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Family, friends mourn death of mother of 6



The husband and children of Dafna Meir (38) are pictured grieving at her funeral in Jerusalem’s Har Hamenuchot cemetery on Monday, the day after she was stabbed to death in her West Bank home by a young Palestinian boy. Dafna’s teenage daughter Renana (17) who witnessed her mother’s brutal murder, spoke glowingly of her mother – “my best friend” – before hundreds who had come to mourn with the family. “It’s hard for me to think we will not laugh together or fight anymore, that you won’t accompany me to the IDF induction ceremony, down the aisle, and to the maternity ward...” Dafna, a nurse, was killed in Otniel, in the Hebron Hills area. She apparently fought her attacker for several minutes in an attempt to protect the three children at home, none of whom were injured in the attack. She was married with four biological children and two foster children. Morad Bader Abdullah Adais (16) was arrested on Monday in a Palestinian village not far from where Dafna was murdered, the IDF said. According to reports he had confessed to the murder.

The kosher dilemma when it comes to marijuana... Kosher authorities in the US and Canada can't seem to agree on whether marijuana is kosher. This has become an issue due to the increasingly acceptable use of medical marijuana (MM), both legally and societally. Once marijuana is reduced to oil, it raises new questions.		PE lawyer hits back at Board of Deputies Lawyer Maureen Jansen was reported to the Human Right Commission by the Jewish Board of Deputies for her Facebook posts that Jews were “monsters” who should be “exterminated”. Jansen is now pressing counter-charges against the Board.	Splendid line-up to celebrate community’s 176 years in SA This year the SA Jewish community celebrates its 175th anniversary. As its history began in Cape Town, a festive programme has been drawn up in the Mother City. It ranges from a symphony orchestra performance to sports events.	Kosher costs and pitfalls aired at meeting A meeting under the aegis of the Co-ordinating Council of National Women's Organisations discussed pressing kashrut issues with Rabbi Yossi Baumgarten, Greg Bloch and Jarred Abelson, of the kashrut division at the UOS.	Jerusalem’s ‘barmitzvah king’ shares laughs and inspiration Rabbi Jay Karzen, coined “the barmitzvah king” by The Jerusalem Post in 1997, has recounted in this interview a series of hilarious anecdotes about boys wanting to have their barmitzvahs at the Kotel.
3		4	5	9	10

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Be emotionally present and responsive in prayer



Parshat Beshalach
Rabbi Sam Thurgood
Beit Midrash Morasha

How should we feel when we pray? If you're like me, one of the major challenges of formal prayer is to actively and consciously be emotionally present and responsive.

To read the words in the siddur is easy. Even to have a sense that we are speaking to Hashem is fairly straightforward: the fact that we're in shul, surrounded by other people davening, is certainly a big help.

But what about the feelings? One thing we should know is that not every prayer feels the same. Some prayers inspire us with their beauty and scope, others help us to feel grounded and settled with simple and practical faith.

The Song of the Sea, one of the greatest songs in the Torah, is a major feature of our parsha. After their terror at the prospect of being recaptured by the fearsome Egyptian army, the Jewish people witness the most awesome public miracle of all time. The sea split, the nation passes through peacefully, and those who intended to enslave them by force, the people who had oppressed them and murdered their children, are hurled into the roaring waves of the returning sea, never to be seen again.

The Jewish people sing a song of faith and deliverance, a song of glory and victory. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook says that what we are trying to achieve here is to honour Hashem - not an intellectual realisation in our minds, but a deep yearning for G-d within us expressed in song. We are attempting to capture in words the song that our soul sings daily without words.

I'd like to contrast this with another won-

derful song we sing daily - Ashrei. The core of Ashrei is Psalm 145 written by King David, and the Talmud tells us that if we say this prayer three times daily, we will have a place in the World to Come. My rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Avraham Goldfein, pointed out that clearly it's not simply saying the song by rote, but living it and applying it.

Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch says that Ashrei is a song that shows us the goodness of Hashem. You know, so often we see (or seek) Hashem in times of crisis and difficulty - and that's a good thing - but it can lead us perhaps to be a foul-weather friend to G-d; or worse, to link Him in our minds always to misfortune. Ashrei teaches us the opposite.

The good things in our life come from Hashem. He is gracious and compassionate, He sustains all of creation, He lifts us up when we fall. We should end Ashrei with a smile on our face.

These two songs - so different in style and feeling: glory and gratitude, splendid victory and quiet happiness - come together in our daily prayers, together with so many other emotions in our journey through the Siddur. May Hashem bless us to say, and to feel, our prayers daily.

Shabbat Shalom!

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Beshalach Jan 22 / 12 Shevat Jan 23 / 13 Shevat		
Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:37	Johannesburg
18:30	20:34	Cape Town
18:15	19:34	Durban
18:15	19:51	Bloemfontein
18:15	20:06	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:54	East London

News

Emmarentia Shul enters a new era

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Popular chazzan, the Rev Rodney Richard, has been appointed spiritual leader of the Emmarentia Hebrew Congregation from February 1.

Richard succeeds Rabbi Hirsch Rosenblum who is retiring after 37 years as spiritual leader of the congregation.

Rev Richard's involvement in Jewish communal life began as a child chorister at the then Wolmarans Street Shul. He spent eight years at the Great Park Shul as ba'al tefillah, ba'al koreh and barmitzvah teacher. He joins Emmarentia Shul from Greenside Shul, where he spent the last 12 years fulfilling the various roles of ba'al koreh, choir-master and chazzan along the way.

His wife, Wendy, a well-respected nursery school teacher, is excited about invigorating the children's services at the shul and assisting the hard-working women of the ladies' guild.

"My wife, and I are excited about this wonderful opportunity," Rev Richard said. "We hope to work together with the community to

build on the wonderful foundations laid by Rabbi and Rebbetzen Rosenblum." Rev Richard and his wife have three children.

"Emmarentia Shul will continue to be a beacon of light for Jewish communal life in the north-western suburbs, and we are all excited about what the future holds," says Jason Morris.

Morris told the SA Jewish Report that Rabbi Rosenblum, who is overseas at present, was highly regarded, very knowledgeable and had a large following.

"He has influenced a lot of younger people," Morris said. Several of them have gone on to become rabbis, while others have become observant as a result of his work.

Emmarentia Shul will formally welcome Rev Richard and his family on the Shabbos of February 12/13 and is extending an invitation to the entire Jewish community to attend. On Saturday February 13, the shul will be hosting a luncheon. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the shul office on (011) 646-6138 or e-mail emmarentiashul@telkomsa.net.



The Rev Rodney and Wendy Richard and their children Shevi, Moshe and Avi.

KASHRUT ALERT

TANQUERAY GIN IS NOT KOSHER ANYMORE

The kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues says it has received correspondence from the Federation of Synagogues in London (KF), who used to certify "Tanqueray Gin", advising that this product is no longer certified and therefore is no longer an approved kosher product for consumption in South Africa.

THESE CHEESES NOT KOSHER

The kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues is reminding the community that the cheeses manufactured by "Kee Ingredients" displaying the name "Kee Wings" on their packaging, contain an unauthorised Beth Din logo and cannot be eaten.

These cheeses are commonly found in hospitality venues such as airport lounges and are currently under investigation.

Their cheese range includes the following types of cheeses, none of which is currently acceptable: Blue; Cheddar 6 month matured; Gouda; Belle; and Camembert.

The kashrut division is working on resolving the issue.

More news on our website
www.sajr.co.za

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Timeous kashrut alerts a challenge to Beth Din



ANT KATZ

The Johannesburg Beth Din came under criticism from kosher consumers over the past week after issuing a “Kosher Alert” that cheese products packed by Kee Ingredients and displaying the name Kee Wings on their packaging, contain an unauthorised Beth Din logo and cannot be eaten.

User comments centred on two main issues: the non-removal of goods from store shelves; and the confusion facing kosher consumers.

The kashrut division of the Johannesburg Beth Din says, however, that kosher consumers don’t always understand the lengths the Beth Din will go to remedy, or protect the community from non-kosher or unsupervised products.

Jewish Report spoke to the head of kashrut at the Johannesburg Beth Din, Greg Bloch, to get a better understanding of the issues.

“From time to time companies make errors on their packaging,” explains Bloch. “This includes their use of the Beth Din kashrut logo on products illegally. The Beth Din logo is a legally protected trademark which cannot be used without our authorisation. This is a very serious matter as it could result in people eating food that is not kosher.”

Included amongst the user comments posted on last week’s story on Jewish Report online was one by a Miriam de Vos: “Excuse me, but what good will it do to send an alert? What about a person who doesn’t have e-mail? Or who missed this e-mail? Or who forgot this e-mail? This is outrageous. As long as (these) products remain available, the BD UOS/SA is ‘placing a stumbling block before the blind’. Why have they not insisted on a total recall? What can we trust anymore?”

Bloch told Jewish Report that “each and every instance of unauthorised logo usage we become aware of, is treated with the utmost severity to ensure that it is resolved as quickly as possible”.

He says that the kashrut division “does not have the legal right to remove products from the (store) shelves without a court order”. Wherever necessary, however, the kashrut division does pursue legal action.

“Given the unavoidable, time-consuming and complex nature of this legal process, we inform the community immediately and engage with the offending company to resolve the matter,” he said.

“At the same time, we make every effort to notify the community in real-time through as many communication platforms as possible to prevent people from unknowingly eating food that may not be kosher.”

Bloch advises kosher consumers who do not currently receive regular kashrut updates to subscribe to ensure that they receive all kashrut alerts immediately. Subscribe to e-mail alerts by -mailing kashrut@uos.co.za

The kosher dilemma when it comes to marijuana...

ANT KATZ

Kosher authorities in the US and Canada can’t seem to agree on whether marijuana is kosher. More specifically, the issue relates to the increasingly acceptable use of medical marijuana (MM), both legally and societally. While smoking marijuana for medicinal purposes has previously passed muster with numerous halachic authorities, once it is reduced to an edible form such as an oil, it raises many new questions.

The squabble started after the state of New York decided to allow the use of MM from the beginning of this month on a trial basis. One enterprising manufacturer who produces oil-based marijuana products had them certified kosher by getting a hechsher (kosher seal of approval) from the US Orthodox Union (OU), the equivalent of the SA Union of Orthodox Synagogues (UOS).

MM has been legal in Canada for some time, and with that country having one of the highest per capita Jewish populations outside Israel, a Canadian producer, MedReleaf, asked its own Kashrut Council of Canada (KCC) to urgently consider an application for a hechsher as well.

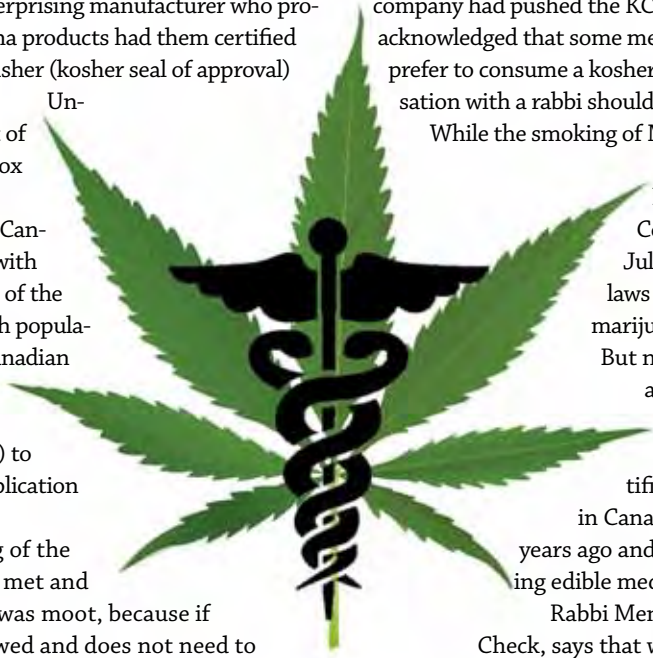
At their first meeting of the year, the rabbis of KCC met and decided that the point was moot, because if it is medicine, it is allowed and does not need to be deemed kosher. The matter affects many among the SA Jewish community who import edible forms of MM even though it is not legal locally. Jewish Report asked our own Beth Din about the matter and whether common or garden marijuana is considered kosher when smoked recreationally.

Rabbi Anton Klein, director of the Beth Din of Johannesburg, said this week that the Beth Din “has not been approached to give a hechsher for MM, so there is no official Beth Din policy on the kashrut of MM, nor is there likely to be one until such time that the Beth Din is asked in an actual case, not just in theory”.

On the question of smoking marijuana, Rabbi Klein said: “the BD does not condone breaking South African laws”.

Cannabis, dagga, pot, gunja, weed, marijuana... call it what you may, MM has been used for decades as a proven medication - smoked or imbibed in oil or other edible forms - to relieve symptoms of chronic and terminal illnesses, ranging from multiple sclerosis and migraines, to cancer pains and epilepsy.

The Canadian kosher authority’s decision was based on the fact that “something that is medicine, that’s prescribed from your doctor, that you need to take for your health, doesn’t need kosher certification.” According to the managing director, Richard Rabkin, “We don’t really want to get into the business of providing kosher certification for



something that is doctor-prescribed. We’re not going to go down that path.”

But pundits differ on whether that is a correct interpretation of halacha, or Jewish dietary law, which essentially says that any life-saving medicine or medicinal practice (such as driving a woman in labour to hospital on Shabbos) overrides any halachic law. While the use of MM does improve quality of life, it has no proven life-saving or remedial attributes. Different halachic authorities apply differing definitions to this issue.

Neil Closner, CEO of MedReleaf and himself a kosher-observant Jew, said after the hearing he was proud his company had pushed the KCC to consider the issue. He acknowledged that some medical marijuana users might prefer to consume a kosher version, but he said a conversation with a rabbi should alleviate their concerns.

While the smoking of MM is already widespread in Canada, it only became a kosher issue after a Supreme Court of Canada ruling last July overturned the country’s laws against consuming edible marijuana.

But not all kosher certification agencies agree with KCC’s decision on edible MM. Kosher Check, a global certification agency headquartered in Canada, debated the issue two years ago and decided in favour of certifying edible medical marijuana products.

Rabbi Mendy Feigelstock, of Kosher Check, says that while the preservation of life did come before all else in Judaism, his organisation had decided it would be helpful to offer a kosher choice for those who want it.

He said dried marijuana that is smoked, is automatically considered kosher since it is a plant. However, edible products including oils, capsules and cookies, would need to be certified.

“There are people who are suffering and unfortunately sometimes the only medication left for them is marijuana, which could ease their symptoms, and to force a person to smoke it seems silly,” he said.

“If it’s easier to ingest it either in an oil or some other edible form, then there’s no reason why that person should not be able to ingest it in a kosher way, if that’s something that they’re careful about.”

Kosher Check’s Richard Wood said that when certifying an edible marijuana product, inspectors would look for issues including insect infestation in plants, equipment that is used for multiple purposes or capsules that use gelatine produced from a non-kosher animal slaughter.

• Jewish Report Online published the story “First kosher dagga on market in January” last month (go to our website, www.sajr.co.za/latest where you will find it on page 4 or 5). Since then, controversy and disagreement has abounded and the debate is on.

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PE lawyer hits back, plans to sue Board of Deputies

ANT KATZ

“Jews per se are peace-loving people”, said Port Elizabeth lawyer Maureen Jansen this week – after the SA Jewish Board of Deputies last week laid a complaint of hate speech with the SA Human Rights Commission (HRC) against her for saying Jews are ‘monsters’ who should be ‘exterminated’ for their support - whether active or passive - of Israel.

According to the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), Jansen shared a news article in December on her Facebook page titled “Israel caught receiving stolen oil from ISIS militants” with the comment: “Bloody Israelis should be exterminated along with all the ‘Jews’ everywhere who support Israel by action or silence. The Semites of the Torah are long gone. These monsters are Jewish converts not Semites.”

There were allegedly a number of anti-Semitic posts on her profile.

But this week, after the HRC confirmed it had received the SAJBD’s complaint, the PE attorney announced that she was pressing charges against them for accusing her of making racist and anti-Semitic statements. Jansen denied the allegation that she called for the extermination of all Jews but would not give any further details as the matter was sub judice.

According to the SAJBD, Jansen also wrote on her Facebook post that “Bloody Israelis should be exterminated along with all the ‘Jews’ everywhere who support Israel by action or silence. The Semites of the Torah are long gone. These monsters are Jewish converts not Semites.”

The SAJBD said it was informed of the posts by members of the community. There was a closed support group for Jansen on Facebook as well as a group calling for a boycott of Jansen.

A description on the support group, which had 863 members, read: “This group was created to counter the negative and defamatory propaganda that has and still is being spread by the Zionist lobby that wants Maureen [Aadiela] Jansen taken off the roll as an attorney, destroyed financially and the lives of her son, Likhona, and herself ended because she airs her views regarding the merciless killings of Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere by Israel, its



IDF and the huge settler population.

“Please do support this group and voice your disapproval of the Zionist threat to the lives of her son and herself.”

The other support group, called “Boycott Jansen - attorney”, which had 54 members, posted Jansen’s contact details and office address in its description and called for people to protest.

SAJBD National Chairman Jeff Katz said Jansen’s comments were another instance showing how certain hate-filled individuals “confidently propagated virulent racism against their fellow citizens.

“Such hate-mongering goes beyond defaming and threatening any particular group of people; they go against the culture of non-racialism on which our democracy is founded, and as such are an attack on all South Africans,” he said.

The Board reiterated that “it strongly condemns all racist comments, such as those by Penny Sparrow, Velaphi Khumalo and Nicole de Klerk”, in recent days.

“No cause, whether political or otherwise, can ever justify incitement to violence, particularly when based on race, religion, ethnicity or other such grounds,” said Katz.

The PE attorney told News24 this week that she liked “the Jews who remained in Palestine after the sacking of Jerusalem... and did not join the diaspora in Europe and elsewhere.”

Sir Jack Zunz, engineer par excellence, honoured at Wits’ graduation ceremony



Sir Jack Zunz, in front of the iconic Sydney Opera House roof structure.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Sir Jack Zunz received an honorary doctorate of science in engineering from his alma mater, the University of the Witwatersrand, last December.

This was in recognition of his immense contribution to engineering and the built environment, as well as his philanthropic initiatives, implemented through the Ove Arup Foundation, which made the announcement in a media release.

Now 91, Sir Jack was unable to attend the ceremony

himself, but recorded his address for the audience from his home in London.

He graduated with a degree in civil engineering from Wits in 1948. Probably the pinnacle of his career was leading the team that solved the engineering challenges on the Sydney Opera House’s now iconic roof structure.

Acknowledgements of his achievements were many - from a knighthood in 1989, to numerous medals and awards by various engineering and architectural associations and even the Zunz lecture series at the University of Technology Sydney, named in his honour.

Guidelines from the Jewish handbook



South African Jewish Report

In the last few weeks the media has been filled with stories of South Africa’s educational crises. Universities have been plagued with protests and the 2015 matric results were dismal. Of the 799 306 candidates who wrote, only 166 263 qualified for university entrance and there was a five per cent drop in the National Senior Certificate matric pass rate from last year.

The reasons behind the troubled school system are numerous: from insufficiently qualified teachers who are often absent, to overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of desks and textbooks.

Disadvantaged learners come from homes without adequate food, electricity, running water or space to study. Only about half the population that begin school reach matric and most fall through the cracks between grades 10 and 12.

At the tertiary level, students face a chaotic 2016 as the #FeesMustFall campaign has already disrupted registration proceedings at campuses across the country. While some of the universities have this week secured interdicts against protests, allowing them to call police onto campus to quell demonstrations, it’s a long, rocky road ahead.

Against this backdrop of a system in crisis is our own privileged community’s continued academic excellence. Our children generally attend schools that offer caring, motivated and highly qualified teachers; warm social communities; a range of extramurals; myriad opportunities for pupils to excel and financial assistance to those who cannot afford

the fees. The Jewish day schools usually boast 100 per cent pass rates with almost all learners qualifying for university entrance.

And at university, while protests may disrupt student life somewhat, our learners do not face the same issues of affordability or an insufficient educational grounding to cope with the degree requirements.

There is sometimes a perception that Jews are just naturally clever. But the reason for our academic success is more likely due to our ancient culture and, may I say, obsession with learning. It has been a key to our survival over many centuries of being immigrant minorities in strange lands where we only had our smarts and education to depend on.

This is perhaps why Jewish parents out there reading this, and I, a Jewish mother writing this, wait anxiously outside school during the first few days of grade one or any grade for that matter, looking into the faces of our little ones for signs of distress.

The worry can escalate to panic when we hear from teachers that our children are not concentrating or performing as expected, and we will spend enough to pay off a house on assessments and therapists. As they approach grade 12, we groom them with extra lessons and private tutors to ensure they achieve their academic potential.

How different is that to the experience of the average South African learner whose mother and father are both likely to be working just to afford a roof over their heads. In this maelstrom of just trying to survive, it’s not surprising that a child’s daily hurts or how she/he might be feeling about a teacher, are not taken into consideration.

University of the Free State Vice Chancellor Jonathan Jansen who writes frequently on education, recently offered 10 ways he would improve the South African education system if he was “minister of schools (new title)”.

Among his excellent recommendations were: a greater investment in pre-school education programmes; firing all deployed officials in the districts and of-

fering them to re-apply on the basis of proven competence; rooting out corruption in teacher and head appointments; ensuring every child has a textbook in every subject within three months, or “somebody loses his job”; raising teacher salaries on the single criterion that the children show steady increases in achievement scores; and the importance of teachers showing up every day unless a viable medical certificate is produced.

Jansen also suggests that no teacher be hired with less than a master’s degree by 2018 and should be remunerated accordingly. Highly qualified teachers are a vital aspect on our “road to recovery” - particularly talented headmasters who inspire and encourage both pupils and teachers.

Consider, for example, the resumé of the newly-appointed campus principal of King David Victory Park High, mentioned on 16 of this paper versus the depressing stories of government school principals fired for fraud or embezzlement or even a recent headmaster fired for rape at a Model C school near Bloemfontein.

I would also add in some “guidelines from the Jewish parents’ handbook”. All South African parents should try, still, even if they cannot read themselves, are financially distressed, or working far away, to focus in on their children’s education, and emotional health.

Jews have historically done it for their children under threat of persecution. In a country like South Africa that is relatively free and increasingly trying to be fair, every parent, no matter how difficult the circumstances, should be interested in their children’s school work; talk to them constantly and know what they are experiencing. Parents need to nurture their children’s self-esteem, their competencies, their interests and their dreams.

Could some of these suggestions from the experts, which have nourished our own community’s academic success and indeed our survival, ensure a positive way forward for South Africa too?

– Vanessa Valkin, Editor

US ambassador to Israel blasts ‘2 standards’ of law in West Bank

TEL AVIV - The US ambassador to Israel has slammed the Israeli legal system in the West Bank, saying: “Too much Israeli vigilantism in the West Bank goes on unchecked.”

Daniel Shapiro, speaking on Monday at a Tel Aviv conference organised by the Institute for National Security Studies, added that “at times it seems Israel has two standards of adherence to rule of law in the West Bank - one for Jews and one for Palestinians”.

Shapiro emphasised the US government stance that a two-state solution is the best solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The United States is “concerned and perplexed” by recent Israeli government actions on the settlements, “which raise questions about Israeli intentions”, he said.

Shapiro spoke at length about what he said was a US commitment to confront Iran in areas not covered by the sanctions relief for nuclear restrictions deal reached last year between Iran and six major powers and implemented last Saturday. He mentioned Hezbollah, Hamas and Iran’s ballistic missile programme.

“To Israelis, who are understandably suspicious of Iran and anxious about Iran’s nefarious activities in other realms, we say the following: This new nuclear framework leaves the international community united and better equipped to respond to other regional challenges - and to respond ‘without the looming threat of a nuclear-armed Iran’, as Secretary Kerry said,” Shapiro said.

He said that US-Israel security co-operation had never been closer, citing Iron Dome and Israel’s other US-sponsored missile defence systems.

“Ask any Israeli national security planner or defence official or top commander - or ask the Prime Minister - and you will hear that our security ties have never been stronger,” he said.

On Monday evening, the Prime Minister’s Office of Israel issued a statement condemning Shapiro’s remarks as “unacceptable and incorrect”.

It added: “The words of the ambassador, on a day in which a murdered mother of six is buried and on a day in which a pregnant woman is stabbed - are unacceptable and incorrect. Israel enforces the law for Israelis and Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority is the one responsible for the diplomatic freeze, and continues to incite and refuse talks.”

Shapiro’s criticism echoes other expressions of concern voiced by the US government in recent weeks.

Following Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon’s approval of a new settlement in a church compound in the West Bank, State Department spokesman John Kirby said at a news briefing that the administration was “deeply concerned” by Israeli actions that demonstrate a lack of commitment to the two-state solution.

Israel’s decision to establish a new settlement “only expands this significant majority of the West Bank that has already been claimed for exclusive Israeli use”, Kirby told reporters, according to Haaretz.

The State Department has also expressed concerns over Israel’s controversial NGO bill, rejecting comparisons between the Israeli proposal requiring registration of foreign-funded NGOs and US laws registering foreign interest lobbyists. (JTA)

You say terrorist, I say militant...



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Four months into the “knife intifada” in Israel, Sunday’s attack on an Israeli woman in her home in the West Bank settlement, Otniel, where she was stabbed to death in the presence of her children by a Palestinian man, did not receive major attention in world papers.

It’s as if they have grown accustomed to random Israelis being stabbed in streets and homes - not only in the West Bank, but Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Ra’anana and elsewhere in Israel - as just another round in the interminable Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since October last year, Palestinian stabbings, car-rammings and gun attacks have killed 25 Israelis; 94 Palestinians have been killed whom Israel has described as assailants. Often attackers know beforehand that they will almost certainly be killed by security forces after their deed, making it

essentially a suicide attack.

With so much brutality worldwide, goes the international media’s thinking, what does another attack on an Israeli settler matter? Look at the examples of ISIS, Syria, Burkina Faso, Paris.

When they do report on it, however, they face the journalistic question of what to call the attackers, while maintaining “objectivity”. Not that long ago, papers refused to call Palestinians or Islamists who carried out such acts “terrorists” but used the neutral word “militants”. With the rise of ISIS and Islamist attacks on Western cities, however, the word terrorist has become more accepted usage.

However, “shooter”, “gunman”, “attacker” and other neutral terms are still used. There is no simple answer to the journalist’s genuine dilemma.

Although neutral terms have a place in police investigations and legal proceedings, where guilt or innocence is still in doubt, in most of these stabbings there is no question of mistaken identity, self-defence or an accident.

The words we use indicate our values. In

2007, South Africa’s then ambassador to Israel, Reverend Fumie Qiba, condemned the Palestinians’ methods, including suicide bombings against innocent Israelis, despite his active role in South Africa’s armed struggle and empathy with the Palestinians.

“Today,” he said, “we are the only country, on moral grounds” that can tell the Palestinians: “‘We don’t think your strategy of using suicide bombers is justified. It is terrorism. It is not accepted by international law. It has nothing to do with the military code’.

“Every bomb that kills civilians,” he warned, “is counterproductive”, undermining the Palestinians’ cause.

Things have worsened in the social media age, where the naming of acts like these, their perpetrators and victims, is no longer determined primarily by journalists. Anyone with a Facebook page or Twitter account, whatever his agenda or worldview, can reach thousands of readers.

Amidst increasing concern worldwide against pervasive incitement on the Internet, the Israeli legal advocacy group Shurat HaDin is threatening to hang

billboards across the street from the home of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, urging him to combat Palestinian incitement on his social media platform which has billions of users.

“If [Zuckerberg] doesn’t see the incitement, we will display it opposite his California home,” Shurat HaDin said in a statement. For example, a post from the Palestinian Fatah political party’s Facebook page is showing Palestinian children brandishing rifles ready to use against Israelis.

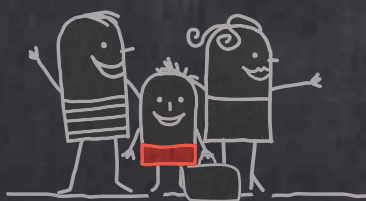
Israel’s Public Security Minister on Sunday proposed new legislation to compel social media platforms to remove posts which directly incite murder or violence. He wants an Israeli law to be enacted in conjunction with other Western countries.

Evil exists and must be named as evil. What happened in Otniel was evil. Even if one opposes Israeli settlements in the West Bank, there are other, less barbaric ways to contest it.

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



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Youth camps: lots of fun with a Torah flavour

STAFF REPORTER

The serious approach and professionalism with which the Jewish youth movements looked after the children attending their camps was heart warming, Ben Swartz, chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, told the SA Jewish Report following the end-of-year camps run by Betar (in KwaZulu-Natal) and, Bnei Akiva, Habonim and Netzer in the Western Cape.

“The vibrancy and strength of the movements was so encouraging. They are representative of the heart of our community,” he said.

“I think it is critical that the Jewish community as a whole continues to strengthen and support the connection of the movements to the broader Jewish community and most importantly to Israel. That remains a responsibility incumbent on all of us.”

The **Betar Southern Africa machaneh**, Omdim Beyachad - standing together - was regarded as especially relevant for a South African Jewish youth movement living in today’s anti-Zionist society.

Camp activities provided a balance of educational content, Yiddishkeit, Betar ideology, creativity and physical activity.

Each day had a theme or objective, including leadership, army, Israel and Betar Day.

Favourite activities included crafts, colour wars, Bnei Etzel banquet, obstacle course, survival night, Betar Olympics, abseiling and pool parties.

Chanichim were taken to several beaches in the area almost daily and used the onsite pool regularly.

The camp hike ended at a waterfall for a fun-filled day of swimming.

Medi Response ensured that all medical needs were provided by advanced life support paramedics while security was ensured by CSO-accredited security guards.

At the **Bnei Akiva machaneh** Dor Shelanu (our generation) people saw, listened and processed every moment, transcending their everyday existence to enter



Betar campers in high spirits.

“The vibrancy and strength of the movements was so encouraging. They are representative of the heart of our community.”

a world filled with excitement, joy, inspiration, Torah, friendship and light, the camp told Jewish Report.

Both chanichim and madrichim felt a pull towards Torah and Hashem. From the education initiatives of a dynamic Torah syllabus, to the first-ever mitzvah fair which saw over 1 000 campers participating in challah baking, tzitzit making, challah cover decorating and more, the true essence of Jewish pride and tradition was ingrained in every heart on that campsite.

Machaneh Dor Shelanu was a high point for every person who was there and who was privileged to be a part of it.

The theme of the **Habonim machaneh** (camp) was Hazman Lif’ol, the time to act.

The camp was attended by 700 campers, making it the largest in years, with 200 counsellors and a full team of cooks, doctors, nurses, CSO and secretarial staff, to create a sensational holiday.

Sollelim (grade 9) learned about

revolution and consumerism. Sayarim (grade 10) ran a carnival that came with a completely new vibe and put smiles on faces. Shtilim (grades 5 and 6) learned about our Jewish community with a beautiful wedding ceremony and Bonim (grade 7) learned about the first aliyot to Israel with unrivalled “Illegal Immigration”. Oz (Shomrim, grade 11) ran a projects week.

Sports tournaments, lazy afternoons on the beach, slushies at the tuck shop and lying on hammocks were little things that made this machaneh brilliant.

Visitors to the camp included former South African President Kgalema Motlanthe, who spoke on post-apartheid South Africa, and Professor Adam Habib, vice-chancellor of Wits, who discussed transformation in universities.

The **Netzer camp**, Machaneh Chalutzim (pioneers), succeeded in spite of a change of campsite 17 days before it started.

Netzer explored the idea of pioneering one’s way through life.

One of the highlights this machaneh was colour wars. The entire camp was split between red and blue teams battling various obstacles until one team was announced the victor.

Other major highlights included time in the beautiful dam on the campsite, various obstacle courses, Israel Day and visitors’ day, when parents and chanichim went head to head in a number of challenges.



Bnei Akiva rosh machaneh (camp head) Aharon Chemel leads the happy campers.



Time for action and smiles at the Habonim machaneh.



A joyful Shabbat at the Netzer camp.

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Kosher costs and pitfalls aired at informative meeting

SUZANNE BELLING

Why is the cost of kosher food escalating beyond the ability of young and even older families to afford it - and what are the solutions?

One definite answer given by Rabbi Yossi Baumgarten, principal rabbinic supervisor of the kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, was to go back to the basics of our grandparents - buy the chicken, enlist a shochet and then pluck the feathers and salt and soak the bird yourself.

Why do people – especially charitable organisations – have to pay function fees?

Rabbi Baumgarten was addressing a meeting of the Co-ordinating Council of National Jewish Women’s Organisations, accompanied by Greg Bloch, head of the kashrut division of the UOS, and Jarred Abelson, head of finance and group services. The Council comprises the Union of Jewish Women, SA; WIZO South Africa; the SA Union of Temple Sisterhoods; and the Johannesburg Sephardi Ladies’ Society.

The old-fashioned way cuts out the cost of the middleman - or the many women employed to de-feather and clean the chicken. And even then, it is not as smooth or clean as a treif chicken because, by soaking the bird in water, the blood becomes cooked



and the chicken is therefore not kosher.

There is no simple answer today - people want the convenience of ready-kashered meat. The fact that the Jewish community only uses the forequarters of an animal also adds to the cost.

Rabbi Baumgarten who inspects kosher facilities on a regular basis, says “kashrut is the heart of Judaism”.

He explained that even observant shop or restaurant owners need mashgichim to ensure 100 per cent observance and had to be subjected to inspections. The frum owner of an establishment could only supervise pareve or dairy foods, he said.

He explained how, during inspections, he believed Hashem was watching over him, and cited examples of how mistakes were averted.

Regarding increases in prices, this was true of the smaller establishments, not big

factories where the approval of a Beth Din label on mass-produced goods did not add to the cost. However, this did happen in smaller establishments.

He debunked the belief that a hechsher was needed on pure (unflavoured) water except on Pesach, which answered an often-posed question from the community.

He dealt with infestations - for example in cauliflower and broccoli - as this was to’eivah (an abomination in the eyes of Hashem). “If one transgressed by eating pork, it is one transgression, but to eat ‘goggas’ (insects), one can have as many as six transgressions,” he said, having proved this to a chef in a five-star restaurant in the same hotel as a kosher function.

He explained how easy it was for an unkosher ingredient, such as an emulsifier, to be part of a shipment. He had spotted this in time in a shipment of chocolate that had

The team stressed that the Beth Din has an “open-door” policy and was always available to discuss matters of kashrut.

been then exchanged.

The women bombarded the rabbi and Bloch with questions - for example:

- Why do people - especially charitable organisations - have to pay function fees? “It doesn’t seem fair when we are raising money.” The team offered to look into this in an attempt to find an answer.
- Some of the participants wanted to know “why the premises of kosher restaurants were ‘so often’ unclean?” The solution suggested by the team was that the women’s organisations carry out regular visits to the premises of these restaurants in an attempt to point out the problem and rectify it with the establishment.

The biggest expenses for kosher diners were restaurants, butcheries and purchasing cheese and meat.

The team stressed that the Beth Din has an “open-door” policy and was always available to discuss matters of kashrut.

Lynne Raphaely, national president of the Union of Jewish Women, who chairs the Co-ordinating Council, welcomed and thanked the speakers.

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Community Voices

It’s 175 years of pride and lots to look forward to

This year the South African Jewish community will be caught up in the spirit of celebrating its 175th anniversary, the years since Jews made their presence felt in the country; first in the Cape and then moving inland to be part of the mining, and other fast-growing, communities that sprang up in Kimberley, Johannesburg and the reef towns. As the first synagogue was opened in the Mother City, celebrations will commence there and will continue until September. The Jewish Report asked individuals how they felt about being part of the history and contribution the Jewish community has made to South Africa over the years.



Amanda Zar, manager of the Herzlia Foundation Trust, spoke proudly about the powerful contribution of Jews and Jewish volunteers to the boards of different organisations and the work of Afrika Tikun.

It is important to celebrate the success of the community which took its task very seriously. She also commented on the generosity of the members of the Jewish community who ensure that the organisations thrive.

“They take their work very seriously,” she says.



Rowan Polovin, acting chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, Cape Council, pointed out that South African Jews have been a very powerful influence on the history of South Africa,

“We have made a huge contribution to the fabric of the country and I think we can be very proud of our history and what

we have achieved.

“Although we face ongoing challenges and incidents of anti-Semitism, we will be able to overcome this and continue to be a presence in the country for a long time,” he says.



Member of Parliament **Darren Bergman** says the Jewish community is an integral part of the country’s heritage.

“Our contribution is historic, present and will continue into the future.”

Jews have been prominent in all fields - business, politics, science, medicine and sport - and this contribution from a small part of the greater community “is very definitely something to celebrate”.



Veteran Pretoria communal leader **Victor Gordon** says: “Over many years, the contribution of the small population of local Jews to the development of this country should be a source of pride to not only our own community, but to this nation as a whole. Undoubtedly, Jews have played a part in almost every sector of society including business, the judiciary, commerce, medicine, the arts, science etc, excessively disproportionate to their numbers.

“While we look back on the past decades with some deserved sense of satisfaction, we also look ahead at the years to come in the knowledge that our community is well poised and equipped to not only face the many challenges that beckon, but to play our part in meeting and resolving them. The South African Jewish community remains a vital component in ensuring this country’s success.”



Mina Sable, a past national president of the Union of Jewish Women and a past vice-president of the International Council of Jewish Women, has served the community for 45 years.

“Our Jewish community has entered into many areas others have left. We are conscious of helping when help is needed.

“I think it is important to celebrate this anniversary - it brings people together in shared experiences.”



Bev Goldman, Israel consultant, SA-Israel Chamber of Commerce, says: “What a wonderful celebration! The Jewish community of South Africa has added incredible value to the growth and development of the country. We have so much of which to be proud.”

This included relationships with non-Jewish communities, with government, business and NGOs, which “have always been of mutual respect and admiration.

“We have enhanced our reputation in the fields of education, charity, medicine, the judiciary, politics and entertainment. We have fought discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. We have supported the poor, the indigent, the disadvantaged, the handicapped.”

Commenting on the “wonderful Jewish education system”, she says that the Jewish community has “almost too many” large and small synagogues. “We have admirable youth groups and we implement values and principles that are - or should be - the envy of so many other communities.

“Whew! We sound perfect - we certainly aren’t; but we keep trying, reaching heights, improving, moving forward - learning, learning, learning, all the time.”

Bev says South Africa is going through turbulence and tumultuous times and the feelings of insecurity in our community and across the nation are manifold. “But we will overcome - we have the stamina and determination.”



Capetonian **Patsy Bagraim** who lives in Highlands, near The Gardens, where the first shul was started, says it is wonderful that the Jewish community “is still going strong. There have been lots of ups and downs, but we still have a strong voice for all Jews. “We don’t sit back when there is anti-Semitism and we always look after our fellow Jews,” she says. Patsy would like more people to join Jewish organisations and lend their support. “Sadly, we are economic refugees at the moment,” she says. But she will join in the celebrations and hope for a bright future.

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

News

Jerusalem’s ‘barmitzvah king’ shares laughs and inspiration

MAAYAN JAFFE-HOFFMAN

Rabbi Jay Karzen, coined the “Jerusalem barmitzvah king” by The Jerusalem Post in 1997, has stories to make you laugh out loud or cry tears of joy.

“A South African family was among the first to book me for their barmitzvah. In the process of printing invitations for their forthcoming event in Jerusalem, they faced me with a simple question: ‘What’s the address of the Kotel?’” Karzen recalls.

He assured the family that no address was really necessary, and that “Kotel” or “Western Wall” would suffice. But the family would not accept his answer. Karzen called various government offices from Jerusalem City Hall to the Ministry of Religion, all of which enjoyed a chuckle at his expense.

Though they couldn’t give him an answer (because the Kotel indeed has no address), Karzen knew he could not get back to the family without a street number.

“So I composed an address: The Western Wall: 1 Kotel Plaza. Believe me, that is exactly what the invitation read,” he says with a laugh.

Karzen, 81, has performed thousands of bar- and batmitzvahs (an average of 100 per year) over the last 30 years. He was among



the first rabbis to offer formal bar-/batmitzvah services at the Kotel for families coming from abroad to celebrate their special day.

Meeting with JNS.org in his posh Jerusalem home, Karzen says that when he made aliyah from Chicago 30 years ago, he needed a job. A then-prominent rabbi at the now-defunct Maine Township Jewish Congregation in Des Plaines, Illinois, he had performed many Jewish lifecycle celebrations and figured a barmitzvah business would

be a good avenue to explore.

“Families would come and bring their groups to the Kotel and I saw the ceremonies were sometimes unmeaningful. It was chaos. I figured I could upgrade the barmitzvah experience,” says Karzen, who acknowledges that he started a trend that now has some steep competition.

Karzen’s philosophy is “to turn kids on, to inspire them”. He does this by explaining the importance of a relationship with G-d to his clients, who often do not lead a

religiously observant life.

“I tell them that to be a Jew means to love G-d. To love G-d, you have to follow the Torah, which He gave us. I tell them it is fun to be a Jew,” Karzen says. “There’s a lot of singing.”

Some of the inspiration comes simply from being at the Kotel.

“Israel is the Holy Land. Jerusalem is the Holy City. The Kotel is the holiest spot in the Holiest City in the Holy Land. It’s a beautiful thing,” he says. “When you go to the

Kotel and see thousands of people around you davening - Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Hassidim - all worshipping G-d, it cannot help but have an impact on the child.”

Karzen also performs bar-/batmitzvah ceremonies at Robinson’s Arch, Masada and other sites around Israel. He was once asked to perform a barmitzvah on the beach in Tel Aviv, but he turned down that request. Ultimately, he wrote a book about his experiences, “Off the Wall”, which was published in 1999.

During his recent meeting with JNS.org, Karzen shared a number of his best tales, such as the time a family asked if they could rent the entire Kotel because they were expecting several guests and wanted a private party.

Then there was the boy who came with his tzitzit snipped from his tallit because his mother “didn’t want all those extra strings hanging down”.

One family asked the rabbi if they could order tefillin in a different colour, maybe blue, because “black is so sombre”.

An American mixed-marriage family contacted Karzen for a Thanksgiving day barmitzvah. In their first correspondence, the mother proudly let the rabbi know

Continued from page 10

Jerusalem’s ‘barmitzvah king’ *continued*

that she had haredi family members in Israel who would be attending the ceremony. As such, they hired a top barmitzvah tutor in the US to prepare her son.

“During my meeting with them the night before the service, I discovered that the celebrant had learned the wrong Torah portion. That Thursday was Rosh Chodesh, the new Hebrew month. There is a special monthly reading on such days... What was I to do?” says Karzen, who “told the family there would be two Torah readings that day - the regular weekly portion that the barmitzvah bochur (lad) had learned, as well as a special reading in honour of the new Hebrew month”.

He called a member of the haredi family and explained the situation, asking him to pass the message to his relatives. The barmitzvah boy never knew about the error, according to Karzen.

“Crazy things happen,” Karzen recalls.

And even crazier e-mails. A sampling of messages that have graced Karzen’s inbox:

“Since we aren’t a very religious family, is it possible to have a ‘non-religious barmitzvah?’”

“I will be bringing my son to Israel next month with an organised tour programme. We do not wish to miss anything from this comprehensive itinerary. I would like my son to have a symbolic barmitzvah. If we come very early to the Wall, can we back at the hotel to meet our tour group by 8 am? PS: My son does not know very much and cannot read Hebrew, so the service will have to be very short and simple.

What do you charge for this type of abbreviated service?”

“We have many important participants coming to our son’s barmitzvah... We know that traditionally only three [aliyot to the Torah] are distributed on a weekday. We are requesting an exception to this rule... I am sure that G-d will overlook these minor variations and bless you for your understanding in accommodating us.”

But Karzen says his successes make it all worth it. One time, a grandfather made arrangements for a barmitzvah at the Kotel for his grandson, informing Karzen that while the father would be there, he was anti-religion and “hostile”. The ceremony started off with the father behaving just as described. Karzen couldn’t leave the father on the sidelines, so he tried to engage him in the ceremony.

At the end of the event, the father stood up and told attendees how when he was 13, he was supposed to celebrate his barmitzvah, but his grandfather died the night before his big day and the event was cancelled. He then learned a second Torah portion, only to have his grandmother die just before he was supposed to recite that one.

The father had figured this was G-d’s way of telling him he didn’t need to have anything to do with Judaism. Yet after witnessing his son’s ceremony, the father was in tears and had changed his mind.

“He said that after seeing his son’s barmitzvah, he realised how much he missed Judaism and how beautiful it is,” recalls Karzen. “He said he just wanted to hug me and thank me for reintroducing him to religion.” (JNS.org)

Jerusalem Unity Prize nominations open until Feb 4

GILA BRILL

Nominations for this year’s Jerusalem Unity Prize will be accepted until February 4.

The Jerusalem Unity Prize in memory of Eyal Ifrach, Gil-ad Sha-er and Naftali Fraenkel, the three Israeli teenagers killed by Palestinian terrorists, is a joint initiative between the Mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat, the families of the three boys and Gesher.

The prizes are awarded annually to individuals, organisations and initiatives in Israel and throughout the Jewish world, whose actions are “instrumental in advancing mutual respect for others among the Jewish people, both in times of crisis and in daily life.

“The prize-winners are all leaders who are making a very special and tangible change in the world due to their efforts. Winners in each of the three categories will be awarded prizes up to 100 000 NIS. The prizes will be presented on Unity Day, June 7, in Israel, as part of the commemorative events of the day.”

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, the prize committee chairman and the Sha-er, Fraenkel and Ifrach families, have determined that the prize will highlight local-level activity, and as such, the categories are now local, national and global.

Within each category, individuals, organisations and initiatives from Israel and abroad, may apply. Judges will be requested to evaluate the impact of the nominee within the geographic area.

The prize committee has expanded and now includes Lt Gen (res) Benny Gantz, former chief of staff of the IDF and Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky. They join Rabbi Jonathan, Lord Sacks, Mayor Barkat, the three families, Prof Yuli Tamir, Rav Yitzchak Grossman, Rabbi Dr Danny Tropper, Orly Vilnai, and Kobi Oz.

• For more details, visit the website www.unityprize.org.

Read the South African Jewish Report online www.sajr.co.za

World News in Brief

Hillary Clinton e-mail reveals US plan to incite Palestinian resistance

WASHINGTON - Former secretary of state and current Democratic presidential front-runner, Hillary Clinton, was advised in 2011 to force Israel to resume peace negotiations by secretly fomenting a Palestinian uprising, according to a newly revealed e-mail.

The plan was uncovered as part of an investigation into Clinton’s private e-mails while she served as secretary of state. In an e-mail on December 18, 2011, former US ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering, who was serving as an adviser to Clinton, suggested that the US covertly generate Palestinian unrest in an effort to push Jerusalem to jump-start stalled peace talks.

“What will change the situation is a major effort to use nonviolent protests and demonstrations to put peace back in the centre of people’s aspirations as well as their thoughts, and use that to influence the political leadership,” Pickering wrote.

Clinton requested that Pickering’s e-mail be printed, but it is not clear how she reacted, if at all, to his idea. (JNS.org)

Israelis arrested in price fixing of school trips to Poland

TEL AVIV - Nine suspects were arrested in what Israeli police believe is a criminal ring that monopolised the market for school trips to Poland in an effort to fix prices. Among those arrested following police raids on Monday morning on homes and offices, were a high-level staffer of a large travel agency and two CEOs of smaller agencies, according to police spokesman Luba Samri. Israel’s antitrust authority also included searches of bank accounts in its investigation.

The suspects are accused of violating antitrust laws, accepting bribes and committing fraud. The antitrust authority alleges that officials in the top travel agencies teamed up to fix prices for groups of young Israelis travelling to Poland for Jewish seminars and heritage trips. According to Israeli media reports, the suspects won the tender from Israel’s Ministry of Education to co-ordinate and facilitate the school trips.

Organised school trips to Poland are commonplace for young Israeli learners. They typically cost parents thousands of shekels, making them inaccessible to lower-income learners. (JTA)

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RACIAL MIXING IS NOT ‘TORAH JUDAISM’

In last week’s edition Geoff Sifrin in his Taking Issue column titled, “Are we heading towards a racist society again?”, includes a paragraph in which he denounces the education department in Israel for disqualifying a novel from the high school curriculum about a love affair between an Israeli woman and a Palestinian man. Sifrin describes this as being an ominous sign of racial separation by the Israeli authorities.

May I remind Sifrin, and all those in favour of equality between all races, that in Israel, unlike any other Western type democracy, racial mixing might sound morally and politically correct, but it certainly is not Torah Judaism. The Land of Israel was given to the Jewish people by the Creator and Owner of the entire world.

It was given to serve the Jewish people so that they have a distinct, separate place to fulfil their obligation. There can be no others who freely live there, let alone sovereignty and ownership. To allow such a thing is to invite military attack and spiritual assimilation.

This is so for all non-Jews. Only resident strangers who have undertaken to abide by the seven Nohahide laws will be permitted to reside in the Jewish state. Even then they must pay tribute and serve Israel and be subjects under the Jewish state as it is written (Deut 20:11): “They will be tribute and shall serve you.”

SA GOVERNMENT’S VIEW ON ISRAELI CO-OPERATION IS SHORT-SIGHTED

The article in last week’s Jewish Report, under the headline “Zuma discourages ANC to travel to Israel” by Ant Katz, was informative, particularly in the light of Israel and South Africa currently doing more than R8 billion in trade annually.

However, the stance of the ANC and academics in universities here in South Africa, in suspending co-operation with their counterparts in Israel, is profoundly troubling and disappointing.

South Africa loses more than 25 per cent of its clean water annually due to poor infrastructure and maintenance; the country is also in the grip of a crippling drought. Israel has all the answers relating to water technology. In short, water in South Africa is scarce.

Countries such as India, Mexico, America, Turkey and China have all rushed to take advantage of Israeli water technology and resourcefulness.

Israel recycles more than 90 per cent of its water and has demonstrated that its sewage bacterial scrubbers can return clean water to the system. In addition, Israel’s scientists have invented computer shower heads and mathematical algorithms to detect leaks and bursts. The country also leads the way in the desalination of sea water.

Zuma signed a \$60 billion co-operation deal with China in 2015. Yet, China, has extensive

Maimonides (Hilchot Melachim 6:11) declares that any non-Jew residing in Israel shall be humble and low and not raise their head in the Land. A unique holy nation with a distinctly separate Torah culture can only be guaranteed with the non-Jew having no sovereignty, ownership or citizenship in the Jewish state that could allow him to shape its destiny and character.

“Thou shalt not place over thyself a stranger who is not of your brethren” (Deut 17:15) Racism? Yes, but also Torah Judaism.

Tanach is filled with passages of the superiority of the Jewish people over non-Jews in the Land of Israel. The very first law passed by the modern state of Israel was the Law of Return. Only halachic bona fide Jews in the Diaspora are allowed citizenship in the State of Israel, should they wish to make aliyah. Racism? Of course, but also Torah Judaism.

To Geoff Sifrin I would like to say: Only by completely banning from Israeli schools literature which in any form promotes physical and/or spiritual contacts between Jew and non-Jew, will our Jewish land survive as a Torah state.

Choni Davidowitz
Sandringham, Johannesburg

dealings with Israel, not only with regard to water technology.

It is difficult to understand the ANC’s and the government’s reluctance to do business with Israel, regardless of the politics in the Middle East.

Moreover, Zuma’s statement at the ANC’s 104th birthday bash was hypocritical when he said: “We urge parties to co-operate in line with principles of international law and resolutions of the United Nations.”

The failure of Zuma to order the arrest and detention of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in terms of an International Criminal Court warrant was a shocking disregard for international law, more so because South Africa is a voluntary signatory to the Rome Statute.

As a result of Zuma’s failure, al-Bashir was able to slip out of the country and land safely back home.

The “principles of co-operation and international law” which Zuma says he espouses, (and alluded to in his statement), seem to be an expediency to promote ANC and government interests.

Nevertheless, it is a pity that South Africa will lose out on Israeli water technology, a technology that is lauded around the world.

Nathan Cheiman
Northcliff, Johannesburg

ISRAEL’S ‘CITYMART’ CO-OP MODEL MAY JUST WORK IN SA

It’s no secret that the cost of food, especially kosher food, in South Africa, is becoming more and more prohibitive and with the latest expected “junk status” rating that is just around the corner for the country, it can only get worse.

Add to this is the stress of citizens having to fork out more money, which leads to more anxiety and pressure and soaring medical bills, with more of us desperately seeking remedies to ameliorate the pain and panic of dwindling bank accounts - and the situation looks disheartening and sombre.

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) recently launched Tzarchaniyat Ha’Ir (“CityMart”), a new chain of food co-ops to be located throughout Israel’s socio-economic periphery, offering customers groceries for significantly less than market prices.

According to media reports, the model has been launched in order to combine a response to the cost of living in Israel and a partnership with local residents. JAFI is not doing this on its own - it is partnering with the Israel Venture Network, with contributions from the UJA-Federation of New York, the United Jewish Endowment Fund of Greater Washington, and private donors - but it will be the major facilitator.

“CityMart” will operate as a social venture, its earnings going toward launching additional branches, lowering prices further, and fostering communal activities for local residents.

What appealed enormously to me was the fact that communal activities at the branches will be run by local young people who are

MYRIAD REASONS WHY REFORM CAN’T BE CALLED ‘RABBIS’

Regarding Monica Solomons’ letter that Reform ministers should also be called rabbi, thanks for the appetite suppressant.

Calling Reform leaders who Isaac Reznik politely refers to as ministers by the title “rabbi”, would simply be impossible, because obtaining smicha requires inter alia learning the Talmud, Rishonim such as Rashi and Rambam and Shulachan Aruch, as well as later authors such as Reb Moshe Feinstein and the Chazon Ish.

The learning is especially focused on the fields of Shabbat, kashrut and family purity. Reform denies this entire teaching - both the subject and the concepts - and advances its own

interested in creating social change in their communities. All earnings from sales will be invested in strengthening the local communities, as well as in further developing the venture.

Co-ops have never really taken off in South Africa, but perhaps this model could work. What is envisaged is that the products sold will be sourced from small and medium-sized companies to offer residents lower-cost groceries.

Local producers will be offered an opportunity to join the project; and wares will be received at several logistical centres, which will supply local branches according to their needs. The individual co-ops will survey the lowest prices offered in the area, ensuring that each individual product is offered at the lowest price available among competitors. Additionally, members of the chain’s buyers’ club will receive a 15 per cent discount.

According to Natan Sharansky, chairman of the executive of JAFI, “this new initiative seeks not only to lower the cost of living and ensure that everyone has access to high-quality, affordable groceries, but also to strengthen the local community by involving community members, consumers and activists in a co-operative effort that belongs to them alone.”

In Israel the project is aimed at lower income individuals and struggling communities; but that doesn’t preclude other communities from embarking on similar initiatives.

Bev Goldman
Israel consultant
SA Israel Chamber of Commerce

Read the South African Jewish Report online
www.sajr.co.za

THESE WEIGHTY ‘TROMMELS’ WILL (OVER)KILL ONE!

It would provide an interesting exercise to investigate the health of some staff members of the Jewish youth camps, with specific reference to their back problems, crushed feet and hernias.

One of our grandsons attended Bnei Akiva camp this past December. I was available to take possession of his “trommel” (trunk) by camp staff members on his return. The bulk and weight of this piece of luggage for one individual (multiplied by probably over 1 000 campers) is quite ludicrous.

To lift a single “trommel” - approximately four times the child’s weight - is quite beyond the capabilities of even two or three kids.

And to have staff to cope with the multitude of “trommels” seems to me like an insurmountable task!

Is it really necessary for a child to have to schlep over 100 kilos of possessions for a relatively short time at the sea?

To me it seems like overkill.

Jack Miller
Gresswold, Johannesburg

HISTORY TELLS US THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A ‘PALESTINE’

There is a fable generated by the media which is biased in many ways about Israel. There was never a Palestine in history; it is an invention by the British. The area in our history goes back 5 000 years. I do not understand why the history of the Jewish people is being ignored. It should be taken into account that the name “Palestine” was borrowed from the Roman Empire.

The Qur’an only came into existence about 670 ACE. So, what this boils down to is that the so-called Palestinians are generic Arabs originally from Syria, and not accepted by the Arab world in general. CNN, BBC and other news outlets are simply ignoring this truth. Why is this history universally being denied?

Rube Bark
Lyndhurst, Johannesburg

Looking for
A TOUGH ONE TO SOLVE BY JEWISH REPORT READERS

Modya Silver from Toronto, Canada, says her family “has puzzled for years over what happened to our Dergoodski family from England.

“The story that seems to be most frequent is that our great-grandfather Myer Dergoodski (Degatski) left England with his mother (who was possibly Elizabeth Myers) and before they had a chance to bring over Myers’ wife and children (to South Africa), he died.”

Silver says they have a ship’s record that shows “a Mr and Mrs Myers and Mr Dergoodski went to South Africa. I have to believe that this is him, his mother and his stepfather. We want to establish what happened to them; they were detained on the boat (Dunluce Castle, part of the Union Castle fleet).”

Are any Jewish Report readers able to shed more light on the issue? Silver may be reached at modya@madrega.com or in Toronto, (416) 994-3278.

What Pope’s visit says about Catholic-Jewish relations

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
ROME

When Pope Francis crosses the Tiber River to visit to Rome’s Great Synagogue on Sunday, he became the third pontiff in history to do so. But his three km journey to the towering Tempio Maggiore shows that what was once unthinkable is now the norm.

“Our meeting,” Rome Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni told the Catholic newspaper L’Avvenire, “aims to convey a very topical, important and urgent message - that belonging to a faith, a religion, should not be a cause of hostility, hatred and violence, but that it is possible to build a peaceful co-existence, based on respect and co-operation”.

John Paul II’s visit 30 years ago marked a dramatic watershed in Catholic-Jewish relations. By crossing the threshold of the Tempio Maggiore, warmly embracing Rome’s then-chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, and famously referring to Jews as Christianity’s “older brothers”, the Polish-born pontiff broke down barriers that stretched back nearly 2 000 years.

The visual impact alone of the pontiff and the chief rabbi embracing sent out a powerful message of reconciliation.

Formal dialogue between Catholics and Jews had begun only two decades before Pope John Paul II’s visit, with the Vatican’s 1965 Nostra Aetate declaration that repudiated the charge that Jews were collectively responsible for killing Jesus, stressed the religious bond between Jews and Catholics and called for interfaith contacts.

For centuries before that, as Brown Uni-

versity historian David Kertzer wrote in his 2001 book, “The Popes Against the Jews”, the Vatican “worked hard to keep Jews in their subservient place - barring them from owning property, from practising professions, from attending university, from travelling freely”. Jews were confined to ghettos and often subjected to expulsions, forced conversions and other persecutions. In Rome, the Great Synagogue stands where the papal rulers kept Jews confined to a crowded ghetto until 1870.

John Paul made fostering relations between Catholics and Jews a cornerstone of his papacy.

“What he did was to assert that one could not be a Christian without recognition of one’s roots in the Jewish community,” said Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, a long-time participant in Catholic-Jewish dialogue and a former vice president of the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

Pope Benedict XVI, who had been a key adviser to John Paul and an architect of his theological policy, followed John Paul’s lead. But Pope Benedict lacked his predecessor’s charisma, and some of his policies strained relations with the Jewish world.

His visit to the Rome synagogue in January 2010 reaffirmed the continuity of the Vatican’s commitment to Jewish-Catholic dialogue. But it came amid tensions sparked by his decision to move controversial Second World War-era Pope Pius XII - whom critics accuse of having turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust - closer to sainthood.

Rabbi Giuseppe Laras, the then-president

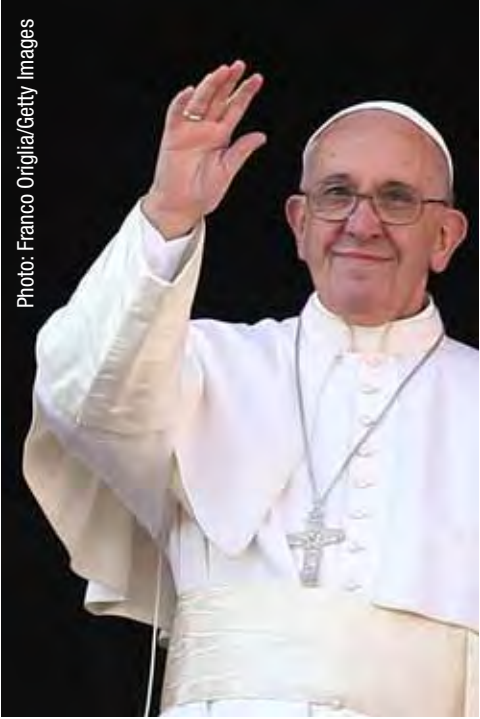
of the Italian rabbinical assembly, even boycotted the synagogue ceremony in protest.

Argentine-born Francis had a close relationship with the Jewish community even before his election to the papacy, when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires. Since he became pontiff in March 2013 he has consistently demonstrated attention to Jewish issues and has won over many sceptics with his warmth. He visited Israel, along with Jordan and the West Bank, in 2014.

His visit to the synagogue “will not be marked by a novice stepping foot in an alien place and saying that I need to find my connection, as John Paul II did”, said Bretton-Granatoor. Pope Francis, he told JTA, “is wholly at ease with the Jewish community and Jewish life. His entrance into that synagogue will not be dissimilar to a Jew entering a synagogue in a new place - new, yet familiar.”

In May 2014, Pope Francis defused the Pius issue to some extent by making clear that he had no intention of fast-tracking his sainthood. And a Vatican document released in December to mark the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate reiterated at length how Christianity is rooted in Judaism. It also renewed pledges of co-operation and stated that the Church as an institution should not try to convert Jews.

“Francis’s visit to the synagogue will be far closer to a family reunion precisely because the blessed new positive Catholic-Jewish relationship has become almost normative, and Francis is overwhelmingly seen as a true friend of the Jewish people, which indeed he is,” said Rabbi David Rosen, the



Pope Francis waving from the balcony of St Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City on December 25 last year.

American Jewish Committee’s international director for interreligious affairs, before the visit.

Rosen added: “Three in Jewish tradition is a hazakah - that is, a confirmation. And now,” after this third papal visit, “it will almost be impossible for a pontiff not to visit the Rome Great Synagogue as well as to visit the State of Israel.” (JTA)

News

Lotto prank puts the spotlight on Shlomo’s generosity

OWN CORRESPONDENT

After the US’s world-record lotto draw of \$1,6 billion (R27 billion) was won by three winning tickets last week, a prank by one entrant’s son served to highlight the amazing philanthropy of a Jewish Californian healthcare magnate, Shlomo Rechnitz (pictured), who owns 80 assisted-living facilities in California.

Rechnitz bought almost 18 000 lottery tickets, one for each of his employees.

A nurse who worked at one of Rechnitz’ facilities in Pomona, California, was pranked by her son immediately after the draw when he texted her a photo of what looked like a winning ticket and told her she had won some R9 billion.

After the nurse received the picture from her son, co-workers immediately began calling reporters to say one of their employees had won the jackpot. Luckily, the nurse had refrained from revealing her name in an effort to avoid an onslaught of media attention.

It turned out that her son had doctored the ticket to match the winning numbers. She wasn’t a winner after all. “It’s too embarrassing,” the woman’s daughter told the LA Times. “Everyone is congratulating us.”

Nonetheless, the story did serve to add to

Rechnitz’ fame - taking his name and fame as an enviable employer from California to the world. To make sure that he gave all of his employees in California an opportunity to go for the jackpot, Rechnitz paid mini-marts to stay open in areas where there were no 24-hour convenience stores, to enable his workers to have sufficient time to buy the lotto ticket he was paying for.



Each employee received a card from the boss on which Shlomo wrote: “We will provide the ticket. You provide the dream.”

Asked what spurred him to do this in the first place, Rechnitz said: “In the new year, everyone wants an extra bit of hope” and he had wanted to give everyone that bit of hope.

Shlomo Yehuda Rechnitz certainly is a different type of philanthropist. And the son who pranked his mom... she says she forgives him. It must be hard, though.

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THE BLUE AGENCY

Sydenham tots just love school!

JENNY MILLER

One week back at school at Sydenham Pre-Primary and smiles all around! Liat Haifer, Emma Miller and Kara Saloner of younger group enjoy “tea and cake” while chatting about their holidays.



KDLPPS moves into its state-of-the-art new digs



Eva Grusin and Sara Kress having fun on the jungle gym together with Principal Sheva Messias.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Imagine being able to slide into school, climb on the snake-rope jungle gym, chat to your friends through an underground tunnel, enjoy a quick round of putt-putt or a soccer game, all before entering your state-of-the art classroom equipped with the latest technology.

Well, this is the reality for children who began the 2016 school year at the newly-built King David Pre-Primary Linksfeld.

The rebuild began in 2015 while the school operated from a temporary location on the King David campus.

Teachers and staff on January 12 welcomed excited little learners back to school; parents and children alike are thrilled with the 14 modern classrooms, all equipped with projectors, a magnificent media centre and library, an impressive music room, admin offices, meeting rooms and a fully functional kitchen.

The resource rooms and therapy rooms will be used for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and guidance by the psychologist/social worker.

There is also a landscaped garden and playground area designed to accommodate the developmental stages of the children from playschool through to grade R.

“Every feature and finish of the school took the children’s needs into account,” said Sheva Messias, principal of KDPLL. “Every child is treated according to his/her own needs and abilities at our school.”

King David Schools have an enviable reputation as schools of progressive thought, focused on innovative programmes and ongoing staff development as well as continuous improvement to the infrastructure.

Hirsch Lyons girls visit ‘ward 284’ in act of chesed



Back: Dr Sue Klugman(head of Paediatric Respiratory Ward), Michelle Adams (patient’s mom) with Hirsch Lyons learners Tamar Heilbrunn, Raizel Suttner and Lena de Bruin (patient’s granny). Front row: Batsheva Oudmayer, Fabienne Radowsky, Dr Andy Goldman (LO teacher) with patient Taylor Adams (7-year-old cystic fibrosis patient), Yocheved Ginsberg and Dalya Blecher.

DR ANDY GOLDMAN

During the December holidays, the Hirsch Lyons High School girls, in a supreme act of chesed, visited the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

The school had collected boxes of non-perishable food for paediatric patients in the respiratory outpatient ward of the hospital, specific food requested by the head of the unit, paediatric pulmonologist, Dr Susan Klugman, and her team.

Klugman explained: “Many of these patients, despite optimal medical care, do not do as well as we would like them to do because their parents do not have the financial means to purchase high protein, nutritious food for

themselves and their families, which is so necessary to complement and complete all the other forms of treatment which they are receiving.

“We have seen such positive results in our patients who receive food from us and we are committed to providing nutritious food parcels as often as possible.”

A Spar supermarket in Germiston donated more than R5 500 worth of groceries.

In ward 284, patients are cared for by a multidisciplinary team including pulmonologists, physiotherapists, dieticians, a social worker and nurses.

Hirsch Lyons learners met families and patients and handed out the grocery parcels to patients and other family members.

Bright new start - all written on the cookies!



Learners and their leaders during the sports activity at Grade 8 Orientation.

GABRIELLA LIPSHITZ, GRADE 12

On Sunday, January 10, the new grade 8s of King David High School Linksfeld started their high school careers with the much anticipated “Grade 8 Orientation”. They were given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the values, ethos and general running of the school, as well as to meet new classmates and start forming the lifelong bonds of friendship.

One of their activities was an introduction to the various committees which form an integral part of school operations.

The Outreach Committee deals with chesed, a commu-

nity service in the school. It ran an activity in which they, as well as the rest of the school, could write messages on cookies.

The grade 8s had fun decorating the cookies and writing messages which were later delivered to underprivileged schoolchildren at Norwood Primary for their first day of school. It gave the grade 8s an opportunity to add something meaningful to their orientation experience and to already get a taste of what it means to be a King David learner.

The reactions of the Norwood pupils were heartwarming and they were extremely appreciative of the effort King David Linksfeld had made to welcome them back to school.



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‘Mr Ref’ a well-timed book to add to SA rugby lore

SUZANNE BELLING

At the age of 83, Max Baise, South Africa’s first Jewish international rugby referee, has published a book on his life, “Mister Ref: Test Referee Max Baise’s Story”.

The memoir underscores the validity of Max’s honorary title of “Mr Ref”. In it, Baise recounts occasions where he played a central role as referee in international matches and how he approached each game.

In those days there was no television in South Africa or TMOs (third match officials) - the referee was the sole judge of events as he saw and interpreted them

The book was published in December and will be launched in Cape Town on February 25 and at a date to be announced in Johannesburg.

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, country communities rabbi of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and CEO of the African Jewish Congress, regularly visits Riversdale in the Western Cape where Baise lives. He is full of praise for the ref’s book and has brought copies back to Johannesburg so that a wider readership can learn about the dramatic life of this charismatic figure.

Baise’s parents, Barney and Rachel, were poor Jewish immigrants from Lithuania who came

to this country in the 1920s. They worked in a small general dealer’s store in a remote Free State dorp, moving to Hoopstad in the same province in 1930 to start their own dealership.

At that stage they already had two sons. Their third son, Motel, was born in June 1932, though he cannot remember anyone calling him anything except Max.

He attended a Jewish boarding school in Johannesburg in 1944, but yearned to go home to Hoopstad where he had friends with whom he shared his passion for rugby, a sport that was not available at the Johannesburg school.

His father agreed to bring him back home and they moved to a farm in the vicinity, from where he cycled eight kilometres every day.

Because of his move back to this remote part of the Free State, Max never celebrated his barmitzvah - no teachers were available.

His parents moved to Odendaalsrus in 1947, but Max remained behind to complete standards 7 and 8.

His rugby career began in earnest in Hoopstad, where he captained both the under-13 and under-16 teams. In 1950 he completed his matric in Kroonstad, captaining the school’s first rugby team and he represented Free State schools at centre.

His playing career came to an abrupt end through injury not long after he left school.

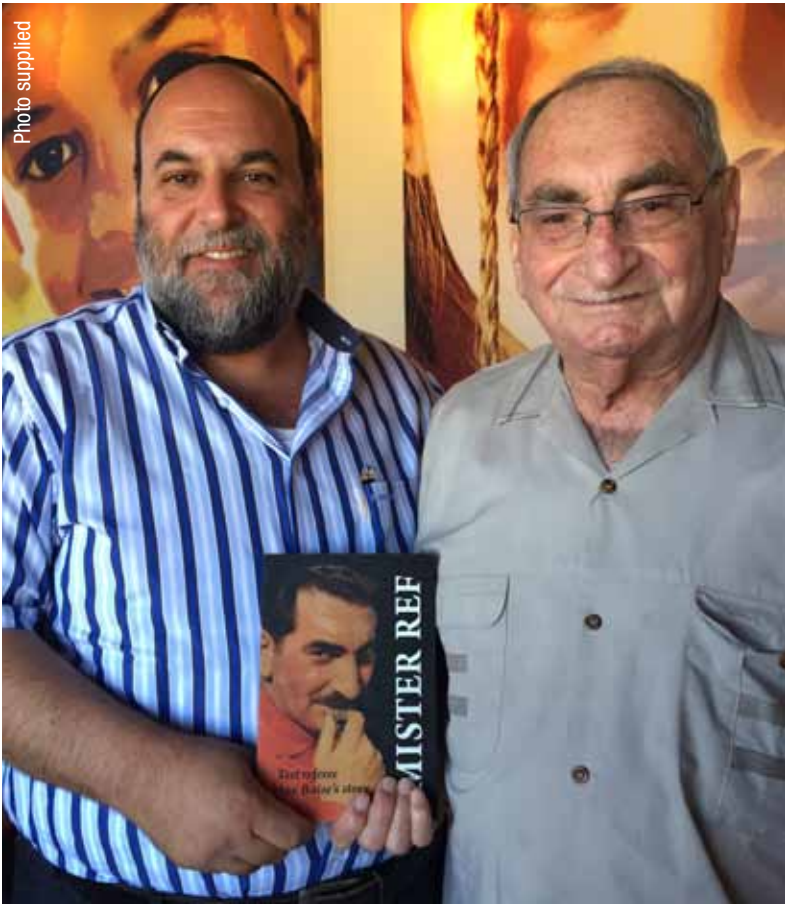
Two years’ later, Max and his cousin Solly went to an Odendaalsrus hotel for a few beers. They found out that there was a meeting of rugby referees and they barged in, paid five shillings and joined the Referees’ Association. They were given rule books and were on their way (they were the only two in that room to become test referees).

By 1960 Max had moved up to the South African trials and had acquired a name for his flamboyant gestures - “some people tend to speak with their hands as well as their tongues”, he wrote.

While his business career went through several ups, downs and changes, he made steady progress towards the top as a rugby referee, taking charge of his first two tests when the French toured South Africa in 1967. His test career continued until the mid-1970s, including two tests in which both he and his cousin Solly participated - Solly as touch judge in the one, with Max refereeing, and reversed roles in the next.

He lost his wife Dorothy in 2010 and has two children.

Max still lives in Riversdale, where he owned a bottle store for many years. It had his rugby memorabilia and was an attraction



Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft receiving a copy of Max Baise's book “Mister Ref” from the author.

for visitors to the town.

Amanda Botha, editor and publisher of the book, describes Max as “a special man with compassionate values of interest and support, which he embodied on the rugby field to the great advantage of the sport”.

He is known as “a man in a mil-

lion” and “the gentleman of South African rugby”.

Copies of the book are available from Rabbi Silberhaft at moshe@beyachad.co.za; and from Max Baise at dbaise@telkomsa.net at R195 a copy, of which R25 per book will be donated to the Chris Burger Players Fund.

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What’s on the web

Some splendid reads on Jewish Report website

Did you catch all the news over the holidays?

From our interview news with SA Zionist Federation head Nicci Raz, our “Top Reads of the Year” series and the eternally interesting antics of Rabbi Eliezer Berland, it was a busy holiday period for our website.

We published 24/6 to keep readers up-to-date, posting 76 stories and three newsletters in the three weeks from mid-December to the first week of January.

Unique user-visits were on a par with normal, which is good for a news website, while time-on-site and

pages-per-visit statistics were way up - suggesting holidaymakers read the site in more depth and breadth than they normally do.

Users who want to catch up on the holiday news can go onto www.sajr.co.za and click the “Latest” main tab. That will lead to all the news in date order.

We also published items of interest over the festive holidays that our many non-Jewish users found as interesting as our core Jewish readership did.

The website also contains many stories not published in the print edition - or expanded with more information and illustrations.

World News in Brief

French PM: Attacks in France, Israel show we are ‘in world war’

PARIS - Listing terrorist attacks in Israel along with attacks by the Islamic State, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said they showed “we are in a world war”.

Valls made the statement on Monday at a Paris hotel in an address before an audience of approximately 350, mostly from the Jewish community, during an event organised by CRIF, the umbrella group of French Jewish communities.

In explaining the reasons for the existence of a terrorist threat in France, he noted “upheaval in the Arab world” and “the reality in certain neighbourhoods in France, where young people are being radicalised. There are more and more terrorist attacks all over the world. In France, Burkina Faso, in Jakarta, in Israel, it keeps happening and it shows we need to learn to live with it,” Valls said.

Asked whether the government was doing enough to protect French Jews from attacks following the slaying of four in January 2015 at a kosher supermarket, Valls said: “Yes, we are doing 100 per cent, employing all measures, and we will continue to do so, but the risk is not negligible.”

Valls condemned former Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who last year said Valls was “under Jewish influence” because of his wife.

“It is anti-Semitism of the worst kind,” Valls said of Dumas, “and certain compulsive anti-Semites act on the fact that my wife is Jewish.” (JTA)

PERSONAL

**ARNOLD KUR
MEMORIAL SERVICE**

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of Arnold Kur on January 18, 2016, in Sydney.

Beloved and devoted husband to Rachel, Loving father to Sarit, Lily and Doron and grand-father of Amy, Ella, Michael and Nathan.

Cherished brother to Charles. Loving father-in-law to Ryan, Nadine and David.

Loved by all who knew him, he will be deeply and forever missed. He will live on forever in our hearts.

A memorial service will held at the Waverley Shul, Cnr Corlett Drive and Scott Street, Waverley, Johannesburg on Monday January 25 at 18:00.

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What's On

Sunday (January 24)

- UJW's House & Garden Circle is holding a spectacular garden show. Join us in viewing a spectacular formal garden. Guest speaker: Keith Kirsten. Entertainment: Laurie Levine. Venue: 57 3rd Avenue, Inanda. Booking essential. Donation: R120 per person. Booking: UJW Office (011) 648-1053 or info@ujw.co.za
- Second Innings hosts Desiree Levine on "The Power of Gratitude". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Tuesday (January 26)

- JJAC hosts a movie night at Sandton City. Time: 19:00. Meet at bottom of escalator by the movies and decide what to see and book from there to see the movie. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za with "Movie 26 January" in the subject line and your name and cell.

Wednesday (January 27)

- JH&GC and partners mark International Holocaust Memorial Day with keynote speaker, Prof Dina Porat, head historian, Yad Vashem, on "The Individual in Historic Turning Points: Abba Kovner and Lithuanian Jewry as a Test Case". Time: 19:30. Venue: Ditsong Military History Museum, Saxonwold. Admission free. Booking: shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100/2148.

Thursday (January 28)

- The Cape Town Holocaust Centre is hosting the "International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust" and the official opening of the refurbished exhibition at the Centre. Time: 18:00. Venue: Cape Town Holocaust Centre. RSVP: (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za Please bring some form of identity. Keynote address by Prof Dina Porat, chief historian at Yad Vashem.
- Join WIZO every Thursday for a "Lunch & Learn" shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz at 13:00 at Beyachad. Information: WIZO Office (011) 645-2515.

Obituary

Reuben Musiker - librarian and musicologist of note

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Professor Reuben Musiker (pictured), a prominent figure in academia and one of the leading lights of the Jewish community, passed away recently shortly before his 85th birthday.

The youngest child and son of Judel and Sarah Musiker, he qualified in 1954 with a medical BSc from the Witwatersrand Medical School. He studied for this degree in order to save what was left of an incompatible period as a dental student, following a severe hearing loss.

After graduating from Wits, he studied for a higher diploma in librarianship at the University of Cape Town School of Librarianship, which he obtained also in 1954.

In 1955, Prof Musiker started work at the Johannesburg Public Library under the guidance of R F Kennedy, the city librarian. The seven years he spent there were "extremely stressful but from a career point of view, richly rewarding". He gained invaluable experience in the periodicals, reference, Africana, cataloguing and lending services, rising to the post of organiser of branches.

He also began to publish books and articles, including the first edition of his Guide to South African Reference Books, which eventually ran to five editions. He also tutored students taking the correspondence courses of the South African Library Association.

He was an inspiring and patient teacher throughout his career and in later years advised and assisted many postgraduate students in bibliographical style, citation of notes and



references. He was responsible for the compilation of a Style Guide for Theses and Dissertations which was published by the University of the Witwatersrand in 1980.

In 1961 he became deputy university librarian at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where he spent 11 years.

During this period he obtained an MA (with distinction) from the University of Pretoria for a dissertation on The Special Libraries of South Africa, which was published in 1970. He also played his part in Jewish communal life, as secretary of the Grahamstown Synagogue Committee.

In 1973, he was invited to take up the post of university librarian at Wits, where he also served as professor of librarianship and bibliography. After his retirement in December 1991, he was made emeritus professor. He was active in the field of bibliography for over 40 years with six books and over 150 articles to his

credit.

In 1999, he was invited to become library consultant to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. He was responsible for the initial installation of a computerised cataloguing system for the library and archives.

When the SAJBD became part of the Beyachad Centre, Prof Musiker had considerable input in the design and layout of the Board's library and archives. He served on the editorial board of Jewish Affairs and contributed many reviews and articles.

In 1984, as university librarian, he accepted the Mendel Tabatznik Yiddish Collection as part of the Landau Library at Wits. With a generous donation from the Sheila Samson Fund, the Landau Library grew in stature and importance and other Yiddish collections were added.

In 1986 Prof Musiker was elected chairman of the SA Association of Jewish Studies and was responsible for organising the Association's 10th Anniversary Conference at Wits in September 1987.

Prof Musiker had a passionate interest in light orchestral music of the era from 1950 to 1980. Many of the composers and conductors of this period were of Jewish origin.

This interest resulted in the production of two reference volumes, Conductors and Composers of Popular Orchestral Music published in 1998, and a semi-autobiographical volume entitled With a Song in My Heart: Aspects of 20th Century Popular Music published in 2013.

Professor Musiker leaves his wife, Naomi, three children and six grandchildren.

Time to clamp down on Israel visa deniers

JACK MILNER

One wonders if international sporting bodies are ever going to put their foot down over countries not allowing Israel to participate in world team competitions. If Israel is a member of the international sporting body controlling a particular sport, the country deserves the same rights as every other member and if a host country does have issues with Israel’s participation, that country should not be allowed to stage the event.

The latest case has been the World Team Table Tennis Championships in Kuala Lumpur from February 28 to March 6. The Israeli squad have reportedly been working with their Malaysian counterpart to get visas to allow them into Kuala Lumpur in time for the championships, but it was clear there was not going to be a resolution.

International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) chief executive Judit Farago insisted that Israel must be allowed to compete or Malaysia could be banned from hosting future tournaments. Farago had also threatened that the World Championships would be scrapped and Malaysia would have to pay the cancellation costs if the visas were not issued.

However, Israel announced on Tuesday it had decided to withdraw from the championships, which has let the Malaysians off the hook because that means no further action will be taken against them.

The Israeli Table Tennis Association (ITTA) announced its decision on its website, claiming the board had decided not to send a delegation due to security concerns. “With great regret, it was decided that the team will not go to the World Champion-



A disappointed Israeli table tennis team waits in vain for Malaysia to issue them with visas for the World Team Table Tennis Championships in Kuala Lumpur.

ships. ITTA has received a letter from the Department of Defence to the Ministry of Sport saying that it is unable to send a delegation to Malaysia with security personnel, following the prohibition (imposed by) the Malaysian government.

“The Association is not willing to risk their athletes’ security.”

Table Tennis Association of Malaysia (TTAM) secretary, Chan Foong Keong, said it was “common” for teams to pull out of international sporting events at the last minute.

Israel is among three teams who have decided not to participate in the championships, the other two being Peru and Azerbaijan.

However, this is the second clash with the Malaysian government, just a month after the Israel Sailing Association withdrew participants Yoav Omer and Noy Drihan and coach Meir Yaniv, just 24 hours before the event, after they were denied visas to compete at the Youth Sailing World Championships in Malaysia.

Malaysia does not have diplomatic ties

with Israel and prohibited the delegates from competing under the Israeli flag, to use any symbol identifiable with Israel on their clothes or surfboards, and would not play the Israeli national anthem should an Israeli win a gold medal.

With that attitude and restrictions, Malaysia should no longer be allowed to host any international sporting event.

On the question of sport and Israel: Many people will be keeping an eye on the Australian Open Tennis Championship in Melbourne for which men’s world No 1 Novak Djokovic is a hot favourite.

Djokovic is openly pro-Israel. He has a lot of money invested in Israeli companies and along with Billie Jean King invested \$3,5 million in a company called PlaySight which has created an affordable tennis analytics system called the SmartCourt, which is suitable for both amateur and professional players.

The investment was to be used to fund a global roll-out of PlaySight’s SmartCourt technology.

Maccabi SA gearing up for football gold in 2017

JACK MILNER

Maccabi South Africa (MSA) is in the process of regeneration and at the end of last year many hours were spent planning the way ahead.

MSA feels that the time has come to launch South Africa’s bid for football glory at the 2017 Maccabi Games.

Maccabi SA’s football management is planning on sending competitive, passionate and well-drilled under-16, under-18, Open and Masters teams to the 20th Maccabiah. There is also the possibility of including a women’s under-18 side - if the standard of play is competitive.

Following on from MSA’s successful futsal results at the 2015 European Maccabi Games where the Open and Masters teams each won bronze, it is believed South African Jewish footballers are once again ready to make an impact. Team Maccabi SA last won a football medal at the 1985 Games.

The first round of national trials for all age groups is to take place on Sunday, January 31 at Balfour Park Football Club in Johannesburg. Register online at www.maccabi.co.za.

- For further information, contact MSA sports director Alain Nathan at Alain@maccabi.co.za or call him on 072-316-2093.

News

7 for KDL’s Rachel Shear

This “big one” somehow slipped through the cracks in our matric supplement. Congratulations to Rachel Shear of King David Linksfield who got distinctions in Afrikaans; English; Hebrew; Life Orientation; Life Sciences; Maths; and Physical Science.



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Maccabi SA National Football Trials 2017 Maccabi Games

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Time: From 08h00
Venue: Balfour Park Football Club, Jhb
Cost: R100 per person

AGE GROUPS:
Male: U16 (Born 2001 – 2002), U18 (Born 1999 – 2000), Trials for Open (35+) and Masters (45+) to be held at later date
Female: U18 (Born 1999 – 2002)

Registration is essential via www.maccabi.co.za

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