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The South African Jewish community remembered the tragic killing of sociologist Dr Melville Edelstein in the historic 1976 Soweto Student Uprising 40 years later this past Thursday, June 16, when Levi Rosenthal, grandson of Edelstein, had his barmitzvh in Soweto’s Western Jabavu suburb. The morning service, conducted by Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, and the emotional barmitzvh ceremony, were a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated his life to the betterment of the impoverished Soweto residents. Prior to the service, a memorial plaque to Edelstein (seen in this photograph) was unveiled by his family. Pictured are Shaun Rosenthal (father of barmitzvh boy Levi Rosenthal), Mark Goldblatt (a cousin), Levi Rosenthal, and Rabbi Dovid Hazdan. Representatives of the SAJBD and prefects from Jewish day schools were present and took part in other Youth Day commemorations in Soweto. See page 4.

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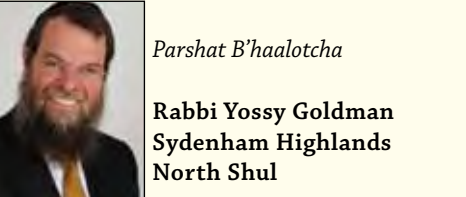
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Path of least resistance?



Parshat B’haalotcha
Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Sydenham Highlands
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By now you have surely recovered from Pesach so we can break the news to you that there is also a Second Pesach. But don’t worry; you won’t have to do it all over again.

This week’s parsha tells the story of a group of men who were unable to bring the Passover offering on Erev Pesach in the wilderness and approached Moses with a sincere request: “Why should we lose out?”

It so happened that they had been occupied with a good deed - according to some it was nothing less than carrying the remains of Joseph from Egypt en route to his final resting place in Shechem - and because of their contact with the dead were spiritually unfit to participate in the Paschal lamb service.

Moses consulted G-d and was told that, in fact,

the men were quite right. Henceforth, those who were spiritually impure or far away at the time the Passover offering was brought on the 14th of Nissan would be given a second chance exactly one month later on the 14th of Iyar to make good their lost opportunity.

There are many important lessons from this law, known as Pesach Sheini, such as: “It’s never too late.”

There are second chances in life for all of us. Or, that G-d sometimes waits to see if we really want something badly enough to demand it and only then does He give it to us. But now I’d like to share with you an important message I once heard from the former Rosh Kollel of Johannesburg, the late Rabbi Mordechai Shakovitzky olov hasholom.

He said that what those men in Moses’ day did was actually quite inspiring: They didn’t really have to come and plead with Moses for a second chance. After all, they had the perfect alibi.

They could have simply said: “Sorry, we were busy with another mitzvah.” They were tamei and spiritually unable to participate. They had

no reason to feel guilty. They couldn’t be faulted. And yet, it did bother them.

They felt left out and genuinely desired to be together with their brethren in the observance of another mitzvah, the Pesach offering. People who had every opportunity to be free of obligation and wilfully choose to actively seek obligation, are indeed deserving of honourable mention. It is right that they should be singled out in the Torah for their sincerity and devotion to the word of G-d.

Lots of us make excuses lots of times. It’s too cold, too hot, too expensive, too difficult etc, etc... Too many of us take the path of least resistance. Parents arranging a barmitzvah for their son sometimes look for the easy way out. “Can we have it at Mincha, Rabbi? That will be less demanding on our son. He’s very active in the school sports programme and won’t have that much time to learn.”

Brides and grooms don’t always appreciate the beautiful way of life Judaism can offer our most intimate relationship. “Do we have to attend the classes, Rabbi? Is the mikveh compulsory?”

“The difference between a success and a failure is that a failure makes excuses and a success makes a plan.”

Let’s not look for excuses. Don’t opt for the easy way out. Let us learn from the men in the wilderness who could have had every excuse in the book and yet happily chose to look for a new mitzvah and to share in the good deed of their community.

Shabbat Times		
June 24 / 18 Sivan June 25 / 19 Sivan Parshat B’haalotcha		
Starts	Ends	
17:07	17:59	Johannesburg
17:28	18:23	Cape Town
16:47	17:41	Durban
17:08	18:01	Bloemfontein
16:59	17:54	Port Elizabeth
16:52	17:47	East London
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Shabbos Project – grassroots project driven by the people for the people

ANT KATZ

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein was a guest of honour at the Conference of European Rabbis in Vienna, Austria recently, as well as at the annual Rabbinical Conference in France. “It reflects our own community’s growing standing as an important part of the global Jewish community,” Rabbi Goldstein said on his return.

While building and cementing ties with other Diaspora communities, SA’s chief rabbi took the opportunity to drum up support for the 2016 Shabbos Project across Europe, meeting with community leaders, volunteers and school learners in three major capital cities.

The French connection

Rabbi Goldstein attended the two-day Paris conference of 80-odd senior French rabbinical leaders at the invitation of the Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Haim Korsia. In his address, Rabbi Goldstein delivered a presentation on the SA-initiated Shabbos Project, which last year reached communities in 918 cities (including more than 30 in France). France has the world’s second-largest Diaspora Jewish population.

Rabbi Goldstein also met with Rabbi Laurent Berros, Chief Rabbi of Sarcelles, where all 27 of the city’s shuls embraced the Shabbos Project in 2015. “Many families kept Shabbat for the

first time,” Rabbi Goldstein told SAJR, which is the objective of the project.

The day before the conference, Rabbi Goldstein visited two prominent Jewish schools in Paris, - Pavillon Sous Bois and Lucien de Hirsch - engaging with teachers and pupils.

Paul Fitoussi, principal of Lucien, is emerging as a key Shabbos Project partner in France. Fitoussi is a past-president of the organisation of France’s 130 Jewish schools.

Moché Lewin, executive director of the Conference of European Rabbis and a driving force behind the Shabbos Project in Europe, arranged a meeting with representatives from Crif, the umbrella group that represents France’s Jewish organisations.

Rabbi Goldstein found enormous support in France for the Shabbos Project. “Many community leaders see it as a way to bring chizuk [strength and inspiration] to their communities during these difficult times.”

At the end of the French leg he was interviewed on national radio through an interpreter. It was the first time he hadn’t spoken in Hebrew.

“At the conference, in the school classrooms, wherever I went, I spoke in Hebrew. It was a powerful reminder that whatever separates us, whether it’s language or culture or national identity, the fact that we are Jewish overcomes these differences.”

He was struck when he saw the kids learning the same lessons about Shavuot that SA’s Jewish kids do, sing-

ing the same Shabbat songs. “It shows that what holds us together is our Torah,” he says.

Vienna comes to the boil

In Vienna, with a Jewish population of 7 000, he was guest speaker at the Biennial Conference which brings together chief rabbis and Torah leaders



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein (centre) with the Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Haim Korsia, and the special adviser to the Chief Rabbi of France, Moche Lewin.

from across Europe.

After participating in general discussions around security and political issues facing European Jewry, Rabbi Goldstein talked on the Shabbos Project and met privately with rabbinical leaders.

Everyone is aware of the Shabbos Project, says Rabbi Goldstein. “Across Europe - from Dusseldorf to Kiev, Manchester to Brussels, Istanbul to Odessa, Toulouse to Geneva,” leaders are redoubling efforts to ensure that

the 2016 Shabbos Project “has a truly seismic impact on their communities”.

Peter Winter, the Shabbos Project’s lead co-ordinator in Vienna, said: “This is a unique opportunity to unite across different backgrounds, outlooks, ages, and levels of observance, and it’s an opportunity we in Vienna have embraced.”

Swiss clockwork

The chief rabbi’s last European stopover was in Zurich. “During last year’s Shabbos Project, thanks to an extremely well-organised unit of passionate volunteers,” he says, the Swiss city emerged as one of Europe’s leading lights.

It was run like clockwork - driven by a steering committee, which oversees eight sub-committees, each with its own portfolio, responsible for organis-

ing events and targeting specific audiences.

“The purpose of the visit was to meet up with the more than 50 volunteers who make up the team to discover how they managed to galvanise the Zurich community in 2015,” Rabbi Goldstein said.

“What’s incredible here is that this army of volunteers come from all walks of life - young and old, observant and not.” Whatever their background, they are all deeply passionate and committed to the ideals of the project, to ensure the initiative is a success.

Dinah Taus, a Zurich steering committee member, says that “last year we banded together intent on creating something that would transcend our usual silos”. In the end, she says, it paid off. “Throughout last year’s event, there was an intimacy and sense of sharing that was difficult to describe.”

This phenomenon isn’t new to Rabbi Goldstein. He says he heard similar accounts on a recent trip to the US.

“Over the past two years, we’ve seen a vast and energetic social movement spring up, as people spontaneously have come forward to take ownership of the Shabbos Project and bring it to life,” says Rabbi Goldstein.

“It is these kinds of creative, passionate endeavours, both small-scale and large-scale, that make the Shabbos Project a real social movement - a grassroots project driven by the people for the people.”

south african

Jewish Report

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Cape Town colloquium: All parties eager to find common ground

Participants listen to veteran community leader Gerald Kleinman at the colloquium.



Photo: Vanessa Valkin

VANESSA VALKIN

About 80 representatives of the South African Jewish community’s shuls, community organisations and youth groups, all affiliates of the Cape Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, attended a much anticipated community colloquium in Cape Town this past Monday.

The colloquium was called to try to resolve the divisive issue of whether women should be allowed to sing solo at annual Holocaust memorial events, run under the auspices of the Board.

While no decision was announced at the almost three-hour discussions, it provided an opportunity for the various interest groups to air their views. The event was mediated by well-known mining executive and veteran on the labour relations landscape, Bobby Godsell. His task was to collate the submission and opinions and present it back to the Board in a way that would help them to reach a compromise.

Conspicuously absent from the forum were the two original claimants Gilad Stern and Sarah Goldstein, who had brought a case against the Cape Council of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies to the Equality Court claiming that excluding women from singing at such functions amounted to gender discrimination.

The case was later joined by the South African Centre for Religious Equality & Diversity (SACRED). The

applicants were not originally invited and said that due to the late invitation to attend, they could not rearrange trips that had taken them out of town. Stern, speaking to the Jewish Report after the colloquium, said: “Had I been invited to speak, I would have said five words: ‘Discrimination against women is wrong’, and anyone who needs that explained to them, is beyond my ability to help them.”

Various members of the Board expressed the view that whatever the outcome, the status quo - women not being allowed to sing at secular events while men are allowed - would no longer be acceptable. Jeff Katz, national chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies who flew from Johannesburg to attend the colloquium, urged participants to express their true views without fear of the pending court case in the Equality Court scheduled for late August.

“The reason we are doing this is not because of the court case,” he said. “The colloquium needed to happen irrespective.” But Katz expressed regret that the applicants were unable to attend to offer their side.

Among the many divergent arguments presented on Monday, the commonalities were passionate ideologies and a hope to find a solution that was acceptable to all.

In a conciliatory bid to remind everyone to look for peaceful outcomes, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, who also flew down for the meeting,

called on everyone to remember that they were all “brothers and sisters”. However, he urged the audience to remember that “halacha has helped preserve the Jewish people until now”, pleading with them to not give up on a halachic prescription (such as kol isha) now. His suggestion was that perhaps no singing at all would be a peaceful compromise.



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

Rabbi Greg Alexander and a colleague, representing the Progressive view, questioned the notion of whether kol isha was actually immovable halacha, saying: “The understanding that kol isha requires women not to sing is a very recent interpretation and only one of the many ways that kol isha has been interpreted in its 2 000-year history.

“What is clear is that whatever their interpretation, no-one up until the 19th century suggests that in or-

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der to save men from hearing a woman’s voice, it is forbidden for women to sing (at communal events).”

Rabbi Alexander proposed various solutions including a redesign of the ceremony into three distinct sections, clearly marked on the programme, allowing attendees to stay for whichever they wish. These would include songs, music and poetry that included male and female solos and mixed choirs.

Holocaust survivor Miriam Lichterman spoke of fellow survivors at camps like Auschwitz who refused to eat bread on Passover when they were starving in order to uphold Jewish law. She implored the attendees to find the strength to refrain from adding another item to the Holocaust programme, since the Jewish prison-

Other comments from students at the event characterised the Board’s current stance on kol isha as “rape culture” and “Taliban style”. This led to passionate comments from Rabbi Goldstein and other rabbis present, that these people were perhaps misunderstanding Jewish laws.

The debate which has been smouldering for at least a decade among South African Jewry, essentially came down to the great ideological divide between those proposing to maintain the status quo and uphold their Orthodox interpretation of halacha versus those who feel it’s an infringement on women’s rights.

It is also a debate about whether the Yom Hashoah ceremony is a secular event under the auspices of a secular Jewish organisation.

This year’s Yom Hashoah ceremony at West Park Cemetery.

Members of the Jewish Board told Jewish Report that they are determined to not let it reach the judicial system of the Western Cape while Stern, speaking for the applicants, says they are “very keen to resolve this and not let it go to the courts”.

Fortunately, both sides seem eager to resolve the issue and say they would prefer that a decision on Jewish halacha is not left to the interpretation of a judge.

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Forty years on, Melville Edelstein’s grandson has barmitzvah in Soweto

STAFF REPORTER

On Youth Day this year, one of South African Jewry’s most unusual, as well as symbolic and emotionally charged barmitzvah ceremonies took place in Soweto’s Western Jabavu suburb.

The Shacharit service was held at the site where Dr Melville Edelstein became one of the first victims of the 1976 Soweto Uprising when he was attacked and fatally injured by enraged protesters. Forty years to the day since the grandfather he never knew lost his life, 13-year-old Levi Rosenthal read the day’s Torah portion.

With him were family, friends and community members, including rabbis, SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) representatives and Jewish day school prefects. Prior to the service, a memorial plaque to Edelstein was unveiled by his widow, Rhona, daughters Shana Rosenthal and Janet Goldblatt, Minister Jeff Radebe and Gauteng Premier David Makhura.

That Melville Edelstein was killed because he was a white man in the wrong place at the wrong time, is one of the great ironies of the Soweto Uprising. As chief welfare officer of the (then) West Rand Administration Board, his dedication to bettering the lot of Sowetans, was well known and appreciated in the wider community.

Through his research work as sociologist, he had also long warned about rising levels of black anger over the regime’s apartheid policies, most notably in his 1971 MA thesis on opinions and attitudes among matric pupils in Soweto.

Executive Mayor Parks Tau at the Youth



Prefects from Johannesburg Jewish day schools attended the barmitzvah of Levi Rosenthal in Soweto on Youth Day and took part in various other events. Here they pay homage to Hector Pieterse, who lost his life on that day.

Day ceremony, described Edelstein as “a peace loving man who dedicated his life to the service of the poor in the then dusty township streets of South Africa”.

He went on to quote the famed press photographer Peter Magubane, who on finding the fatally injured Edelstein after the attack said: “If they had known who he was this never would have happened. Not at all. He was part of the community.”

Through the SAJBD, 20 King David Linksfield and Yeshiva College prefects were among the Jewish community representatives taking part in the Youth Day commemorative events in Soweto. Following the Edelstein unveiling ceremony and barmitzvah, participants attended the official renaming of a street after youth leader Hastings Ndlovu, who was also killed in 1976. From there, they moved on to the Hector Pieterse monument, where the prefects and SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn laid wreaths. The SAJBD was officially welcomed by the day’s master of ceremonies.

The next morning Kahn and Chaya Singer, Board diplomatic liaison, at the invitation of Gauteng MEC for Sport, Arts, Recreation and Culture Faith Mazibuko, represented the SAJBD at another commemorative ceremony, this time in memory of the victims of the Boipatong Massacre.

On June 17, 1992, 45 residents

of Boipatong, a black township near Vanderbijlpark, were hacked to death by hostel dwellers affiliated to the Inkatha Freedom Party. The atrocity, arguably the most horrific of the many violent incidents that took place in the lead-up to the democratic transition in 1994, saw the ANC for a time pull out of the negotiations process in the belief - subsequently shown to be unfounded - that the police had colluded with the IFP in the attack.

Kahn was called up to jointly lay a wreath with Mazibuko. In her address, the MEC said that it was important to have the Board represented, as Jews understood from their own experiences the kind of tragedy that had occurred in Boipatong.

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Jews prominent in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List



London Mayor Sadiq Khan with Commonwealth Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis at Yom Hashoah, which was chaired by Honours awardee Neil Martin.

COMPILED BY ANT KATZ

In the Queen’s 90th Birthday Honours List, some 1 149 people have been recognised for their services to the UK and the 16 Commonwealth countries. Each year the honours are awarded as part of the Queen’s Official Birthday celebrations during June.

Jewish media and wire services were slow to identify Jewish honourees. Jewish Report consulted various sources to compile as comprehensive Jewish awardee list as possible.

Of 17 known Jews on the list, one is an SA expat - **Saul Klein** OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire). Klein is a technology venture capitalist and founder of numerous start-ups who was made an OBE for services to business.

Neil Martin, the chief executive of the Jewish Lads’ and Girls’ Brigade, was made an OBE for services to young people and interfaith relations.

Professor Anthony Finkelstein, professor of software systems engineering at University College London, received a CBE for services to computer science and engineering.

Sonia Friedman was made an OBE for services to the theatre.

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, a talented cellist who survived Auschwitz by playing in the Women’s Orchestra at the camp, was made an MBE for her services to Holocaust education.

Rachel Hopcroft, principal private secretary to the Cabinet Secretary, received a CBE for public service.

Debbie Woskow, founder and chief executive of Love Home Swap - a home exchange website which now has more than 90 000 registered homes, was made an OBE for services to business.

Jack Morris, chairman of the Business Design Centre

Group, was made a CBE for services to business and charity in London.

Michael Simons, the senior application support officer at the parliamentary digital service, received an MBE for parliamentary service and his voluntary work at Sutton United Synagogue and with the Sutton Jewish Community.

Alex Chesterman, founder of Zoopla, was awarded an OBE for services to digital entrepreneurship.

Benita Refson, president of children’s mental health charity Place2Be, was made a Dame for services to education.

Emma Samms, who starred in TV shows Dynasty and General Hospital in the 1980s, was made an MBE for her services to seriously and terminally ill children.

Commander James Cohen, 58, was awarded the Queen’s Volunteer Reserve Medal following 37 years in the Royal Naval Reserve.

Ian Rosenblatt, 56, was made an OBE for philanthropic services to music.

Anna Kessel, a popular sports journalist who co-founded Women in Football, has been made an MBE.

Malcolm Livingstone, chairman of the Glasgow Jewish Community Trust, received an MBE for services to the Jewish community in Glasgow.

Mohammed Amin, founder and co-chairman of the Muslim-Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester, was also honoured.

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World News in Brief

Jewish migrants preferred to Muslims in Europe, British study finds

LONDON - The prospect of Jewish immigration raised the least amount of opposition among respondents to a British survey about attitudes to immigration.

A study conducted by the Centre for Social Investigation at Nuffield College in Oxford found that seven per cent of British people would allow no Jewish migrants into the United Kingdom, while 17 per cent would allow no Muslims, The Jewish Chronicle reported on Monday. Thirty per cent said they would not welcome Roma immigrants. Researchers used data from the most recent European Social Survey, published in 2015. The survey of more than 1 500 adults from at least 30 countries is conducted every two years; the most recent survey contained questions on immigration, according to The Jewish Chronicle.

In the survey, opposition to immigration - and by Jews in particular - was the lowest in Britain among the countries. Ten per cent of respondents said they would bar Jews from immigrating, while 25 per cent would bar Muslims.

Lindsay Richards, co-author of the report, said Britons felt most welcoming to Jews given their longstanding presence in the country, as well as their historical persecution, the Jewish Chronicle reported.

She added that the local population was more receptive to professional people arriving in the country than unskilled labourers, who they regarded as a threat to jobs, housing and public services. (JTA)



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Israel stays a ‘well-regulated militia’ despite so many guns around

RON KAMPEAS
JERUSALEM

Dirty, hot and exhausted Israeli soldiers waiting for their bus home from the army base tend, understandably, to be in a hurry to get on board.

But when I was living in Israel during the first intifada, or Palestinian uprising, soldiers didn’t jostle to be first in line. Rather, the most coveted position was second.

That’s because the bus driver had the right - under rules issued by the army and made clear to each armed soldier before she or he left the base - to order any soldier to sit in the front seat and remain alert. And the first one to get on board was the obvious choice.

If you’d just finished three weeks of training with rare interruptions for sleep and were looking forward to a snooze on the long trip home, this was definitely a downer. But it was necessitated by the rash of Palestinian terrorist attacks on bus drivers at the time.

One of the first things visitors to Israel notice is the ubiquity of young people with automatic weapons. Yet Israel suffers the tiniest fraction of the mass killings the United States does. Daniel Gordis, writing last year in a Bloomberg column, reported that Americans are 33 times more likely to kill each other with guns than Israelis. How is that possible?

The answer is couched in that front seat the Egged bus driver kept empty for a soldier.

It may not be immediately obvious, but the Israelis you see armed on the beach or at the cafe are just as subject to the army hierarchy and its regulations as they would be if they were on the front line or a base.

Calev Ben-David (an old friend) wrote this week in The Jerusalem Post about the dif-



Photo: Hadas Parush/Flash90

Soldiers attending the funeral of Alon Albert Govberg, who was killed in a terror attack in Jerusalem, on October 14, 2015, in this file photo.

ferences between gun use in the US and Israel. He noted that just four per cent of guns in Israel are not military issue.

This means that the use of 96 per cent of guns is governed by army rules of conduct. As a soldier, you’re answerable to a military tribunal if you break army rules and use a gun without orders - or if you fail to use a gun when you’re under standing orders to do so. For example, if a terrorist boards the bus you’re being forced to stay awake on.

The training Israeli soldiers receive also helps keep gun violence down. When Gabby Giffords, the Jewish congresswoman from Arizona, was shot in 2011, an armed passer-by

recalled later to his own horror that he nearly opened fire on the folks who were restraining the gunman.

Donald Trump’s assertion that a club full of armed French concertgoers would have headed off last year’s Bataclan massacre, is belied by the chaos engendered when shooters lack training - not just in proper shooting of the weapon, but in identifying when and where it is safe to shoot.

The careful use of guns in Israel is about being answerable to a hierarchy, beyond being answerable to the law. This is the opposite of the “right to bear arms” in the American ethos.

There is no “right” to bear arms in Israel - there is a duty

to bear arms, according to strict regulations.

This is why current and former military officers, even right-wingers among them, have been appalled by public support for the soldier in Hebron who in March allegedly shot an attacker after the attacker was subdued.

As much as killing a subdued man is wrong, in Israel’s military culture, using a weapon outside the command structure is equally taboo.

In some ways, then, Israel is the “well-regulated militia” promised by America’s Second Amendment. That component of the amendment, however, has all but been ignored in recent American court rulings. (JTA)

Time for Jewish Achiever nominations is running out

Nominations for the Jewish Achiever Awards 2016 close today, Friday, June 24. If you wish to nominate someone, please do so NOW.

- To nominate you have two options:**
- 1: Visit the SA Jewish Report website (www.sajr.co.za) - click on the red nominations banner at the top of the page and complete the form; or
 - 2: Send a nomination to nominations@sajewishreport.co.za - nominations must include:
 - a. The nominee’s name, telephone number and e-mail address
 - b. The award for which the nominee is nominated
 - c. A short motivation for the nomination

- The Awards are:**
- The Lifetime Achievement Award in honour of Helen Suzman
 - The Absa Listed Company Award
 - The Absa Unlisted Company Award
 - The Absa Entrepreneur Award
 - The Creative Counsel Young (30 and under) Jewish Entrepreneur Award
 - The KIA Community Service Award
 - The Arts, Science, Sports & Culture Award
 - The Chivas Humanitarian Award in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris
 - The Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award

No late nominations will be accepted. The staff and directors of the SA Jewish Report are not eligible for nomination.

The winners are selected by four independent judging panels.

All money raised from the Jewish Achiever Awards goes to support the free publication and distribution of the SA Jewish Report newspaper.

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

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Mandy Wiener facilitates the local elections 2016 panel, with Parks Tau (ANC), Herman Mashaba (DA), Steven Swart (ACDP) and Mosiuoa Lekota (COPE).

Send your questions for the discussion and book your seat at joburgelections2016@gmail.com. Bookings are essential.



The politics of rage – please don’t burn our books!



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Amidst thousands of tweets responding to the mayhem overtaking Tshwane, with buses and municipal vehicles torched, businesses ransacked and roads blocked with mobs and burning tyres, one of the most poignant pleas came from a young man, presumably a student, named Theodore Sebolai: “Please don’t burn the library. Police go protect the library... we have assignments and we’re heavily relying on it, Please!”

The current violence exposes the ANC’s vicious internal struggles. The decision from its Luthuli House headquarters to appoint outsider Thoko Didiza as the Tshwane mayoral candidate in the coming municipal elections, overriding local voices, has provoked fury.

But Sebolai’s plea symbolises more than

“[In 1976] we were dodging bullets and teargas... We burnt most of the beer halls throughout Soweto, and all administration board offices. [But] no single school was burnt... Each and every student was hell bent on defending their classrooms.”

party squabbles. It is about the betrayal of the country’s youth over the past two decades, and how the casualties of government incompetence have been young people’s most precious things, such as education.

Last month, 50 schools in the Vuwani area in Limpopo province were burnt down or vandalised in protests following an unpopular government decision to incorporate Vuwani into a new municipality.

Meanwhile, more fortunate South Africans continue going about their lives while anxiously following reports of the instability. The “lucky” ones who possess foreign passports hold them preciously as an insurance policy, and everyone stashes as much money as they can into foreign bank accounts, in case things get so bad that the anarchy comes to their doorsteps.

As far as education is concerned, most who can afford it - middle class people, whether white, black, coloured or Asian - send their children to private or independent schools because of the appalling state of government schools. For example, over 85 per cent of Jewish kids go to Jewish day schools.

In 2013, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga admitted to a parliamentary media briefing that “[t]he diagnostic test of the [National Development Plan] said 80 per cent of [South African] schools were dysfunctional”.

Who should we blame for South Africa’s travails? Is it still a result of apartheid, white racism and privilege and white monopoly capitalism, as radical black politicians claim? Or the ANC’s inept governance, corruption and its lack of vision since 1994? Whatever the answer, we are sliding downwards.

In times of crisis, angry young people often help change things which seem intractable. So it was with the Soweto Student Uprising of June 1976, the watershed event which initiated the eventual demise of the apartheid regime. Perhaps they will do it this time too with the political leadership.

What about the human right to an education? A 1976 student leader Dan Montsitsi who is deputy chairman of the June 16, 1976 Foundation, last week warned today’s youth: “[In 1976] we were dodging bullets and teargas... We burnt most of the beer halls throughout Soweto, and all administration board offices. [But] no single school was burnt... Each and every student was hell bent on defending their classrooms.”

Student movements cross red lines and make mistakes, but their militancy and energy tends to focus minds. The controversial “Rhodes Must Fall” movement, for example, has initiated a crucial debate about university policies.

The energy of the youth needs to be affirmed and steered by elders into constructive directions. Ultimately, responsibility for the country’s sorry state lies with politicians - in this case the ANC - for failing to provide hope to young people. In particular, failing to educate them.

The catastrophic education system has been described by South African commentators as a “crime against humanity”.

Indeed, it is, no less than apartheid was. A burnt bus can be replaced tomorrow, but young South Africans whose fresh minds have been squandered by not being educated, will be handicapped for the rest of their lives.

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

Israel to build massive wall around Gaza

JERUSALEM - Israel is reportedly set to build a massive underground and aboveground concrete wall around the Gaza Strip in order to prevent infiltration by Hamas terrorists using cross-border attack tunnels.

The wall, which will cost around \$567 million, will stretch along Israel’s entire 100 kilometre border with Gaza and will be built tens of metres under and above ground, according to Yedioth Ahronoth.

“We have no desire to rule over Gaza... But on the other hand, we cannot conduct a constant war of attrition,” said a senior defence official said. “Therefore, the next conflict has to be the last conflict in terms of Hamas ruling the Strip.”

There have been several efforts to build a barrier around Gaza. The first barrier was erected in 1994 in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords, while the second barrier was built following Israel’s disengagement from Gaza in 2005. But neither barrier addressed the threat of underground attack tunnels, which became a major concern during 2014’s summer war with Hamas. (JNS.org)

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Book on ground-breaking Dr Mary Gordon

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

A book on the life of the legendary Dr Mary Gordon casts the spotlight on a period in Israel's early history that is emblematic of its protagonist's lifelong pioneering spirit.

“Married to Medicine”, written by her nephew Professor Jack Metz and great-nephew Gordon Metz, is a testimony to a woman who dedicated her life to the service of humanity in her chosen field, both in this country and during the 12 years she spent in Mandate Palestine and Israel.

Born in Telz, Lithuania in 1890, Mary was the granddaughter of Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, chief rabbi of Telz and “the most renowned Jewish scholar of his day”, in the words of co-author Gordon Metz, who launched the book at an event hosted by WIZO in association with the Jacob Gitlin Library.

Rabbi Gordon had set up the famous Telz Yeshiva which was the biggest such institution in the world at the time.

In 1900, Mary's family moved to Warsaw, Poland. Mary had decided by that stage that she wanted to become a doctor, but there was nowhere in that part of the world where a woman could qualify in medicine, so they moved again, this time to England, where she was admitted to the University of Newcastle Medical School in 1908.

This in itself was quite a feat as very few women were allowed into medical schools at that time.

After she graduated, Mary immi-



The cover of a book on the life of the legendary Dr Mary Gordon.

grated to South Africa and in 1917 was the first female doctor appointed to the staff of the Johannesburg Hospital, as well as at the Wits Medical School where she lectured from 1923 - 1946. In 1919 she opened a private practice, becoming "the best known woman doctor in South Africa at that time".

During the course of her duties, she delivered many infants who became known as “Mary’s babies”, among them politician Helen Suzman. Mary herself never married, saying that she didn’t have the time to look after her patients and a man!

Mary had a great affinity for her Jewish identity and in 1946 she visited Palestine. She had wanted to practise her profession there, but was unable to get a visa or the right to practise, due to a surplus of doctors and preference

being given to Holocaust survivors.

She came back to South Africa, but in 1947, volunteered for WIZO in Palestine and it was then that she was approached by the Jewish Agency to go to Cyprus, where she became head of the Jewish wing of the British Military Hospital for refugees from Eastern Europe who had been refused entry to Palestine by the British and were deported to detention camps there.

The refugees were so struck with her compassion and dedication that they named her “Mother Mary”!

In November, 1948, Mary returned to Israel and joined the Israeli Defence Forces. Two years later, at the time of Operation Magic Carpet, she established and ran an emergency hospital at Rosh Ha'Ayin for Yemenite Jews who had been evacuated from that country.

Later she set up a vocational school for the children of these immigrants so that they would be better equipped to find employment.

In 1958, when she was close to her 70s, Mary returned to South Africa, setting up a clinic and volunteering her services as a doctor to a farm school for blacks.

“The key lesson of her life for me,” said Gordon, “was that she never stood on the side-lines, but always got involved. She sided with the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised - that was her life.”

As Mary herself once said: "Life is a battle not for yourself, but for what you believe is right and truthful and necessary."

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בס"ד

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Happy at home

Our Kibbutz Lubner residents moved across to their new home at Beit Netanya on the Selwyn Segal campus in the week preceding Pesach. That timing was chosen because most Kibbutz residents would historically move into Selwyn Segal for the Pesach festival anyway, so they would feel minimal disruption in their schedule to allow them time to acclimatise.

Having been in their new home for two months now, the time is opportune to offer an update on their integration.

“I sometimes think we underestimate our intellectually disabled residents,” Marcelle Ziperstein, one of two occupational therapists in our Protected Employment programme, told me. “The 10 residents who moved across have integrated brilliantly.”

Two of them board the Chev bus each morning to make the trip to our Kadimah division in Norwood where they spend the day involved in a variety of creative and productive activities.

Four are very busy at our Junction workshop where they join a team of over 80 workers. The Junction is quite literally a stone’s throw from Beit Netanya - they walk across every morning after breakfast.

The remaining four have each found their niche in our World of Work programme: two



Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff

in the laundry at Our Parents Home where they are motivated and excited about learning new skills; one as a porter at Sandringham Gardens where his natural ability to socialise makes him a favourite with the elderly residents, and one - a lover of nature and gardening - with the gardening maintenance team.

“Because of the wide variety of opportunities on this campus, we are able to meet the individual needs of each resident and match their interests and skills with complementary work,” said Mika Messer, the other OT.

But it’s not all work and no play. The residents are enjoying their new home too - the spaciousness of Beit Netanya with its seven large double bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, and the recreation areas including a dining and lounge/TV area as well as an outdoor braai feature and adjoining games room with pool table.

We have worked closely with their relatives to ensure that the “family feel” is retained in their new home, which is mostly independent (but supervised).

I am delighted that we no longer have the worry of these vulnerable residents being distant and isolated. They are home now, and thank G-d they are happy and productive.

May our partnership continue to thrive!
feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

World News in Brief

EU foreign ministers approve resolution backing French ME initiative

BRUSSELS - The foreign ministers of the 28 European Union member countries approved a resolution backing the French peace initiative and agreed to provide economic incentives to promote the agreement.

On Monday, the EU’s Foreign Affairs Council adopted the resolution in Brussels and reiterated its support for “a just, sustainable and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and peace and stability in the region”.

“The EU is determined, alongside other international and regional partners, to bring a concrete and substantial contribution to a global set of incentives for the parties to make peace with a view to an international conference planned to be held before the end of the year,” the foreign ministers said in a statement issued after passing the resolution.

The incentives are believed to extend to political, economic and security assistance, which has been offered by the body in the past.

Both the Israelis and Palestinians “need to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to a peaceful solution in order to rebuild mutual trust and create conditions for direct and meaningful negotiations aiming at ending the occupation that began in 1967, and resolving all permanent status issues”, the ministers also said.

Foreign ministers from two dozen countries gathered earlier this month in Paris to kick off the French peace initiative with a one-day summit to reboot peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians, who were not invited to the event. The ministers proposed an international conference to further talks between the two sides by the end of the year, but did not set a date for such a conference.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry rejected the call for the

peace initiative, calling it “an unfortunate step that pushes back efforts to provide the peace that Israel needs”.

“International conferences like those that the European Union’s foreign minister welcomed today push peace farther away because they enable the Palestinians to continue to avoid direct talks and compromise,” the ministry said in a statement.

Also on Monday, EU Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini confirmed that a report on the stalled peace talks compiled by the Middle East Quartet, which is expected to be critical of Israel, will be released in the coming days. The European Union is a member of the Quartet, which also comprises the United States, Russia and the United Nations.

Meanwhile, according to unconfirmed reports, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US Secretary of State John Kerry are set to meet in the coming days. (JTA)

Hamas member reportedly defects to Israel

JERUSALEM - Palestinian Fatah-affiliated websites last week reported that a senior member of the Gaza-ruling Hamas terror group defected to Israel. The senior terrorist reportedly has significant information about how Hamas handles the building of its cross-border attack tunnels.

The terrorist defector - Bassam Mahmoud Baraka - is said to have told his family that he was going on an errand, and has since disappeared. He reportedly surrendered himself to the Israel Defence Forces at the border with Gaza while carrying a laptop. The Red Cross informed his family that he is in Israel.

In a similar incident last month, a 17-year-old Hamas member who was detained by Israel gave Israeli authorities information about Hamas terror tunnels, including information with regards to escape routes for terrorist operatives in emergency situations and the locations of tunnel shafts. (JNS.org)

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Cape Town colloquium: Bringing community on board

On Monday, along with our National President Mary Kluk and National Director Wendy Kahn, I attended a Cape Jewish community meeting convened to discuss the question of whether or not to include women solo singers at Yom Hashoah ceremonies.

Representatives of a broad range of Jewish communal organisations, including the Orthodox and Progressive communities, women’s groups and the youth, participated. All interested parties were given the opportunity to engage, present their views and suggest possible solutions.

The discussion, controlled by the chairman, Bobby Godsell, was robust, with a diversity of viewpoints expressed and emphasis placed on the importance of the community itself coming up with creative and constructive ways forward.

Several practical suggestions were raised and debated, and will be incorporated in the report on the meeting that Mr Godsell is drafting for the Cape Council.

While we do not yet have a final answer as to how to resolve this dilemma, the colloquium was certainly a constructive step forward. The very process of community consultation, involving frank and respectful debate between the various constituencies, was itself positive. We are confident that ultimately, the kind of good sense and goodwill that underpinned the discussions in Cape Town, will lead to a positive outcome and that our community will emerge the stronger for it.

Learning from the past

As reported elsewhere in this issue, the Board was involved in a number of very moving commemorative events last week, in Soweto on Youth Day and in Boipatong the following morning.

Our participation in these events, in

which the victims of the 1976 Soweto Uprising (one of the first of whom, Dr Melville Edelstein, was a distinguished member of our own community) and the 1992 Boipatong Massacre were remembered, forms part of our broader mandate of leading South African Jewry in identifying with our country’s national culture and heritage.

Earlier this year, we partnered with the Greek community in sending a delegation to Sharpeville to participate in the Human Rights Day memorial ceremony there. In 2015, among other initiatives, the Board hosted an evening to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter and partnered with Chabad SA in ensuring an enthusiastic Jewish presence at the Heritage Day carnival in Pretoria.

Apart from the tremendous goodwill that it generates among our fellow citizens, our participation in events of this nature strengthens our own feelings of connection and “buy-in” to the society of which we are part, and creates avenues through which we can find ways to continue contributing and building bridges in our country.

Coming up next, the Board will be holding a panel discussion with senior representatives of the various political parties contesting this year’s municipal elections. For further details of this event, watch this space.

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

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

News

Bethlehem set to become Foundation for Jewish Culture president

SUZANNE BELLING

Veteran community leader Marlene Bethlehem (pictured), who is a past chairman and past president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, has been nominated to be president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, a prestigious organisation based in New York.

The flagship of the Foundation is the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship which trains young Jews from all over the world, including several South Africans.

Bethlehem leaves for Mexico City this week where the inauguration will take place.

She has been both secretary and a vice-president of the Foundation for two terms and a member for many years. She has visited the Foundation programmes in Moscow, Istanbul, Warsaw, Montevideo, as well as paying many visits to Israel.

The outgoing president, Professor Ismar Schorsch, welcomed Bethlehem’s nomination saying: “Marlene has rich organisational experience and an excellent understanding of the Foundation’s mandate. Furthermore, the close association between the Memorial Foundation and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies is because of her commitment to both.”

The Foundation was founded in 1965 by founder and longtime president of the World Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldmann, as a result of reparation funds from the government of the former West Germany.

Its mandate since its inception has been reconstruction of cultural life after the Holocaust.

It has identified a new generation of scholars, intellectuals, academics, writers, artists, rabbis, educators and other Jewish communal professionals, seen as replacing those of their ilk, who were murdered during the Holocaust.



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman



Disclaimer
The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

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

ABBAS MEETING: ZUMA’S ‘BETTER UNDERSTANDING’ OF MIDEAST PROBLEMS A FANTASY

Ant Katz’s report on the Tuynhuys talks between President Jacob Zuma and his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, was thought provoking in the sense that these meetings will always be ineffectual for a number of reasons.

Firstly, both Abbas and Zuma are reputedly corrupt and, as yet, neither Zuma nor anyone from his government has condemned last week’s terrorist killings in Tel Aviv.

Tim Knight, a global journalist and Emmy award winning writer, has this to say about Zuma: “Zuma ranks high up there in the lengthy, ignoble pantheon of Africa’s notoriously corrupt and autocratic ‘Big Men’”. To bolster his accusation, he adds: “You want evidence? Check the Internet and find some 4 000 references under the heading “Charges against Jacob Zuma”.

Secondly, it is difficult to perceive any trade between the two, as the Palestinian Authority exports little or nothing (other than terrorism).

Thirdly, neither Zuma, nor (former Deputy Minister) Aziz Pahad have any idea of the underlying difficulties afflicting potential dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. In any event, because South Africa hosted and indeed feted Hamas on several occasions, it is unlikely that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (or any Israeli official), would entertain a discussion with any envoys from South Africa.

The “better understanding of the Israel-Palestinian situation” that Zuma claims he gained, is a fantasy of the mind.

In addition, the French initiative, for some unfathomable reason, excluded Israel and the Palestinians. Nor did the British, Germans, Japanese or Russians send their foreign ministers to France to attend. So much for the global inclination to resolve the impasse between Israel and the Palestinians.

South Africa, typically, sent the quintessential ignoramus (Minister of International Relations and Co-operation) Maite Nkoana-Mashabane to France as a representative.

Optimism, or just a free ride to France, is what our government ministers cherish. You decide.

Nathan Cheiman
Northcliff, Johannesburg

IT BOGGLES THE MIND THAT ANY JEW WOULD WANT LITHUANIAN CITIZENSHIP

Daniel Lutrin’s article in last week’s Jewish Report about the difficulty in obtaining Lithuanian citizenship for himself and his family is hard to understand. Firstly, I find it incomprehensible that a Diaspora Jew should seek (a second) citizenship in any country except his own, that is Israel.

To claim, as Lutrin does, that former Lithuanian Jews and their descendants have an ancestral right to citizenship is an insult to the G-d of Israel. The ONLY country to which any Jew has an ancestral right is the Land of Israel.

By his own admission Lutrin writes that “when the Nazis marched into Lithuania in 1941 the government and people did not lift a finger as Jews in over 200 shtetls were humiliated, tortured, and ultimately murdered by Lithuanian collaborators”.

Which Jew with pure emotions would wish to now seek citizenship of that country and for that matter any European country which aided and abetted the German murderers?

The Yizkor prayer Jews recite in synagogues four times a year includes the one for martyrs: “May G-d remember the souls of the holy and pure ones who were killed, murdered, burned, gassed and strangled for the sanctification of the name through the hands of the German oppressors (and collaborators). Yemach sh’mom v’zichrom (may their name and memory be obliterated).”

Again we must ask: Which Jew would like citizenship of one of these countries?

Last but not least, the Holocaust has taught each and every Jew that it is forbidden for us to derive any benefit from countries that have persecuted our people. (Hilchot Sanhedrin 15:9).

How can we seek to walk around these countries (as citizens) which have caused unspeakable misfortune to klal Yisrael? There is not a single Jewish family in which at least one of its members have perished in these places. How can anyone with pure emotions associate with these places, much less seek citizenship, after they have poured contempt and disgrace upon us?

With all due respect to Lutrin and all those who seek citizenship of these countries, may I suggest they should rather seek citizenship for themselves and their families in their one and only true ancestral land - the Land of Israel. Seeking citizenship anywhere but Israel is scorning G-d’s most precious gift to His people.

Choni Davidowitz
Golden Acres, Johannesburg

World News in Brief

Iran vows to ‘set fire’ to nuclear deal if US reneges

TEHRAN - Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has threatened to “set fire” to the nuclear deal with world powers “if the threat from the American presidential candidates to tear up the deal becomes operational”.

In that case, Iran “will set fire to the deal”, Khamenei said, reacting to rhetoric against the agreement from presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and various GOP contenders who have now dropped out of the race. Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Sen Bernie Sanders support the deal.

Iran can expect a possible Republican presidential administration in 2017 to take a harder line in American-Iranian relations than the Obama administration.

“The Islamic Republic won’t be the first to violate the nuclear deal. Staying faithful to a promise is a Quranic order,” said Khamenei, Reuters reported, citing Iranian state media. (JNS.org)

New Turkish PM tries to mend relations with Israel

ISTANBUL - New Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim has conveyed a reconciliatory message to four countries with which Turkey has had strained relations, including Israel.

“Israel, Syria, Russia, Egypt... There can’t be any permanent enmities between these countries encircling Black Sea and the Mediterranean,” Yildirim said, the Hurriyet Daily News reported.

Yildirim, who replaced resigned prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu in May, added: “We are coming to a point with Israel. They are also showing will. There are contacts. It’s not concluded yet. I don’t think it will take long. The determinative thing here is eliminating the isolation of Gaza for humanitarian purposes.”

Turkey and Israel have had strained relations since the 2010 Gaza flotilla incident, in which nine Turkish militants were killed in clashes after they attacked Israeli commandos who boarded a ship that was trying to breach the blockade on Gaza. (JNS.org)

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The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

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

BEWARE A FLAWED COMPASS IN THE KOL ISHA BROUHAHA

I am writing as a Sephardi-Ashkenazi woman, a mother, psychologist and member of the Rosh Chodesh group, regarding the question of women singing at Yom Hashoah ceremonies.

Traditionally, women always sang at funerals, births, weddings - and then something changed in the Jewish relationship to women and their music.

This prohibition of women singing was introduced after Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein walked out at the Yom Hashoah ceremony in 2005, while Hilit Milner, a teenage girl sang. Those present witnessed Hilit’s embarrassment and distress at the rabbi’s departure.

In an interview with “Jewish Action” in 2013, Rabbi Goldstein justified his actions by saying: “If your leadership is going to be based on what is most pleasing to people, you have no compass.”

The focus of this letter is not about that single event, but rather its long-standing repercussions.

I cannot help but consider the impact of his actions on Hilit Milner. I refer to the Talmud Bava Metziah: “Better to throw oneself into a furnace rather than embarrass another” (59a) and “He who publicly shames his neighbour is as though he shed blood” (58b).

The prohibition of women’s voices as Erva in the context of a Yom Hashoah ceremony, undermines men and their capacity to manage their sexual responses. The men I have spoken to consider this principle humiliating, particularly in the context of a ceremony which honours the victims of genocide.

They perceive this prohibition as a reductionist stereotype of men’s sexuality as “unbridled and fickle”. If indeed a man fears he might be sexually aroused by a woman singing at a Yom Hashoah ceremony, then perhaps he should take it upon himself not to attend.

A blanket prohibition according to this Erva principle is just as incongruent as banning all young boys from shul choirs due to the risk that a paedophile in the community might be stirred. Both men and women in our community need to take responsibility for their sexuality and their capacity to channel it responsibly.

In April 1951 the Israeli Knesset declared 27th of Nissan to be the official Yom Hashoah commemoration day. This date was created as a secular day of mourning and draws Jews, irrespective of their position on the spectrum of religious belief and practice.

Numerous ceremonies take place each year across the world; many of them involving women singing (such as women soloists at the Yad Vashem ceremony in Jerusalem).

Other official days of commemoration were introduced by the Knesset and include Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha’atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim. Might a ban be placed on women’s singing at these events too? And why stop at singing - there are many other proscriptions placed on women (such as in relation to modesty).

I came across what could be considered the first-ever recorded Holocaust memorial ceremony. It occurred after the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp was liberated in April 1945. Rabbi L H Hardman, the Jewish chaplain to the British Second Army, held a service consisting of surviving men and women.

In this recording, women’s singing voices are clearly heard. Their voices, although taut and uneven, so clearly express their humanity and survival. To simply sexualise their voices, or our voices now, is to trivialise and censor the breadth and depth of our experience as Jews and as humans among humans.

So, in contrast to Rabbi Goldstein’s statement to “Jewish Action”, I shall conclude by saying that if your leadership is based on dismissing the discrimination and distress this prohibition has created in the community, your compass is flawed.

DENYING A NATION'S RIGHT TO EXIST IS GENOCIDAL RACISM

I would like to address the mantra readily accepted in the world today, even by some who defend Israel, that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are not to be equated - that they are different; that the one has nothing to do with the other.

Anti-Semitism is hostility to Jews anywhere. Hence the anti-Zionist cannot claim he is not an anti-Semite because he “only” hates Jews in Israel, any more than someone can make the claim that he/she is not a racist because they only hate blacks who live in South Africa.

The enemies of Israel want the physical elimination of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel. This constitutes anti-Semitism. The point is that they want a Judenrein “Palestine” the same way that Hitler wanted a Judenrein Europe.

The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semites but that they think the only country on earth which must be annihilated is Israel. The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semites but that the only children on earth whose being blown up is okay if it serves a good cause, are Jewish children.

The anti-Zionists believe that the only conflict that must be resolved by total dismemberment of one of the parties is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Dismembering Israel into a single Arab-dominated state means a second Holocaust. It means the methodical massacre of millions of Jews, of hundreds of thousands of Jewish children.

Anyone who pushes for a “one-state solution” is actually pushing for a second Holocaust. Denying a nation’s right to exist is genocidal racism, akin to Nazism, hence in my opinion, anti-Zionism is Nazism.

Judea Pearl a professor of computer science at UCLA and president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation correctly reminds us: “As a form of racism, anti-Zionism is worse than anti-Semitism. It targets the most vulnerable part of the Jewish people, namely, the people of Israel, who rely on the sovereignty of their state for physical safety, national identity and personal dignity.

“To put it more bluntly, anti-Zionism condemns five million human beings, mostly refugees or children of refugees, to eternal statelessness, traumatised by historical images of persecution and genocide.”

Anti-Zionism is racism as it involves hatred of an entire people, such as the Jews of Israel. I believe anti-Zionism is in fact far more contemptible than traditional anti-Semitism. The new anti-Semitism is cloaked in political correct and academic language, but the end goal is the same - the genocide of Jews.

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg

SLOW AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIME BELIES JOHANNESBURG’S BOAST

I am outraged that a slow response time by a Johannesburg emergency ambulance has reportedly led to the death of Klipspruit West resident Daniel Hoker (62). This was after he deteriorated following a three-day power failure that cut off his oxygen machine.

According to his family, an ambulance was called at 09:00 last week Wednesday, but only arrived at 13:30 when Hoker had already died after being driven to hospital in the van of a family friend.

This highlights once again the very poor ambulance service by the Johannesburg City Council which repeatedly boasts about providing a world-class response time.

The Council claims that more than 80 per cent of Priority 1 calls are responded to within 15 minutes. I have challenged this claim in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature as I receive many complaints about slow ambulance response times.

The Gauteng Health Department should step in and ensure that a decent ambulance service is provided to Johannesburg residents.

Jack Bloom
DA Gauteng Shadow MEC of Health

Lorraine Benson needs information on her mother or that side of the family

Lorraine Lena Benson (née Resnick) wants to learn more about a family member, or members, who have since passed on.

She says she and her brother Kenneth were brought up by their father, Jack (Jacob) Resnick). Jacob had two brothers and two sisters and Lorraine’s zaida was John Julius Resnick a builder who built many buildings in Krugersdorp.

“We went to school at Krugersdorp High. My brother played provincial rugby for Transvaal while my father was a Rangers soccer player.”

She would like to know if anyone may have information about her mother or any of her family During the years 1940 - 1946.

“My mother’s name was Joyce Silverblat; she had two sisters and a brother. I don’t know what my zaida or bobba’s names were, nor where they originated from. I believe my zaida could have belonged to the Jeppe Shul.

“My biological mother, Joyce, denounced her Jewish faith, becoming a practising Catholic, living at Nazareth House, abandoning my brother (age three years) and myself (age one year).”

Lorraine asks: “Is there anyone in the community who may have any recollection/information of the years gone by?”

If so, Lorraine may be contacted on 083-457-1775.

Marc Wainer is Redefine’s executive chairman

A photograph which appeared in last week’s SA Jewish Report, under the heading “Jewish movers and shakers converse with Kgalema Motlanthe”, refers to Marc Wainer as the CEO of Redefine Properties. Wainer is in fact the executive chairman. The current CEO is Andrew Konig. We regret the mistake.

IS THERE NO ‘WORKAROUND’ ON THE ISSUE OF A GET REFUSAL?

I am hoping that one of your readers can explain something to me. People far wiser than me have been able to work out ways to circumvent rules/laws where they prove “inconvenient”, such as a Shabbat light switch, or an eruv to allow carrying on Shabbat.

These are relatively trivial matters I would think. How is it possible then, that where something life-changing is at stake, there is no workaround possible? I’m talking specifically here about the refusal of a husband to issue his (legally) former wife a get.

Sidney Bilski
Cape Town

NOVEL SUGGESTION TO KEEP WARRING RELIGIOUS FACTIONS AT BAY

With reference to the host of letters in Jewish Report expressing various beliefs and opinions about religion, I tender this narration of a cartoon (with apologies to the New York Times) that I saw in that paper, which - G-d willing - conceivably provides the solution as to how to disentangle all the strife on earth caused by religion.

A rabbi, a priest and an imam arrive at the gates of heaven and are looking at a sign pinned to the gates.

One of those who has arrived at the gates is saying to himself and the others: “I always wondered how they manage to achieve eternal tranquillity, peace and happiness in heaven.”

The sign states: “No religion beyond this point.”

Ozzie Osrin
Sea Point, Cape Town

JEWISH DEFENDER OLGA MESHOE TALKS LOVE, NOT HATE

A fair-sized Great Park Shul audience was recently enthralled by an inspiring address by Olga Meshoe, CEO of DEISI (Defend Embrace Invest Support Israel). Her enthusiasm and reverence for Judaism and Israel are a constant source of wonder and admiration to those Jews lucky enough to hear her and read her compelling words on Facebook.

The auditorium and the shul should have been bursting with a record size audience. Olga and her parents, Rev Dr Kenneth and Dr Lydia Meshoe, are indeed G-d’s gift to the Jewish nation.

At a time when we feel that everybody hates us, with anti-Semitism rising throughout the world, it is heart-warming and healing to hear these Christian Zionists and many, many others like them, talk love instead of hate.

Olga described how she told Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) supporters that if they were really sincere about boycotting everything Jewish, they should boycott Moses, boycott King David, etc and especially their revered Christ as he was also Jewish.

They should boycott numerous items that make for comfortable living because they were invented by Jews.

There should be standing room only wherever any of our enthusiastic Christian Zionist friends, like Olga, speak to demonstrate our gratitude for their all-too-rare, but much needed support.

They should address shuls and Jewish schools throughout the country to feed love into our hearts.

Edna Freinkel
Johannesburg

SHORT NOTICE AFFECTS QUALITY OF SACRED’S KOL ISHA SUBMISSION

The South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity (SACRED) and the other applicants in the (kol isha) case against (the Cape Council of the) South African Jewish Board of Deputies would like to thank the SAJBD for their invitation to submit a statement to their colloquium.

Unfortunately, the invitation was only received by SACRED, via intermediaries, last week Thursday (June 16) with a deadline for submission the next day. Thus our submission was not as detailed or as thorough as we would have liked.

The other applicants in the case were, alas, unable to attend on such short notice. Nevertheless, as consistent advocates for dialogue and an internal resolution to this matter, we welcome the SAJBD’s long overdue opening up of dialogue on this matter.

James Lomberg
Executive Director, SACRED
On behalf of the applicants

On Youth Day, TA learners remember the elderly



OWN CORRESPONDENT

The deputy principal of Torah Academy Primary School, Michelle Kaplan, organised a wonderful programme for Youth Day last week.

It included a presentation from the grade 4 girls and a handover of knee rugs, knitted by Torah Academy learners and teachers, to the residents of Our Parents Home, some of whom joined the learners.

Pictured are Myer Manne and Maureen Solomon with TA pupils Eliyah Gochin; Leeya Eppel; Rochelle Medalie; Eli-sheva Ainsworth; Chayale Goldman; Racheli Unterslak; and Meira Feinblum.

KD Linksfield Open Day an enticing appetite-wetter

YAKIRA COHEN

King David High School Linksfield hosted its annual Open Day for the 2017 intake, which was a huge success.

The day started off with the excited incoming grade 8s and their parents going on informative tours of the school. They saw the rugby fields, newly renovated classrooms, a display of cultural activities and the “Being Human” and art exhibitions, to name but a few.

They were then able to experience all that the school had to offer by looking at the committee expos, followed by a Yom Yerushalayim and open day presentation, where there was dancing, music, vibes videos and informative speeches showcasing the school.

It was a day filled with fun and the school hopes to see many new faces around its campus next year.



Grade 7 pupils and parents registering at the KDHL Open Day.

Refurbished Glenhazel mikveh opened at Yeshiva College

OWN CORRESPONDENT

For more than 50 years, the Yeshiva College Campus has been at the heart of Jewish Johannesburg, enabling and supporting an enduring Torah way of life.

On Thursday June 9, the Yeshiva College community gathered for the official opening of their newly-refurbished Glenhazel mikveh.

Built in 1985, The Glenhazel mikveh was the first of its kind in Johannesburg to be built outside of the Yeoville area. This much needed refurbishment was required by the existing community and for a new generation of families, for whom family purity is a fundamental commitment.

The refurbishment of the mikveh was completed in memory of Glynis Sher z”l and will now be known as Be’er Gittel. This magnificent building is a fitting tribute to a woman who was indeed a true eishet chayil.



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Dads bond with their kids on Father’s Day at Sydenham Pre-Primary



SUE BENJAMIN

Dads are special and Father’s Day is a time to recognise the fathers and father figures in all our lives.

Present-day fathers are expected to take on multiple roles and this is an ideal time to applaud the contributions they make to enrich the lives of their children. Sydenham Pre-Primary School last week Wednesday paid tribute to the “Sydenham Dads” by inviting them to join the kids for soup and rolls.

Studies reveal that a father’s participation in school activities and events can have a significant impact on his children’s educational success. The children (and some fathers too) dressed in their pyjamas and they had the opportunity of completing a creative activity together.

Enjoying the evening are Lance and Tia Goldsmith.



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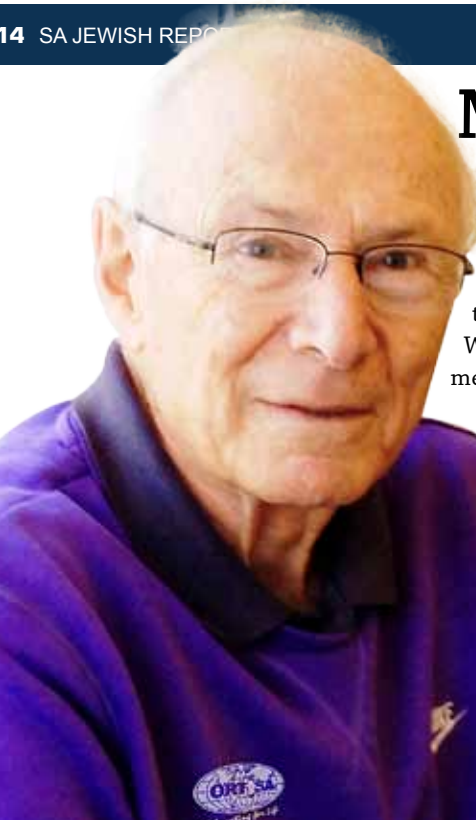
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Martin Behr retires from top World ORT positions

A warm tribute was paid to Martin Behr who recently retired as chairman of the World ORT Audit and Risk Committee, after a four-year term and 16 years serving in various World ORT functions, including as a member of the prestigious Board of Trustees. He remains a member of the National Executive Committee.

“ORT South Africa is indebted to Martin Behr, honorary life president of ORT SA for his commitment and dedication both to World ORT and to ORT South Africa,” said Darryl Wiesz, ORT SA chairman, in a media release.

At the recent World ORT Gen-

eral Assembly in Jerusalem, outgoing chairman, Baron Jean de Gunzberg, when thanking, described him as “a man of integrity, decency, intelligence and outstanding leadership”.

De Gunzberg went on to say that in all the years that Behr had been in a leadership position, there had never once been a concern about the World ORT strict governance controls and Behr had often been the voice of quiet reason and patience at the World ORT Board of Trustees meetings.

Said Behr in response: “My years working in World ORT have given me exposure to some outstanding, selfless individuals, both lay leaders and professionals, who have devoted themselves to World Ort’s international programmes.

“I have been privileged to see the amazing work done by ORT in the former Soviet Union, helping to bring Jewish values and a high qual-

ity education to young people eager to find their Jewish roots.

“The schools run by ORT in Argentina, Mexico and France, cater for thousands of Jewish youngsters, delivering the highest academic standards.

In Israel, through World ORT’s subsidiary, Kadima Mada, thousands of children, including children at risk and new immigrants living in the peripheral areas of the Galil and Negev, have had the quality of their education significantly upgraded to levels competitive with the major cities.

“In line with World ORT’s long-term support for the principle of tikkun olam, I’m particularly proud of the work done by the ORT SA teams in Johannesburg and Cape Town in uplifting disadvantaged children through maths and science programmes for teachers and nurturing skills in technology through robotics.”

Bikkur Cholim teams up with Uber taxis in historic first

MARC HUMMEL

“Bikkur Cholim” literally means visiting the sick. The organisation has compassionate volunteers who visit the various hospitals during the year, offering comfort and support to as many Jewish patients as possible.

“However, there are times when our patients need to get to hospital, to doctors for checkups or even to go to a pharmacy to just collect their medication, but simply do not have the means to do this.”

Bikkur Cholim has therefore teamed up with Uber taxi service. If anyone needs assistance in getting to and from a doctor, or needs to collect medication, they can call (011) 440-3606 or e-mail info@bikkurcholim.co.za and Bikkur Cholim will endeavour to get Uber to assist them with their requirements.

“We will cover the cost of the Uber transport, thereby eliminating further strain on the person who requires the assistance.”

JWBS looks back on a highly successful Bonanza 16 fundraiser

Once again the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society has completed its exciting fundraiser - Bonanza 16.

The funds from this very successful raffle will be channelled into the clothing depot of the JWBS for the purchase of new shoes, socks, slippers, pyjamas and underwear.

Says the JWBS: “Picture this case: Mrs Green, shivering, enters on a very cold morning, shoes worn to the ground, no socks, swollen feet. Help is at hand - she is provided with size 8 shoes, flat heels, wide fit, and three pairs of socks. A smiling, comfortable Mrs Green departs. Another happy client has been assisted.”

The Bonanza 16 prize-winners are:

- 1st Prize - Diamond earrings worth R10 000. Winner - Heather Schneider
- 2nd Prize - Spar voucher R2 500. Winner - Doreen Shapiro
- 3rd Prize - Gold/pearl necklace from By Design Jewellers, Killarney. Winner - Mannie Avitan
- 4th Prize - Stuttafords voucher R 500. Winner - Elise Ackerman

Prizes were awarded to the sellers of the most tickets: Leigh Brouze, Glynne Wolman and Helen Sackstein.



Judy Wainer with 1st Prize winner, Heather Schneider.

Madonsela to speak at Temple Israel

ANT KATZ

Temple Israel in Hillbrow, the mother shul of the local Progressive Reform movement, will celebrate its 80th anniversary on Saturday July 9, with a special morning service starting at 10:00, followed by an exhibition tour and refreshments. A battery of local and international VIP guests will be in attendance.

Guest of honour, Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, will be the keynote speaker during the service. The shul chairman, Reeva Forman, expects a big turnout, including Jewish organisations and associations at this milestone event.

Madonsela, who was recognised by Time magazine as one of the world’s most influential people in 2014, will deliver the keynote address. Israeli Ambassador Arthur Lenk will also be a guest speaker.

“We are ecstatic that Advocate Madonsela has accepted our invitation,” says Forman, who has been chairman of Temple Israel since 1994. “Not only has she been hugely successful as South Africa’s public protector and an excellent advocate for human rights, but she is also an eyshet chayil, a true woman of valour, a remarkable individual.”

Safe parking inside the grounds is available on request and RSVPs are required - call (011) 726-2025 for security reasons.



SA Union for Progressive Judaism chairman, Alvin Kushner (who got married at Temple Israel 50 years ago) who sits on the executive committee of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) will be there.

Among the international dignitaries will be 12 international Progressive leaders, most notably Canadian Carole Sterling, chairman of the WUPJ, and the organisation’s vice-president for the Diaspora, Rabbi Joel Osrin.

In 1933, Rabbi Dr Moses Cyrus Weiler was brought to Johannesburg to lead a small, but growing Progressive Jewish community. Three years later, Temple Israel was built in Hillbrow. It still stands proud as a place of Jewish culture and religion and as a heritage site.

Rabbi Weiler established a school in Alexandra township and, in his book, Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela wrote about the Progressive movement’s commitment to the school, even when churches and other groups were pulling out of schools in the area.

Temple Israel was built in what was then the northern-most part of Hillbrow. It serviced the flourishing Jewish populations of Hillbrow, Yeoville and Doornfontein.

It continues to serve the elderly Jews still left in the area with Lael Bethlehem as spiritual lay leader.

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‘Entebbe 40’ celebrated in style in Johannesburg

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Star American vocalist Benny Friedman headlined two shows at Emperors Palace on Sunday and Monday nights this week and demonstrated unequivocally why he has climbed to the top of the international Jewish hit parade. His beautiful voice, energy, and chein came through loud and clear on stage.

The supporting act was The Gat Brothers, Arie and Gil from Jerusalem, who were originally musos in secular Eilat. Today, although sporting long beards and payot, they still play the music of the ‘60s, notably the compositions of other nice Jewish boys like Bob Dylan and Simon and Garfunkel. Somehow, they manage to invoke Jewish messages from these iconic classics.

Fourteen-year-old South African singing sensation Shmuli Brill was on the bill too and his duet with Benny brought the house down.

“Thank you Sydenham Shul!” was a refrain heard throughout the nights as concert-goers acknowledged that attracting overseas artists to South Africa in light of the country’s plunging exchange rates, has become more and more difficult. Somehow Sydenham Shul managed to pull it off and Johannesburgers were treated to a rare musical treat.

The shows were endorsed by the Embassy of Israel in South Africa and by the SAZF as they were the only official commemorations of the upcoming 40th anniversary of the amazing “Rescue at Entebbe” back in July 1976. A short video especially produced for the occasion was screened and the artists dedicated songs to this important milestone event.

Benny Friedman



Photos: Joffe Berkowitz

Shmuli Brill sings a duet with Benny Friedman.



The Gat Brothers



Recipe

Sesame noodles with chicken and vegetables an all-time favourite



Photo: Chaya Rappoport

Cold sesame noodles with chicken and vegetables.

CHAYA RAPPOPORT

The thing with cholent is that it’s just so heavy! No matter how it’s made, it always seems to put me straight to sleep. It’s even worse in the summer: the heat in the air combined with the heaviness and hot temperature of the traditional Shabbat dish always have me yearning for something lighter, fresher and – dare I say it – newer.

That’s where this sesame noodle salad comes in. As wonderful as it is warm, it’s equally good cold and is easily made ahead; it’s the perfect answer to the what’s-for-lunch problem.

In this salad, noodles tangle together under a sweet, nutty sauce and combine with shredded grilled chicken for protein and heft. A mix of colourful vegetables add bright flavour and crunch – the result is a summery, refreshing dish that will have everyone wanting seconds.

If you love peanut buttery sesame noodles, you’ll love this. They have that sweet/salty thing going on, they work well with just about any vegetable you’ve got languishing in the fridge and you can even make them vegan by substituting tofu for the chicken and maple syrup for the honey.

In my house we love these noodles very much; we’ve made them for weekday lunches as well. They keep for a couple of days in the fridge and, speaking from personal experience, a poached egg is not remiss here.

Regardless of how you serve the noodles, they are always delicious in any setting. Kids love them too and they’re my go-to for summer Shabbat lunches.

Note:
All the components of this recipe can be made ahead and remain fresh in the fridge for a few days, which allows for easy assembling the day you want to serve. The chicken (which is good on its own, too) is flavourful and shreds easily, the vegetables are tender yet crunchy and the sauce is sweet with honey, nutty with sesame oil and punchy from the addition of a little vinegar.

Cold sesame noodles with chicken and vegetables

Yield: Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

For the chicken:

- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

For the salad:

- 1/2 small purple cabbage, sliced thin
- 1 large carrot, peeled clean, then cut with a julienne peeler
- 1 large red pepper, seeded and thinly sliced into matchsticks
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 pound (about half a kilogram) spaghetti, cooked
- 2 scallions, sliced, for serving
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds, for serving

For the dressing:

- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 5 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

Variations:

Substitute soba or udon noodles for the spaghetti. Add a few thinly sliced radishes to the vegetable mixture. Use 1 pound (about half a kilogram) of drained, dried and fried-until-crispy extra firm tofu in place of the chicken and use maple syrup instead of honey (in the dressing) to make this vegan.

Directions

Start by making the chicken:

- In a medium bowl, whisk together the wet ingredients and the garlic.

Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Reserve 1/4 cup of the marinade and set aside.

- In a gallon-sized bag (about 4,5 litres), marinate the chicken in the marinade for 1 hour. Drain the chicken from the marinade.
- Preheat grill or grill pan to medium high heat. Add chicken to grill and cook, flipping once and basting (coat the chicken with the reserved 1/4 cup marinade while it’s cooking) until cooked through, about 5-6 minutes on each side.
- Set chicken aside until cool enough to handle. Shred into small pieces and set aside.

Prepare the vegetables.

- Heat the oil in the pan and toss in the carrot, cabbage and pepper. Cook for 6 minutes, stirring constantly, until the vegetables are soft and tender yet still crunchy. Remove from heat.

Prepare the dressing:

- Combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a low boil. Lower the heat to medium and simmer for 4-5 minutes, until well combined and slightly thickened.
- In a big bowl or large pot, combine the cooked noodles, the shredded chicken, the vegetables and the sauce. Toss with one of the sliced scallions and half of the sesame seeds until well combined.
- Serve warm or cold, topped with another sprinkling of sesame seeds and scallions.

(The Noshers via JTA)

Symbolism of plates permeates Renos Spanoudes’ latest play

PETER FELDMAN

Playwright Renos Spanoudes (pictured) is a Greek-Cypriot with a Jewish heart. He is head of drama and arts and culture at King David Victory Park, where he has staged several big school productions, including a lauded recent version of Fiddler on the Roof in which he played Tevya “at the insistence of both colleagues and students alike”.

The gregarious Spanoudes has other strings to his bow, too, which involve hosting a Saturday morning show on Hellenic Community Radio, being a judge on the Naledi Theatre Awards panel, directing plays, mentoring and lecturing on the arts.

Last year Spanoudes realised a dream when he took a group of Jewish day school children on a 12-day Israel Encounter Tour, which he found one of the “great experiences” of his life.

“My late mother always wanted to go to Israel. It was her dream, too, to ‘go to the place where Jesus walked’. I realised this in her honour and for my soul.”

Spanoudes’ greatest passions, however, are acting and writing. He has left his mark on the professional stage in roles such as Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd’s assassin

in “Living in Strange Lands: The Testimony of Tsafendas” and in the playwrighting arena with his “Soil” and “The Apple Tree”.

His latest play, “Broken Plates”, opened at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square for a three week run from Thursday, June 23.

He is extremely proud of bringing this slice of intimate theatre to the stage in which he also performs in the various roles.

“This is the first time I have written a play and performed my own work on the stage at Daphne Kuhn’s theatre. In the past it has either been me writing, directing or someone else playing my creations.”

“Broken Plates” is described as “a theatrical treat of comedic Greek delicacies” and the stories that unfold will relate to everyone in some way. The tales have been garnered from family, friends and the writer’s own experiences.

He says: “Plates are a fascinating, integral part of our lives. We eat off them, we use them when serving guests and sharing meals with loved ones; we give them as gifts, we display them in our homes, some even break them on a grave in bereavement and, at times, during a celebration. We even smash them as we dance.”

He compares this breaking of plates both in joy and sorrow to the breaking of the glass at Jewish weddings.

The play, he says, deals with life and living and is depicted in a selection of stories using the plate as a metaphor. Each reflective story provides the dramatic device that reveals in all its wonder and poignancy - a father making his speech at his daughter’s wedding; an old woman remembering her life; a young man reacting to his past.

“We all face universal truths such as belonging and identity, sadness and joy, especially the case with immigrants in their ‘adopted’ country; these aspects are reflected in the play.”

Spanoudes says the work is inspired by his own personal journey as a South African of Greek-Cypriot immigrant parentage, as well as by “Zorba the Greek” and “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”.



Photos: Philip Kuhn

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Playwright Peter Shaffer, creator of Amadeus and Equus, bows out at the age of 90

OWN CORRESPONDENT

One of the greatest postwar playwrights, Sir Peter Levin Shaffer, died on June 6 at the age of 90 while on a trip to Ireland from his Lancashire, England home. He gave the world masterpieces such as Amadeus and Equus.

Shaffer was born into a prosperous Orthodox Jewish family in Liverpool, five minutes after his twin brother, fellow playwright Anthony. The family's property business was later taken over by the twins' younger brother, Brian.

Peter Shaffer was awarded a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, to study history. He was a Bevin Boy coal miner during the Second World War and had a number of jobs including bookstore clerk and an assistant at the New York Public Library, before discovering his dramatic talents

Shaffer's first play, The Salt Land (1954), was presented on the BBC. Encouraged by this success, Shaffer continued to write and established his reputation as a playwright in 1958, with the production of Five Finger Exercise. It won the Evening Standard Drama Award and when it moved to New York in 1959, it landed Shaffer the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Foreign Play.

Equus (1973) won Shaffer the 1975 Tony Award for Best Play as well as the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. A journey into the mind of a 17-year-old stable-boy who had plunged a spike into the eyes of six horses, Equus ran for over 1 000 performances on Broadway.

Shaffer followed this success with Amadeus (1979) which won the Evening Standard Drama Award and the Theatre Critics' Award for the London production. This tells the story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and court composer Antonio Salieri who, overcome with jealousy at hearing the "voice of G-d" coming from an "obscene child" - Mozart, sets out to destroy his rival. When the show moved to Broadway, it won the 1981 Tony Award for Best Play and, like Equus, ran for more than 1 000

performances. Shaffer wrote various other plays, several of which have been adapted to film.

Shaffer received the William Inge Award for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theatre in 1992. Two years later he was appointed Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford University.

Shaffer was awarded the CBE in 1987 and named Knight Bachelor in the 2001 New Year's Honours. In 2007 he was inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame. He never married.

His brother Anthony's death from a heart attack in 2001 affected Peter deeply. Despite an element of sibling rivalry, the brothers spoke together on the phone most days and it is known that Peter was shown first drafts of many of his brother's thriller scripts.

Despite Peter's claim that he had never been jealous of his brother, a series of letters written in the late 1960s (when Anthony had ditched his advertising career to work on Sleuth), laid bare Peter's frustration. The letters, discovered at Anthony's London home after his death, include such passages as: "I do feel threatened. As if my little Kingdom has been invaded, and I am no longer to be The Playwright, but again part of that faintly cute and annihilating 'Which one of them did it?'"

In another letter, he implored: "Before it's too late? I beg you to take another name for writing." Anthony declined, and instead maintained the family name for Sleuth, before going on to write screenplays for the Alfred Hitchcock film Frenzy, and The Wicker Man. Though Shaffer always insisted that the dualities to be found in his plays were more "enactments of my own internal tension", there is no doubt that sibling rivalry was a factor.

Yet Peter was hardly short of success. Through West End hits such as Five Finger Exercise and The Private Ear and the Public Eye, by the early 1960s he had become the favoured dramatist of the theatre impresario Binkie Beaumont.



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News

President Rivlin appeals for anti-Semitism to be nipped in bud

ANT KATZ

BRUSSELS - Israeli President Reuven Rivlin is on an official visit to Belgium and the European Union (EU) this week. He met with the country's prime minister, Charles Michel, and King Phillippe.

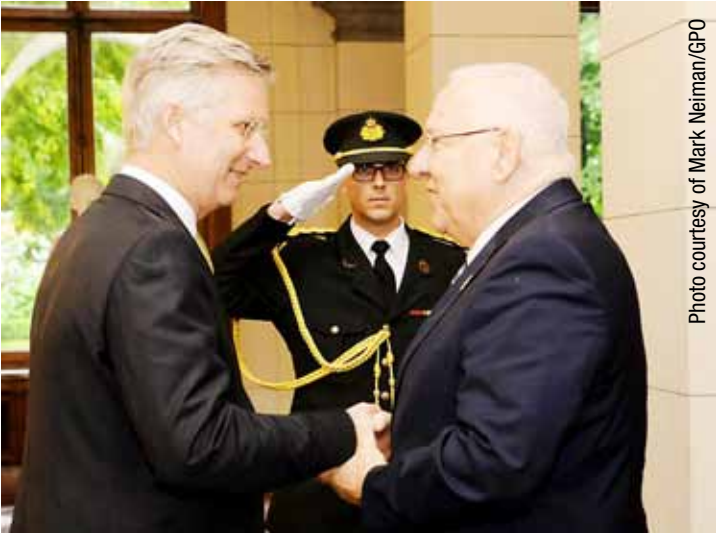
After the president and Prime Minister Michel met, the latter told the media that Israel and Belgium "share diplomatic, political and economic values, and the co-operation between us is significant - especially in the area of trade".

Rivlin, in turn, said: "Today we know that there is a link between anti-Semitism against Jews, and jihadi terror that kills innocent people of all religions. We must not wait for anti-Semitism to become terror; we must fight it from the beginning, together.

"We hope that under your leadership, Belgium will say 'No to BDS' and 'Yes to peace', 'Yes to co-operation'."

Michel responded by saying that Belgium appreciates "Israeli innovation and the drive for education and academic development".

"We spoke today about the fight against terror, which stands central to the efforts of our two peoples and of the whole world," said Rivlin. The two had discussed improving co-ordination between their intelligence services "to ensure that we will succeed in preventing future attacks".



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin meets with Belgian King Phillippe.

The two leaders shared their concerns about events in Syria, Libya, and Iraq and the plight of refugees "which is of concern to both countries", said Rivlin.

The Israeli president told Michel that "Israel is concerned by the activities of the BDS movement in your country. BDS is of no importance," he pointed out, "but even their small victories can give the wrong impression".

Michel stressed that in their discussions, "he had the opportunity to reaffirm Belgium's commitment to fighting anti-Semitism. We will fight anti-Semitism with all our strength. This is a shared struggle."

Rivlin also met King Phillippe and discussed a range of bilateral issues. He spoke of strengthening the relations between Israel and Belgium.

Rivlin is due to deliver a special address before the European Parliament and meet leaders of European institutions, and of the Jewish and faith communities.


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Electronics create tenuous global family links



FROM THE BELLING
TOWER

Suzanne Belling

I never met my paternal grandparents or my maternal grandfather, save for faded sepia photographs of the menfolk sporting head covering of the type religious leaders wore in the old days and bushy moustaches reminiscent of a British colonel in the Punjab.

My maternal grandmother immigrated to South Africa following the passing of her husband in Manchester, England, with my parents, my aunt and me as a tiny baby to settle in the “fairest Cape in the entire circumference of the earth”.

She always had a copy of the Yiddish paper on her lap on the rocking chair in the living room and her long silver hair was brushed 100 strokes daily and then wound into a bun. She told me stories about the fictitious Mirele, over and over again until I had swallowed every last morsel of my hated cocoa or bean soup lunch.

My grandchildren are cleverer. They either refuse to eat it or pour the hated beverages into the nearest plant pot.

But at least we were a family - half in South Africa and half remaining in the UK - with annual communication with relatives who spoke in funny accents which I couldn't understand (especially the Scottish) and my parents and local aunts and uncles gathered around to take their turn speaking during the trunk call.

When the old black telephone rang and the operator would announce the long distance call, everyone would clamour for a turn. They never had a conversation. The tension was so palpable, all they could repeat over and over again was, “Hello, how are you?”

In my mind's eye I pictured these people

with their strange unfamiliar voices and wondered what they looked like and why they said it was so cold when the sun was streaming through our window.

Perhaps it is a good thing they were British, as opposed to American, because the apocryphal-turned-reality might have happened just as the conversation began - US operator: “Are you through?”

South Africans: “Yes!”
Click - phone goes down.

Today's grandparents are different. They look younger, act younger, do lift schemes, use Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, selfies, Instagram and so on and so on.

Nearly all my friends and associates have children and grandchildren in Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the four corners of the earth where our children immigrated to find whatever they thought would be a better life. And we communicate on Skype.

Fortunately I have three grandchildren here, but I also have a little English rose - not yet one year - with my daughter having gone full circle back to the land of my birth.

I have met the baby once. But she will have recognition from the little mini-me on the Skype screen - the same size as she is - and am fortunately able to monitor her progress: crawling, waving, standing and doing actions to the nursery rhymes.

When I see her again, hopefully she will realise the full-sized granny is a blow-up from Skype.

I am just part of the throngs of South African grandparents who communicate virtually and who commiserate daily, bemoaning the low value of the rand and the distances that separate us.

And, in spite of the miracles of modern communication and not having to miss out on the progress of our grandchildren, I know we would rather have them right here on our laps and tell them stories about The Little Mermaid or Madiba.

What's On

Friday (June 24)

(incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

- UZLC hosts Isaac Reznik on “Cheesecake and Blintzes”. (Reznik was originally scheduled to speak last week.) Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45-14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (June 26)

- Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts Leon Reich former mayor and member of Rhodes University Council who will talk on “Grahamstown as I knew it”. Venue: HOD. Time: 19:00. Cost: R25 (incl tea & refreshments). RSVP: Hannah (011) 485-2188.

- WIZO Tzabar hosts a charity fundraiser of “The Whole Megillah According to Harry Sideropolis”. Venue: The pop-up theatre corner Glenhove and 5th Avenue, Melrose Estate. Time: 18:30. Cost: R250. Bookings: Raya 083-377-2970 or Batya (011) 645-2517.

- Second Innings hosts Fiona Capstick, sworn translator in the High Court on “The Role Played by Jewish Translators in the Transfer of Knowledge Across Cultures in Mediaeval Europe”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors

Monday (June 27)

- UJW hosts Caroline Cremen, chartered financial analyst, member SA Institute of Stockholders, on “Braving the Stock Exchange in the Time of Zuma”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Everyone welcome - men and women. Booking not necessary. Contact: UJW office (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (June 28)

- WIZO Women Inspired presents “From the Law Bar to Candy Bars”, Karen Schneid-Liberman and the inspiring story of an advocate turned confectionery queen. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R100 (incl tea). Venue details and bookings: Lorraine 083-268-8016; Joceline 082-441-4375; or Lesley 083-456-3911.

- JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to Ster Kinekor Movie Night at 19:00. Venue: E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za for details.

Wednesday (June 29)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer dept of English at Wits, on her sixth lecture

on Hamlet. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW offices: (011) 648-1053.

Monday (July 4)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Prof Peter Delius, historian at Wits, on “The Rampant Destruction of Southern Africa's Historical Artefacts”, an audiovisual presentation. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW offices: (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (July 6)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer dept of English at Wits, on her seventh lecture on Hamlet. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Sunday (July 10)

- JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to come and watch the Wimbledon Men's tennis final at Metzuyan. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za for details.

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Anti-Semitic Hungarian soccer fans give Hitler salute

JACK MILNER

Hungary versus Iceland at Euro 2016 in France. No Jews on the field and probably just a few in the stands. What on earth a section of the Hungarian soccer fans believed they could gain from giving a Nazi salute during the match, is a total mystery.

Now French police are investigating the incident. The fans are believed by police to be far-right “ultras” (soccer enthusiasts whose fanaticism about the game often erupts into violence), who were wearing identical black shirts with the word “Magyarország” (Hungary) in white letters, as they made the Hitle-rian gesture en masse, in the direction of the competing team.

According to the Daily Mail, a police source said the incident “could lead to prosecutions

under anti-racism laws and legislation aimed at combating anti-Semitism”.

The explanation given is that the Stade Velodrome, the stadium in Marseilles where the match took place, is located near a Jewish district, whose residents regularly complain of verbal and physical intimidation at the hands of anti-Semites.

The Hungarian fans under investigation were seen climbing over segregation walls in the stadium after the match and brawling with stewards. Riot police from the Republican Security Companies and plain-clothed officers had to intervene to restore order.

This is only one of many violent incidents that have occurred since the opening of Europe’s quadrennial football championship on June 10, which is to continue until July 10.

England fans have been arrested for clashes

on the streets of Marseille, while Russian and Ireland supporters were also caught fighting in the streets of Nice. Ukraine and German fans were battling outside a bar in Lille last week.

It is interesting that a new survey - conducted by the Median Opinion and Market Research Institute on behalf of the watchdog group the Action and Protection Foundation - a third of Hungarians hold anti-Semitic views, a phenomenon that jibes with “general xenophobic attitudes (are) found to be rampant in Hungarian society”.

In addition, the third largest political party in Hungary is the far-right Jobbik, which won 20 per cent of the parliamentary votes in the 2014 election. Jobbik is growing in popularity across Hungary and party leaders have spoken out against what they call “Zionist Israel’s efforts to dominate Hungary and the world”.

Looking at individual players in the teams taking place in the European jamboree, Jews seem to be as rare as an elephant in the middle



Hungarian soccer fans giving a Nazi salute during their match against Iceland in Marseille at the Euro 2016 competition.

of the Sahara.

In the World Cup the teams from the United States and occasionally South America, sometimes contain Jewish players but it is quite rare in the European tournament.

Sometimes we just have to accept it: There just isn’t a Jewish angle. It seems this unbridled hatred against anything Jewish, doesn’t need any angle.

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Highlands Park writes another golden chapter in its history

ILAN HERRMANN

Highlands Park Football Club long ago indelibly carved its name in the history of South African soccer. The club then dissolved and for many years seemed to have disappeared for good. But a few years ago, through the vision of a few legacy-keepers, Highlands Park began a road towards its former glory.

Today it has written another chapter in its record book. For the first time in 24 years, it has gained promotion to the top tier of South African club football – it won the playoffs for promotion to the Professional Soccer League (PSL).

No team in the history of South African soccer has had more of a Jewish association than Highlands Park. The club has had numerous Jewish directors and players over the years; the home ground was originally the Balfour Park Stadium and Highlands enjoyed a significant Jewish fan base. The club’s current managers and directors are Brad Kaftel; Larry Brookstone; Hadley Lasarow; and Sinky Mnisi.

Kaftel, whose partnership in the club began in 2008, was over the moon with the club’s recent success. “We’ve had an amazing season. We

started slowly but gained momentum as the season progressed. At the halfway mark we were only in sixth place.

“We have a magic team spirit with great belief and the best defence in the league. We made some very shrewd signings at the start of the season and the total team delivered when needed to.”

Highlands Park had qualified for the playoffs by coming second in the league behind Baroka FC. They faced Mbombela United on their home turf at the Makhulong Stadium and came away 2-0 victors to earn promotion.

Highlands Park was founded in 1959 by Luc Mattus. Within a few years the club had become the most feared side in the National Football League. This reached its zenith in the 1966/67 seasons when Highlands Park assembled the team many believe to have been the greatest in South African footballing history.

The club has had many top Jewish stars over the years, including Rafi Levi, Martin Cohen and Julie Kaplan in the forefront, with others like Abe Koplow, Dennis Bieber, Robin Kuper, Hazom Hazom, Roy Schewitz, Errol Kaplan, Maish Novick and Roy Weiner, claiming a place in an always competitive side.

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43⁹⁹
240g

KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER

The way to start the day...

Offers valid till 29 June '16 or while stocks last
E&OE. IMAGES MAY DIFFER FROM ACTUAL PRODUCT

JUNGLE OATSO EASY
ORIGINAL FLAVOUR
10X 50g SACHETS

37⁹⁹
500g

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Hours: Mon-Thurs 7am-10pm | Fri: 7am-4pm Sat: 1/2 Hour After Shabbos -10pm | Sun: 8am - 10pm