to retain its government in spite of the fact that it had been occupied by Germany since 1940. This gave Danish leaders the flexibility to do the right thing.

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin travelled to Denmark last month to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Danish rescue. He laid a wreath at the memorial to the Danish underground. There he said: “The determination with which the Jews of Denmark were saved moves us even today”, according to the *Times of Israel*.

Ordinary Danes and Swedes proved that widespread resistance to Nazi policies could save lives. It’s a lesson in being an “upstander” not a “bystander”, in doing everything we can to help others in need and stand up to bullies, Tali Nates Founder and Executive Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre told the audience on Monday night at a screening of a film which documents the evacuation, titled *The Straight Escape*.

“Many Swedes were happy to be able to do something concrete,” Julin said, pointing out that Sweden’s history of neutrality during World War II was “not a very heroic position”.

“We just did... you just did. How could we have self-respect otherwise?” a member of the Swedish resistance asks in the film. He concludes with the words, “I hope we’ll have a world where decency will be the rule, not the exception.”



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Why Roseanne Barr and Shmuley Boteach need each other

ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach may or may not be America’s most famous rabbi. But among Jews, at least, he may be its most polarising rabbi.

Boteach has built his career on those twin tent poles of American fame: sex and celebrity. In books like *Kosher Sex* and *In Defense of Adultery*, he offered up traditional Orthodox Jewish bedroom values in cheeky, borderline salacious packages. His role as Michael Jackson’s “spiritual adviser” was a mutually beneficial relationship that gave the suspected paedophile a degree of public absolution and Boteach an enormous platform for his take on Jewish values. For some, Boteach’s enterprise was a brilliant mainstreaming of conservative Jewish teachings, an only slightly cynical answer to the Joel Osteens and Rick Warrens and other widely popular purveyors of Christian self-help. His critics, meanwhile, call Boteach star-obsessed and self-involved, peddling sex and celebrity not to cannily promote a Jewish worldview, but using his rabbinic aura to achieve his own weird form of fame for fame’s sake.

“It’s always about Shmuley,” is what you often hear.

Both sides of the Boteach divide are having a field day with his latest celebrity crush, Roseanne Barr. The two have known each other since the publication of *Kosher Sex* nearly 20 years ago, when Boteach was a guest on Barr’s short-lived TV talk show. Boteach has said they have studied Torah together ever since, and that Barr welcomed his offer to find Jewish spouses for her three daughters.

So it wasn’t totally out of the blue that ever

The woman behind the national anthem

>> Continued from page 9

“The brocha from the Rebbe... has continued to give me confidence and security,” he explains.

Having obtained a Master’s degree in Public Health in the 1970s from Harvard University, Rudolph came to serve as head of the department of community dentistry at the University of the Witwatersrand. During the height of apartheid, he became one of a handful of medical professionals organising mobile dental clinics and treatment in areas starved of basic healthcare.

For example, during the 1970s, the Transkei, as it was then known, was home to 3.5 million people – and only four dentists. Rudolph began to organise groups of dental professionals to provide essential services in these under-served areas biannually for a week at a time, making it one of the longest-running outreach projects at Wits University. Similar community outreach programmes still operate today.

His most recent work has been the founding of the Siyakhana food garden initiative, located in a park in Bezuidenhout Valley. While it began in response to research that found that nutrition continues to be a “terribly neglected” aspect of preventative healthcare, the urban garden has expanded into a hub of innovation, research and training across a number of disciplines.

As Rudolph explains, the initiative has transcended “the ‘grass roots’ of just growing cabbage and spinach” to become a site for not only growing but also “facilitating connection between people”.

The couple originally met as a result of many people trying to make a shidduch between them – so much so, jokes Zaidel-Rudolph, that “we couldn’t avoid each other”. They are now proud parents to a bevy of daughters and grandparents to a clan of grandchildren.

Rudolph reflects on how, despite their different and many pursuits, their relationship has always been centred on their great support for each other.

since a seemingly racist tweet by Barr blew up her TV comeback, the two have been on a sort-of apology road show. Barr has twice appeared on Boteach’s podcast to discuss the scandal that cost her a job on the reboot of her acclaimed 1980s show *Roseanne*. They have held public events in New York and Los Angeles in which

is the power of forgiveness that defines our humanity.” Nothing in the statement is going to change minds about either Boteach or Barr. But, if you can take seriously what the two have been saying in their apology tour, you might at least acknowledge that there is more at work here than mere self-interest.



Boteach hails Barr as a Jewish exemplar, and Barr offers her side of the story.

In their latest mind meld, Boteach and Barr jointly issued a statement in response to *The Commers*, ABC’s attempt to resurrect her sitcom (and its enormous ratings) without the star. In Tuesday night’s premiere, the Roseanne character is dead, felled by an opioid overdose. That evening, Boteach posted their statement on Facebook over the banner of his non-profit enterprise, the World Values Network.

The statement is essentially a lament that ABC fired Barr, and did not extend her the forgiveness that the actress and the rabbi feel she deserves.

“Through humour and a universally relatable main character, the show represented a weekly teaching moment for our nation,” they write. “Yet, it is often following an inexcusable – but not unforgivable – mistake that we can discover the most important lesson of all: forgiveness. After repeated and heartfelt apologies, the network was unwilling to look past a regrettable mistake, thereby denying the twin American values of repentance and forgiveness. In a hyper-partisan climate, people will sometimes make the mistake of speaking with words that do not truly reflect who they are. However, it

In Judaism, no one is owed forgiveness, and no one can be commanded to forgive. Forgiveness must be earned, typically according to a three-stage process for the confessor laid out by medieval sage Maimonides: acknowledge the sin, show remorse, and resolve not to repeat the offense in the future.

Boteach and Barr discuss *teshuvah* (repentance) at length on one of his podcasts. She seems to be taking pains to live up to *teshuvah*’s demands, and Boteach is eager to nudge her to do it right.

When Boteach brings up Maimonides, Barr demonstrates that she is familiar with his ideas on repentance.

“The point is to feel remorse in your heart because that’s what unplugs your heart. You have to feel remorse, not just repentance,” she says, as she begins to sob. “That’s just a step towards feeling remorse. And when you feel remorse, you have to follow it with recompense. You have to take an action in the world – whether it’s through money or other things – to correct your sin. After your heart is unfrozen, and after it stops being broken from the pain you caused others, you stop being a robot and you gotta come back to G-d. So it’s remorse, and I definitely feel remorse.”

Barr explains that her tweet about former Obama official Valerie Jarrett, calling her a mix of “Muslim Brotherhood & Planet of the Apes”, was not meant to be racist. She said she wasn’t aware that Jarrett was African-American, although she understands how others interpreted it that way. She points out that she had apologised to Jarrett on social media, and to ABC executives, saying she had made a “huge error”. It may be obvious what Barr gets out of mediating her apology through a religious leader. But it also becomes clear what Boteach gets out of it, and it’s not just headlines. In the podcast, Boteach is eager to present Barr as a role model for Jewish learning and values.

“[O]f all the high-profile people I’ve studied Torah with, Torah specifically, the Jewish Bible, you’re the one who speaks the most passionately, publicly about your love for the Torah. It’s quite remarkable,” he says.

Boteach wants to redeem her, and at the same time redeem a Jewish value, in this case repentance, in the eyes of the world.

You also sense political expedience in their confessional partnership, especially on Boteach’s part. The Jewish World Values Network, which gets a lot of funding from the conservative Jewish megadonor Sheldon Adelson, is unabashedly political. Its highest-profile activities are full-page adverts in major newspapers pushing a consistently right-wing and fiercely pro-Israel agenda. Barr’s tweet about Jarrett was in part about the Obama administration’s support of the Iran deal. Boteach appears eager to separate the substance of Barr’s politics from the allegations of racism.

“[W]e can disagree with Valerie Jarrett and anyone in the Obama administration, or Trump administration, on policy. We can always disagree on policy,” he says on the podcast, setting up the softball question: “Do you believe that their humanity is fully guaranteed?”

“Of course,” Barr responds.

In Barr, Boteach has an important messenger for getting his Jewish ideas and politics into the mainstream – someone whose fame and reach is bigger than the synagogue circuit and the pages of, well, *JTA*. You understand why he doesn’t want to lose that.

So what’s in it for Boteach? Fame and celebrity, sure. That’s valuable capital these days. But he’s trying to use the very imperfect and risky vessel of celebrity to offer up Jewish values and Jewish politics as he sees them. His Jewish values may not be your Jewish values. But it’s not all always about Shmuley, either. (*JTA*)



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Kentridge reflects on those used by war

ROBYN SASSEN

They were not soldiers. They had no vested interest in the war, but in their millions, black men from Africa were used as porters for World War I soldiers, generals, cannons, and boats. They were a continuation of the colonialist mindset, which perceived them as the proverbial paper bag: useful, but ultimately disposable.

It is upon the reflected thwarted hopes and broken dreams of these men that internationally-acclaimed artist William Kentridge has based his current exhibition in Johannesburg, titled *KABOOM!*

Over the years, Kentridge, who is unequivocally contemporary South Africa’s most well-respected and recognised artist, has always focused on the social realities that inform a war on a grand scale. Indeed, since the late 1980s, he has referred to the anti-war rhetoric of German artists Otto Dix and Max Beckmann, as well as something of the pro-war rhetoric that made the poetry of Italian futurists so mad and engaging. “Tatatatata!” it shouted, emulating the guns of war, with an absurdist voice that is destructive and seductive, yet speaks of the testosterone-infused enthusiasm of young men.



Photos: The Goodman Gallery

Having studied art through the Johannesburg Art Foundation, and performance through L’École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, Kentridge also played a seminal role in Johannesburg’s post-Soweto Riots Junction Avenue Theatre Company in the 1970s. He collaborated then with theatre luminaries like Malcolm Purkey, Pippa Stein, Patrick Shai, and Ramolao Makhene.

The son of South Africa’s most important legal family – his father, Sir Sydney, was leading defence lawyer in the Treason Trial, defending Nelson Mandela – William (born in 1955) effectively invented himself as an artist. He doggedly continued to work in the face of gallery rejections, until he began to be taken seriously by gallerists of the ilk of Linda Givon, the founder of the Goodman Gallery, in the 1980s.

Kentridge’s phenomenal work ethic and collaborative generosity has stood the test of time. At the moment, his Centre for the Less Good Idea, now in its fourth season at the Maboneng complex in downtown



William Kentridge

Johannesburg, has proved to be a remarkable incubator for all sorts of fabulous creative energy. This year’s season has seen important giving and taking between Kentridge and live performers, including composer Jill Richards, and jazz performer Kyle Shepherd, to name but a few.

But, if you watch the three-channel film central to *KABOOM!* at the Goodman Gallery, you will also be

earlier this year at the London’s Tate Modern; and his 2017 production of Alban Berg’s opera *Wozzeck*.

But these works didn’t come out of isolation. Kentridge’s pieces, such as *Ubu and the Truth Commission* and *Wozzeck on the Highveld* were enormous critical successes. They played with the possibilities of conjoining European stories of war, greed and corruption with South African ones, as they gave puppetry from the Handspring Puppet Company, under Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler, important cultural currency.

Above all, when you approach Kentridge’s work, you realise two things: his unrelenting curiosity in

exploring the possibilities of ideas and looking at the bits left off of grand projects; but also his humility in the face of the process and the work itself.

There’s a great deal of “what if?” happening in the processions which he creates, in his use of disused encyclopaedia pages as support for his drawings and prints. There are also bronze cast sculptures in this exhibition, all of which coalesce to the work’s central theme. And, it’s been a long time coming.

Indeed, the gallery argues that if you missed all the most recent exhibitions and performances Kentridge has mounted overseas this year and just come and see

KABOOM!, you will garner a very fair understanding of the magnificence of his work, from both a physical aspect and an intellectual one.

For his design of the opera *Wozzeck*, the gallery explains, Kentridge worked with photographs which documented Flanders’ ravaged battle fields in the wake of World War I. *Wozzeck*, based on the eponymous story by German writer Georg Büchner, is about a soldier who is broken emotionally by war. It was made into an opera by Alban Berg in the early 20th century, and has inflamed Kentridge’s imagination for decades.

“Is it possible to tell a story without telling it through the story of one individual – the girl, the soldier, the hero – standing in for the whole war?” Kentridge ponders in the gallery’s press release. His is an understanding of history “as fragmented”. It is the bits and pieces that he puts together to help forge “a provisional understanding of the past”.

Indeed, Kentridge comments on the “many things not used at the edge of rehearsed productions. Many of the items called to be looked at again, to be brought back onto the stage”, and this in many ways encapsulates the thinking process of this artist, who has become the darling of the world’s most prestigious festivals, galleries and opera houses, including the Musée du Louvre, in Paris, La Scala in Milan, and the New York Metropolitan Opera.

• *KABOOM!*, at the Goodman Gallery in Oxford Road, Rosebank, runs until 10 November.

Five living generations pass on family legacy

>>Continued from page 11

life, including four husbands, and Judaism has not always been a priority for her. Interestingly, this contrasts with the younger generation. Cami is a kosher caterer, and Judaism is central to their lives.

“It has been wonderful to be a young granny and a young great granny,” says Klugman, in spite of the fact that the family is scattered around the world, from Dubai to Melbourne to South Africa. Though the family has faced numerous challenges, including its own internal conflicts, Klugman says it remains grateful for the blessing of five generations.

The family continuing the Rebbe’s legacy

“The Rebbe conceived of a calling and a life mission across the generations. That’s what our life is, and it describes our grandparents’ lives. It is what our children are passionate about, and we are sure it will continue with their children,” says Rebbetzin Masha (Mashi) Lipskar. She is blessed to have both her mother and mother in law still alive, meaning that there are five generations on both sides of the family.

Her mother, Chana Teleshevy Popack, was born in July 1926 in Russia. She has lived in many places, and will soon be 92. Masha is 69, her daughter Mushkie is 23, and her granddaughter Aida is five months old, making up five generations of women. Her mother in law, Rochel Duchman Lipskar, is 96, and is also the eldest of five living generations.

The two matriarchs have had fascinating lives. Chana’s father followed

in the Rebbe’s footsteps in leaving Russia, and Chana was on the last transport out of Riga, Latvia, before the Nazis arrived and her entire eighth grade class was killed. She survived the rest of the war in Helsinki, Finland, where her father was sent by the Rebbe. By the time she settled in America, she knew seven languages.

Rochel was born in Russia, and she was blessed by the previous Rebbe when she was five years old. She believes this helped her survive many harrowing ordeals. She grew up and became a medical student, but during the war, her class was ordered to dig trenches at the edge of the city. One evening, she was too ill to work and was taken back to the city. That night, the entire group was wiped out by a bomb.

Rochel and her family survived three winters during the siege of Leningrad, a time in which her leg was almost amputated. The family eventually escaped together with the Rebbe’s mother in a truck driving over an icy river that threatened to crack. Mashi’s husband, Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, was born



Rabbi Mendel Lipskar with his mother Rochel Lipskar

in a DP camp in Czechoslovakia, and the family eventually made it all the way to Toronto.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Lipskar were picked by the Rebbe himself for *shlichus* in South Africa, building the Chabad movement from the ground up. Their children now continue this mission in Mauritius, Beijing, the United States, and South Africa.

“It’s not always easy, but it’s great,” says Rebbetzin Lipskar. “There is nothing greater than having your children as passionate about the same things as you are. We have a purpose across the generations. A legacy to receive, and to pass on.”

The impact of importing protest tactics

With more than 5 000 immigrants marching towards the United States border, it would seem that Donald Trump is about to be tested in much the same way that Benjamin Netanyahu was with the Gaza border protests.

The so-called “caravans” are made up of large groups of migrants from Guatemala. They have formed near Honduras, and are moving towards the US border. They are doing so largely to escape extreme poverty and crime. The claim is that it is safer to move in massive numbers to protect themselves and their families. The concern is what will happen when they ultimately reach the US, and how a Trump government will respond to it.

In May, the Hamas protest on the Gaza border led to the death of multiple protesters. It was a bleak moment in Israel’s history. Although it is unclear how the situation could have been handled differently, Israel was roundly condemned. South Africa, at the time, recalled its ambassador to Israel. This is still an unresolved situation.

Once again, it would appear, that what began in Israel as a form of protest and violence, will conclude with the export of the concept around the world. One need look no further than car-ramming and terror stabbings as examples. It is the uncomfortable reality of the region. And one that seems to be repeated over and over again.

In the case of the Gaza protest, Israel lost the public-relations war. Israel, and not Hamas, was condemned around the world with little, if any, sympathy awarded to a country that faced an onslaught of 5 000 people. Many of the protestors had the clear intention of inflicting harm on Israeli civilians, but this was ignored.

With regard to the US “caravan” that is currently about 1 200 miles (1 931km) from the US border, one has to wonder what lies beneath the surface of the initiative.

It is unlikely that 5 000 people have come together organically to march spontaneously toward the

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



border. It requires transport, food, and significant organisation.

That means that there is most likely a political motive behind this. One option is that this is “fuelled” by the Democrats, who are pushing to swing the mid-term election in November. They might be thinking, as in the case of Israel versus Gaza, that the photo opportunities will be spectacular, and Donald Trump could easily be portrayed as an aggressive bully as his people chase and arrest “innocent” migrants.

This might be correct. But the fatal flaw of this argument is that it fails to note a significant aspect of the Israel-Gaza situation. It is that Israel might have received negative publicity globally, but Israelis were not unhappy with a government that protected its citizens. US voters are likely to feel the same. The result could increase the chance of driving voters to the Republicans, and not away from them.

The possibility exists that the “caravan” is Republican supported to create anxiety and push mid-term voters towards the party. But the risk of doing so would be significant should it be exposed, making it unlikely that this is the case.

What is clear is the déjà vu nature of the event. We have seen this all before in one way or in another. Once again, Israel was first to face a challenge that others will have to confront. And once again, very few will join the dots.

One can only hope that the US border situation will end before it gets ugly, and before people get hurt.

When Hamas began its protest, it became clear that the people who would suffer most were the people of Gaza. They were pawns in an ugly and violent protest. Please G-d, this will be different.

Where have all the Jewish art firebrands gone?

When Israeli-born concert pianist Aviram Reichert performed in South Africa in the early 2000s on a five-week programme, the auditoriums were packed everywhere. Having performed as a soloist with major philharmonic orchestras worldwide, Reichert commented that it was “very seldom that you encounter such audiences” in their knowledge and enthusiasm.

Close to two decades later, internationally acclaimed Israeli-born pianist Amit Yahav joined the Odeion String Quartet last week to perform Chopin and Dvorak at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg. The music was superb, but the hall was half empty; mostly old people came to hear him, a few of them Jewish.

Jews are almost absent in the arts today, particularly young ones. Younger Jews have either emigrated, are doing business degrees and are uninterested in the arts, or have become deeply religious.

In the past, the most innovative artistic individuals, institutions, and bums on seats, were Jewish. Those at the forefront were the likes of Steven Cohen, William Kentridge, Moving Into Dance founded by Sylvia Glasser, The Market Theatre’s Barney Simon, the National Children’s Theatre’s Joyce Levinsohn, Daphne Kuhn’s Auto and General Theatre on the Square, the Johannesburg Musical Society’s Avril Rubinstein, to name but a few.

It’s natural that each generation becomes bored with the previous one’s ethos, in arts and elsewhere. Teaching staff at South African universities report that when struggle musician Johnny Clegg and satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys are mentioned, many students have either never heard of them, or refer to them as “old white men”.

Added to this is the pressure of the social-media generation, and its impatience with such precious memories. This generation doesn’t read books, walks around with its collective headphones on, and cellphones at hand. They don’t talk to anyone, and engage instead with virtual friends on digital platforms. The digital age seems unstoppable, with

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



everything being gobbled up and digitised.

Yet there are signs here and there of a counter-revolution, small green shoots appearing with an “analogue” ethos. Where it matters, you can touch something with your hands, read a physical book and have it on your bookshelf, see people face to face, not just on a screen, and so on.

One small example is the revival of vinyl records, because people find digital CDs too cold in their “perfection”. Manufacturers of vinyl records are running at full capacity.

While Jews appear to be withdrawing from the arts, it is ironic to see the young Afrikaans community stepping up. The community is highly cultured, and now largely freed from apartheid’s stigma. They are producing excellent artworks engaging openly with post-apartheid South Africa.

As an example, a courageous Afrikaans-language film currently on circuit called *Kanarie*, directed by Christiaan Olwagen, looks piercingly into tough issues in Afrikaans culture. It focuses on a sensitive 18-year old Afrikaans boy (played by Schalk Bezuidenhout) from a conservative, rural village.

He is drafted into the South African army during the 1985 state of emergency when unrest was at its peak. Being musical and talented, he enters the army choir. There are almost no black people in the movie; it is entirely about what young, white, mainly Afrikaans boys faced in the army and the propaganda they were fed by the mainly Afrikaans regime. A brave movie for young Afrikaners to make.

South African Jews also went through the horror of apartheid and the army. They too have cutting edge stories to tell and explore. Are there storytellers brave enough to do it in this generation? Will the pendulum swing for Jews, and pull back into its ranks innovative, young people? Ultimately, it always does. In the meantime, green shoots must be nurtured.

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

Helping SA Jewry to be part of the solution

During the years leading up to the transition to democracy in 1994, the way in which the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) carried out its mandate to represent the Jewish community also underwent significant change.

One particularly noteworthy shift in emphasis was that whereas previously, the work of the board was largely concerned with the internal workings of the Jewish community, there was now a recognition that the organisation also needed to involve itself in the broader process of post-apartheid nation building.

This, among other things, includes bringing to bear wherever possible the kind of skills and resources that our community is able to provide to alleviate the serious socio-economic imbalances in our society. Over the years, a number of such initiatives have been implemented, amongst them our Black-Jewish Entrepreneurs Network (B-JEN), pioneered by our Cape Council, and thereafter successfully replicated in Johannesburg.



Above Board Shaun Zagnoev

Three of the participants, who constituted the SAJBD delegation for the occasion and presented papers, were members of our community. The board was also responsible for publicity and media coverage, executed through our communications department, headed by Charisse Zeifert. The board’s communications structures have frequently been used to promote the work of the organisations with which we work, including the Hate Crimes Working Group.

The event is an excellent example of how the board mobilises the Jewish community in addressing issues of concern to the greater society. It went off very successfully, and I congratulate all those responsible for putting it all together.

Shabbos Project

The Shabbos Project, the brainchild of Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, was an immediate hit when first introduced in 2013. It has since gone on to become a global phenomenon, one that has brought countless Jews together in a very special way.

As an unequivocally “made in South Africa” export, it is something our community can justly be proud of. The Shabbos Project encourages community members from across the religious spectrum to come together in keeping Shabbat in all its rich symbolism and meticulous attention to detail that has marked its observance by our people over more than three millennia.

I look forward to celebrating this coming Shabbat with as many of our community members as possible.

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

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Getting together to dig deep and find purpose

Young South African Jews gathered recently in a forest in Elgin, in the Western Cape, for the third annual three-day LaunchPad, an innovation retreat and networking opportunity for 25 to 45-year-olds from around the country.

Kayli Vee Levitan, a LaunchPad participant, describes the retreat as three days “where people who want to leave the world a better place than when they entered it, get together, open their hearts, dig deep, and leave with a renewed sense of purpose and passion”. She was one of about 100 attendees, who are now part of a robust network that meets on the last Thursday of every month.

LaunchPad is run by the United Jewish Campaign (UJC), in collaboration with the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and Mensch, an organisation which

works to create positive social change in South Africa.

“We believe that by uniting incredible change-makers, giving them skills, networks, and opportunities to connect, think, create, and lead together... magic can happen, says Kristy Evans, UJC’s Director of Fundraising, Strategy and Operations. “Through annual LaunchPad retreats, networking events, professional development opportunities, and grants, we are building leaders who will grow Jewish life, transform wider South Africa, and have an impact on our world.

LaunchPad was started in Australia by Tracie Olcha from the Australian Jewish Funders network, who recognised a gap in programming and networking for 25 to 45-year-olds in her community in Melbourne.

UJC’s Aron Turest-Swartz met



Bradley Katzen holds forth in one of the icebreakers during the 2018 LaunchPad Olcha at the Schusterman ROI summit (an international young Jewish leaders conference) in 2015. He heard Olcha describing LaunchPad Australia, and felt that it would be a perfect fit for the South African Jewish community. Evans and Turest-Swartz went to Melbourne in May 2016 to attend LaunchPad Australia, and decided to import it to South Africa three months later.

“From the minute you arrive at LaunchPad, you’re thrown into the deep-end of connection, both with yourself and those around you. Each of the ice breakers, workshops, and challenges make you think about who you are, what you stand for, and why,” Levitan says. “Whatever you’re passionate about, from sustainability, to reconnecting the youth to Judaism, women’s rights, mental health and wellness, and so much more, people are there to listen and learn, and, if possible, solve. “It was three days with innovators, change-makers, creators, and thinkers – strangers who become friends. We were inspired, motivated, and challenged. We worked together to build each other up, to challenge the norm, and look for better ways of doing things.”

Cultivating a 21st century hub at KDVP



JORDAN MOSHE

King David Victory Park (KDVP) Primary School last Thursday held its annual Cultivate art exhibition and auction, featuring the works of prominent South African artists. The event promoted the cultural value of art, and raised funds for the school’s most recent project, part of its Cultivate initiative. The evening combined canvas and cocktails with a unique spirit-tasting held alongside the exhibition at Aspire Art Auctions in Sandton. All of the proceeds are to be used to establish the Hub, an innovative education centre geared towards education relevant to the modern age. “The Hub aims to create a 21st century learning centre for our students,” said Rabbi Ricky Seeff, the principal of KDVP Primary School. “This will make sure that education remains relevant, exciting, and engaging for many years to come. It has been the case at our school for the past 50 years, and we want to make sure it remains that way for the next 50 years. Artworks by Nelson Makamo, Norman Catherine, Asanda Kupa, Bev Butkow, Kim Lieberman,

Themba Khumalo, Candice Kramer, and several others, featured in the auction. A few of the acclaimed artists are parents at the school. Some works fetched amounts over R100 000, with many participants eager to raise their bids as the competition stiffened. By the end of the evening, the combined spirit of generosity and zest for art resulted in sufficient funds to make a significant contribution to the project, even after the respective artists had received their share. “This year’s event took the Cultivate brand to another level,” says Seeff. “It will not only be remembered for its level of style, but also for the significant funds it raised for the school and in particular this project, which will help enhance our school as an education leader in Johannesburg.”

SA’s economic future is in professional hands

JORDAN MOSHE

South Africa’s future economy will have an impact on the country’s youth, and it is young professionals who hold this future in their hands. With this in mind, 50 young professionals got together for the Youth Economic Crowdstorming (YEC) Summit at the ORT centre in Houghton last Thursday to discuss ways to improve our economy. They brought fresh perspectives and ideas to the forum, each with their own vision of a country with opportunities for people at every level of society. Entrepreneurial maven Wandile Zulu guided the participants – from many different sectors of society – in identifying key economic problems and possible solutions. Among the solutions discussed were: the exposure of students to a needs-based education system; formalising taxi transportation services; and moderating the rate of urbanisation in South Africa. The recurring theme was the need to challenge the status quo by championing ideas that are perhaps considered beyond the pale in order to make a difference. Only in this way, the participants stressed, could real change be effected in the future. By the end of the afternoon, a stable

foundation had been laid for future action. Said Zulu, “It is clear that issues surrounding education, government policy, and entrepreneurial opportunities have emerged as our areas of focus. But, this is not enough. Our aim is to be action-oriented, and we need input from young professionals across South Africa to turn this country around.” “Laying blame on government will not help,” he said. “We all have the contacts we need to help us make a difference instead of apportioning blame. We need to do whatever we can in our areas of expertise. “Mere discussion gets us nowhere. Young people want action fast, but need to understand that there is a process to follow. If we do this properly, change is certain. “We need to ask ourselves the difficult questions, but commit ourselves to answering with solutions. Something is very wrong in our country, because we seem unable to suggest solutions despite constantly seeing problems. This needs to change.” Ariellah Rosenberg, the Chief Executive of ORT SA, said, “Frequently, we find ourselves complaining and criticising our economy, crime levels, unemployment, and corruption. Being a leader is also about being proactive and finding solutions to the challenges in our environment. So often

we work in silos, but this is a wonderful opportunity to work together.” Hosted by ORT SA and held in association with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), the event included organisations such as Investec, Telkom, Africa VR, MIG Capital, the Black Management Forum, Unemployed Graduates, and Fedusa. Representatives of these organisations presented papers throughout the day, each of them devoted to a detailed analysis of a particular problem, and including the outline of a potential solution. Through the SAJBD, Jewish entrepreneurs were also involved in the summit, proposing papers of their own, and discussing the various solutions proposed during the course of the day. Dan Brotman, Antony Seeff, and Amanda Blankfield-Koseff presented papers on their areas of expertise, showing how inroads can be made to areas such as education, immigration, and start-up ecosystems. Participants agreed to meet again to put their solutions into practice. “The goal is to take suggestions from the youth to government. We now leave it to the participants themselves to take this process forward. We look forward to holding more of these types of events to get young people talking about their future,” said Rosenberg.

Chabad of Norwood welcomes new Torah

Even a rainy Sunday afternoon on 14 October could not deter more than 250 people from welcoming a brand new Torah scroll marking Chabad of Norwood’s 20th anniversary. Rodney and Anita Plett, the sponsors of the Torah, inscribed the final letters of the scroll at the home of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Mordechai and Sorale Rodal. From there, the scroll was marched in a grand procession amid singing, dancing, music, fiery torches, and much pomp and ceremony to its new home in the ark of Chabad of Norwood. While the procession lasted only a few blocks, the 20 year journey to this point has been long and adventurous. Chabad of Norwood’s humble beginnings started with Friday night services in a small classroom in Norwood Primary School. It soon moved into the Rodals’ lounge, and was dubbed, “The shul for the non-shul goer.” As the years went by, the community grew not only in size, but in its spiritual and communal mission. After renting space for Shabbat services from the Freemason Society, Chabad of Norwood finally found a permanent home on The Avenue in Norwood, where it has continued to expand and offers week-long programmes, services, and events far beyond the scope of Shabbat services, leading to its current motto, “We’re not just a shul, we’re family.”

“For a Torah scroll to be kosher,” said Rabbi Rodal, “The letters cannot be touching, but at the same time, they need to be close enough that it is obvious they are part of the same word. “This is symbolic of our community,” he continued. “Every individual is celebrated; every person makes a difference. But it is that very sense of community and unity that gives each individual the tools with which to grow and become self-standing, self-sufficient.”



The Chabad of Norwood community with their new Torah

Israel Quiz is a winner

Liron Krawitz, a pupil at King David High School Victory Park, and this year’s Israel Quiz winner, says the competition gave him a unique perspective on Israeli dynamics, and the country’s place in world history.

“The state of Israel is also a story of heroism and great personalities, more importantly, it is the story of the Jewish people,” says the Grade 8 pupil, who feels very fortunate to have won the competition so young.

“I can definitely say that I have developed a much stronger bond towards Israel and sense of identity by participating in the quiz. I have developed a greater appreciation for the huge contribution Israel has made to humanity, and the world in general. I also gained a tremendous amount of knowledge that will stay with me forever.

Krawitz says all students should have access to this material, even if they do not participate in the quiz.

“I know that my fellow competitors knew their material as well as I did, and I realise anyone could have won it on the night. Every participant is a deserving winner. I was overwhelmed when they announced me as the winner. I am humbled and grateful,” Krawitz says.

Though the “incredible prizes” offered by the South African Zionist Federation and Israel Centre are a motivation to take part, “The reward of simply understanding how fortunate we are to have a state we can call our own should be enough motivation.”

“My school, King David High School Victory Park, is very supportive, and my fellow participants have become good friends. I strongly recommend the competition to everyone,” Krawitz says.



Liron Krawitz

Singing for Shabbos Project at Torah Academy

Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein addressed a special assembly of Torah Academy Primary School pupils last Friday ahead of his global Shabbos Project this weekend.

He explained the project to the children, who said tehillim (psalms) and pesukim (Tanach verses), and gave tzedakah (charity) as part of their contribution to the project. The assembly, chaired by Torah Academy Dean Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, was followed by music and dancing.

The best thing about Shabbat at Sydenham Pre-Primary School



The Chief Rabbi at Sydenham Pre-Primary School

“The best part of Shabbos is lighting candles, spending time with my family, going to shul, and eating challah,” the children at Sydenham Pre-Primary School told Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein last week. Goldstein was visiting the school to promote the Shabbos Project.

He explained what the Shabbos Project is all about, and the children were asked what they loved about Shabbat. One child summed it up by saying, “Nothing is my favourite part, ‘cause I love everything about Shabbos.”

Sunday (28 October)

- The Women’s International Zionist Organisation of South Africa (WIZO) hosts its annual garden day. Visit three beautiful gardens in the Sandhurst area and hear a talk by Steven Venter, the designer and landscaper of the second garden. Donation R220. For bookings and information, call Lee 082 441 2953 or Michelle 082 413 8903.
- The Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa presents *Jews, Russians & Ukrainians – In pursuit of our Heritage and Paternal Roots*. Robert and Barry Slavin relate the tough living conditions for Jews in Eastern Europe, the Slavin family’s origins, and their arrival in South Africa in 1925. Time: 19:30. Venue: HOD. Cost: R30, includes refreshments. RSVP Hannah 011 485 2188 or jgssa16@gmail.com

Monday (29 October)

- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosts Rodney Katzew exploring *Burning Violins: Depictions of the Holocaust in Modern Music*. Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100.

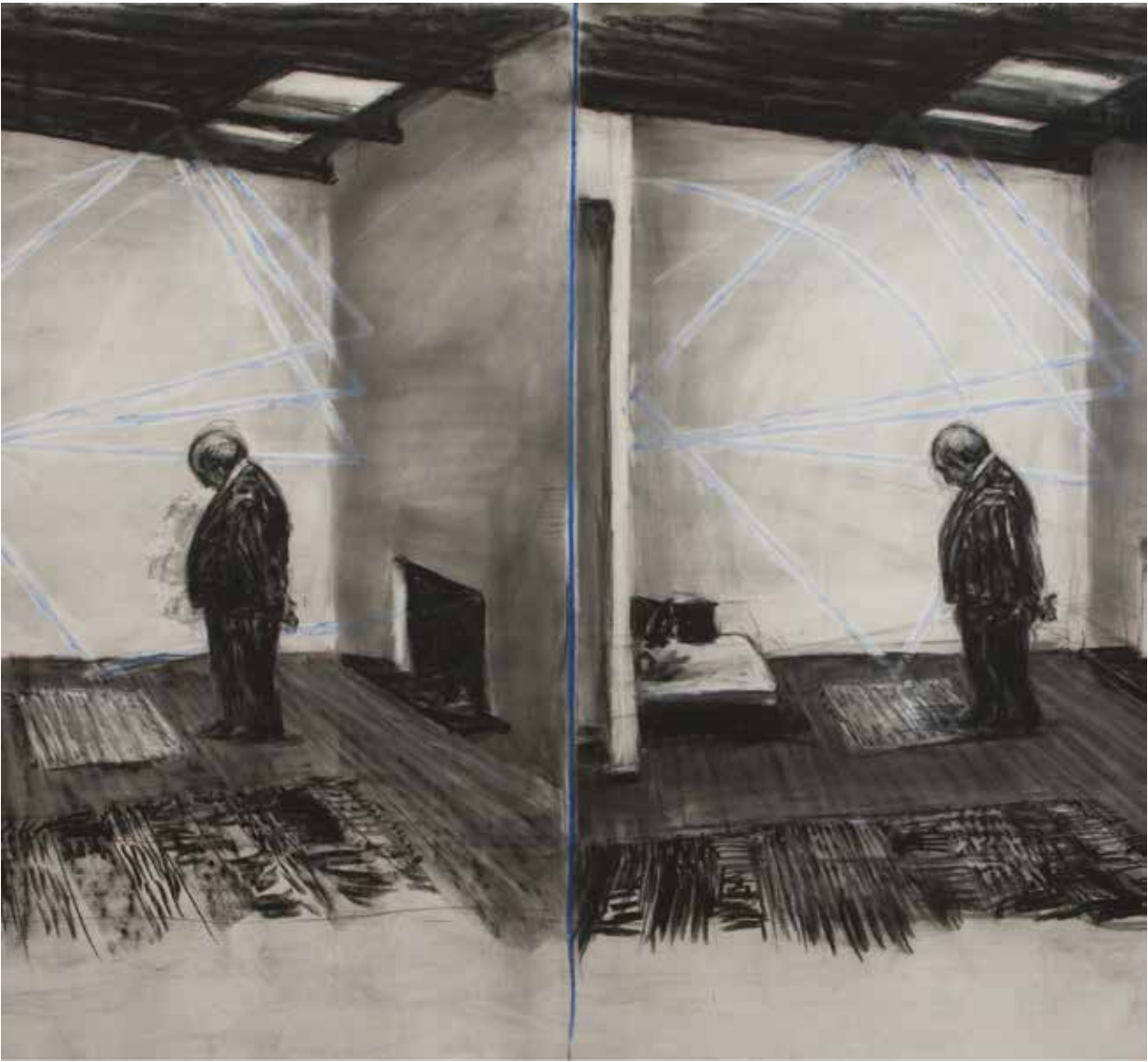
Thursday (1 November)

- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in partnership with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung hosts a lecture by Stefanie Burmeister (the Director of Ahlem Memorial in Germany which commemorates the Jews from the region of Hanover who were deported between 1941 and 1944). Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100.
- ORT SA presents *ORTArt*, a collaboration showcasing South African artists in quarterly cycles, presenting themed exhibitions. Viewing until Monday 29 October during office hours. Artists include: Gail Josselsohn, Jan Cohen, Michael Goetze, Samuel Tafula, Glenn Josselsohn, and more. RSVP: samantha@ortjet.org.za or 011 728 7154

The Union of Jewish Women hosts Debbie Alcock, *Habonim Enthusiast on Life on a Kibbutz shortly after Israeli Independence*. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.

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William Kentridge, *Drawing from Stereoscope (Double page, Soho in two rooms)* (detail), 1999
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Adam Bacher talks about the importance of being an all-rounder

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Former South African cricketer Adam Bacher says that the feeling he experienced when walking out to bat is exactly the same feeling he experiences going to meet a big prospective client.

“There’s that fear of failure, what happens if it doesn’t pan out,” says Bacher. “It gives me the same adrenaline rush, and that’s what I love about it. Then you get a few runs on the board or a few clients into your business, and you build confidence.”

Just as preparation is key before taking guard against a fast bowler, so too is preparation in business. Says Bacher, “I always try to ensure that my skills are honed well before I go into that meeting with a prospective client, or in the cricket arena to face that fast bowler.”

Bacher is aware that like the dips in his batting form, he may have dips in his business life. However, the batsman who has played 18 test matches for South Africa says, “You’ve got to have the grit and determination not to give up, not to always change your game plan, to hang in there.”

The lessons Bacher learnt on the cricket pitch have helped him to start and run his own wealth management business, and assist people seeking financial advice. “I love building relationships with people and families. It’s about lots more than just investments, it’s about looking after people’s financial well-being and their families.”

But though Bacher’s celebrity status might

open doors for him, he believes that “unless you have credibility in terms of your skill and ability to manage their investments, being a celebrity alone won’t close the deal”. That’s why he equipped himself with a BCom degree, and CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) qualification.

Bacher’s advice to professional sportspeople is, “Don’t live beyond your means. Take into account the long term, and have a professional partner you can trust when it comes to managing your money.”

He says a select few top sports professionals will earn enough to sustain themselves for life. But, the majority need to plan for the next chapter of their life after the curtain comes down on their career.

“I was very lucky that I was still playing in an era where there was a respect for youngsters that didn’t just

play cricket – you could hold down a job,” says Bacher. “We practiced in the afternoon, so I could go to university to study in the mornings. I was almost the last kind of cricketer that could have that kind of balance – so I was really fortunate.”

As a Jewish professional cricketer, Bacher believes that he was fortunate that he never had a cricket match on Yom Kippur, and although he did play matches on a Saturday because he is not strictly observant, he has always been proud of his Jewish heritage.

Bacher says that the lack of Jewish cricketers playing at top level in South Africa is due to the absence of the Balfour Jewish Guild, whose grounds became townhouse complexes. “The club was very successful, and introduced many

wonderful Jewish cricketers. Some of them went on to play first-class cricket,” Bacher says. He believes South Africa needs a traditional club where Jewish cricketers can progress and hone their skills.

Bacher advises aspiring Jewish cricketers not to give up if they don’t make provincial or national squads. “There’s a big emphasis on getting to the top level, but that mustn’t be the ultimate thing that determines whether you love cricket or not. People can still enjoy the benefits of playing club cricket – meeting friends, meeting different people, and enjoying the game.”

He encourages this philosophy in his own kids, saying that he would be happy for them to follow in his footsteps, but he won’t push them to pursue that path.

Bacher continues to be involved in cricket,

primarily by mentoring aspiring young cricketers who don’t have the support system required to reach their full potential.

In 2016, Bacher was part a four-person panel tasked with examining the performance of South African men and women’s teams. He describes this as one of the highlights of his cricket career. “Working with Francois Pienaar [the former Rugby World Cup-winning captain was also on the panel] was an eye-opener for me. We interviewed players and coaches, and we looked into what makes high-performance teams tick.”

Bacher is worried about the all-or-nothing approach expected from cricketers nowadays, believing in a more balanced approach to life. In fact, he rates finding a balance between family, business, and giving back to cricket as his greatest achievement off the pitch.

Israeli gymnasts competing to fly flag in Doha

JACK MILNER

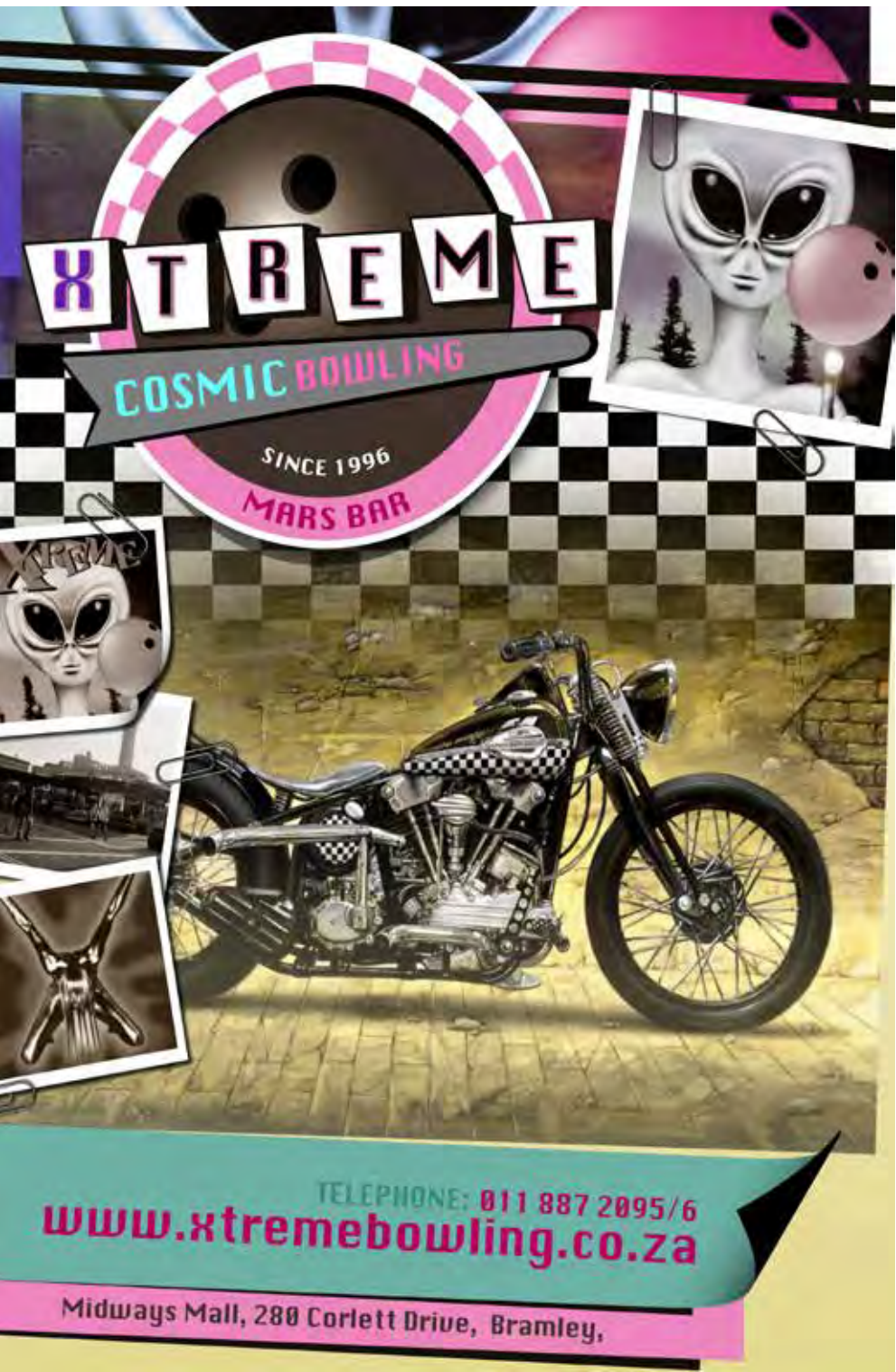
The Israeli gymnastics team was out in full force at 48th FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships that began at Aspire Dome in Doha, Qatar, on Thursday. There are five males and two females in the team headed by new Israeli sensation Artem Dolgopyat. The others are Alexander Shatilov, Ilan Korchak, Andrey Medvedev, and Michael Sorokine, while the women are Ofir Netzer and Meitar Lavy.

There were doubts whether Dolgopyat, the winner of two World Cup medals in the past month, would be allowed to attend the competition because he is a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces and would need special permission to attend a sporting event in a country hostile to Israel.

Shatilov, 31, who won bronze on floor at the 2009 and 2011 world championships, views this event as a great opportunity to build bridges through sport. “I think it’s really exciting to come to Qatar,” Shatilov said in an interview with the media after their first day’s training this week. “It’s nice to show friendship with this country, and for us to compete here.

“I think it will be amazing to have the Israeli flag flying during a medal ceremony in Doha. And, we will do all we can for this to happen.”

In training on Monday, Dolgopyat struggled with his signature double front with one-and-a-half twist, but came back with an impressive quadruple twist. Shatilov, now considered a veteran, showed a unique double front pike half-out to open his routine.



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