

There will be no paper  
for the weeks of October  
10 and 17 due to Yomtov.  
Our next edition will  
be October 24.

# South African Jewish Report

www.sajr.co.za

## Getting ready for the Succot Festival



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

The joy of Rosh Hashanah, the introspection and atonement of Yom Kippur, and then the abundance of Succot. Pictured are Simi Trabelsy and her daughter Nitan from Moshav Dolev in Israel, visitors to South Africa, checking out the succah decorations at Sukkah Mart at Genesis Centre in Johannesburg. During the eight days of Succot - which starts on the night of October 8 - Jews eat their meals in a succah, made of walls of a fragile hut with a roof covered in branches sparse enough to allow glimpses of the heavens and an expanded field of vision. Along with the lulav, myrtle and willow, the etrog is one of the four palm species required for rituals during this agricultural festival. One of the mitzvot of Succot is fulfilled when all four are held together. Then and only then, are all Jews one people.

### Cosatu digs in heels over the 'unkindest cut'

"We have a problem that the device comes from Israel. We need to boycott everything that comes from that pariah state," said Sizwe Pamla.

### 'To pilgrim' seems appropriate in diatribe

What can one say about the credibility of someone who, in commenting on the seven-week war between Israel and Hamas, cannot mention the missile barrage that preceded the war?

### Do BDS flashmobs in Woolworths matter?

"We will shut down many, many Woolworths stores. We are discouraging the Youth League, the Young Communist League and the SACP, from buying from Woolworths."

### Keeping it together, all around the world

"The international Shabbos Project is an opportunity for the entire Jewish world to keep one complete Shabbos together - from October 24 until October 25."

### 'Wheels of Love' for Alyn Hospital children

"Many South African cyclists choose to ride off-road. This year, the Alyn challenge has an off-road section, and several levels of participation in the cycle race," says Steven Blend.



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# Community Voices

## CSO and others do an excellent Yomtov security job

*On behalf of the entire Jewish community, we would like to thank the CSO and their team of permanent staff and volunteers, for all the work they put in to make South Africa a safer place for the community. We are blessed in South Africa to be able to freely practise our Judaism, and this year the CSO again made it possible through mobilising our community and providing extra security. The level of dedication that was put into making the country safe for us over Yomtov, was phenomenal and deserves a big thank you. Other organisations which need a thank you as well are EZRA, Hatzolah, ICCG/CAP and the private security sector, who also gave the community an outstanding service. Thank you to the teams of permanent staff, but also the many volunteers and community members who gave unselfishly of their time for the sake of the community. The SAJR asked the following question of a random cross-section of the community: “The CSO and other Jewish organisations managed to make you feel safe in ‘Jewish Johannesburg’ and other major South African cities. How did you experience it?”*

**KAREN KNOWLES**  
SAJR GENERAL MANAGER



**Gershon Bachrach**

Very good! The security was impressive and I felt like I was in Israel. The security measures made a difference; I wasn't afraid at all. The difference between Israel's Muslim community and South

Africa's Muslims, is that Israeli Muslims are often prepared to die for what they consider to be their "cause", while in South Africa the Muslim community in general appear to be much more moderate.



**Corinne Bartkunsky**

I walked to shul and felt comfortable doing so. Even the smaller shuls had ample security. I was at Sydenham Shul and the security was great! The CSO did a wonderful job; you could find marshals at different points on the road, looking after the community's wellbeing.



**Shira Silberman**

I felt secure and safe to walk to shul. I daven at

Ohr Somayach and I felt very secure while I was in shul, as I know that we were being looked after by the CSO. Having the roads blocked off also helped with prams and made it easy to get into shul. There were lots of patrol cars all over, thanks to the CSO.



**Natalie Marx**

I felt extremely safe. I davened at Pine Street Shul where the security had been more than jacked up. One expects a shul to be a safe place, but one still felt a bit nervous. But all the security was very reassuring. We are so lucky to have them.

More news on our website [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

**Shabbat Times**

**Yom Kippur**  
**October 3 / 9 Tishrei**  
**October 4 / 10 Tishrei**

17:50	18:40	Johannesburg
18:15	19:25	Cape Town
17:40	18:31	Durban
17:59	18:49	Bloemfontein
18:04	18:56	Port Elizabeth
17:54	18:46	East London

**October 8 / 14 Tishrei**  
**Succot**  
**Light yartzeit candle**  
**Candle-lighting before**

17:53	Johannesburg
18:15	Cape Town
17:43	Durban
18:02	Bloemfontein
18:07	Port Elizabeth
17:57	East London

**October 9 / 15 Tishrei**  
**Succot**

18:42	Johannesburg
19:29	Cape Town
18:34	Durban
18:52	Bloemfontein
19:00	Port Elizabeth
18:49	East London

**October 10 / 16 Tishrei**  
**October 11 / 17 Tishrei**  
**Chol Hamoed**  
**Kohelet**  
**Candle-lighting**

17:54	18:43	Johannesburg
18:15	19:30	Cape T own
17:44	18:35	Durban
18:03	18:54	Bloemfontein
18:09	19:01	Port Elizabeth
17:59	18:51	East London

**October 15 / 21 Tishrei**  
**Hoshanna Rabba**  
**Candle-lighting**

17:56	Johannesburg
18:15	Cape Town
17:48	Durban
18:06	Bloemfontein
18:13	Port Elizabeth
18:03	East London

**October 16 / 22 Tishrei**  
**Shemini Atzeret**

18:46	Johannesburg
19:34	Cape Town
18:39	Durban
18:57	Bloemfontein
19:06	Port Elizabeth
18:55	East London

**October 17/ 23 Tishrei**  
**October 18 / 24 Tishrei**  
**Bereshit**

17:57	18:47	Johannesburg
18:15	19:36	Cape Town
17:49	18:40	Durban
18:07	18:58	Bloemfontein
18:14	19:07	Port Elizabeth
18:04	18:57	East London



*A Succot message from Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul*

Many years ago, when downtown Johannesburg was still home to Jewish shopkeepers and office dwellers, in my capacity as director of Chabad House, I would always organise the Central City succah. The little booth stood at the foot of the Carlton Centre, at the time Africa's biggest office and shopping complex. One year, I asked a photographer to take a shot of the succah and the Carlton Centre skyscraper together. He had to use a rather sophisticated lens to get them both into one picture. Naturally, the succah was dwarfed by the skyscraper. But I couldn't help thinking that, in the end, that humble little succah would outlast even the mightiest of skyscrapers. Indeed, since 9/11 and the collapse of the world's tallest towers, that feeling is even stronger. There are two opinions in the Talmud as to what we commemorate when we build our succah. One is that it recalls the booths our ancestors built to shelter themselves from the burning desert sun after the Exodus from Egypt. The other, is that the succah recalls not a physical shelter but the spiritual shelter provided by the

Clouds of Glory, Hashem's protective cover that shielded them from many harmful effects. Rashi, in his commentary seems to favour the latter opinion of spiritual rather than physical shelter. This seems to be corroborated by the halacha in the Laws of Succah, that if the schach, the leafy covering is so thick that the rain cannot penetrate, then the succah is actually invalid (posul). It would seem that the purpose of the succah is to remind us wherein lies our true security. It is in the protective cover of G-d, as symbolised by the Clouds of Glory, rather than in our own man-made shelters. This is, in fact, the most important moral lesson we are meant to derive from this beautiful festival. "Life is but a succah", a temporary dwelling, here today, gone tomorrow - "a fleeting dream", as we said on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. So, where do we look for strength, hope, salvation and our ultimate security? Not in the impressive man-made skyscrapers. We have seen all too horribly and vividly on our television screens how the mightiest towers on earth collapsed like a deck of cards! And now life in South Africa is a mirror of the meshugaas that happens elsewhere. Today, an ordinary trip on an airplane requires taking off our shoes and being scanned for weapons; and even a little scissors or a vial of liquid is suspect.

And this year we have seen unprecedented security measures around all our Jewish centres. Suddenly, nowhere is safe. Yes, at the end of the day, "Life is but a succah". When we realise our own vulnerability and our dependence on G-d for our life, our livelihood, our safety and security, then we begin to understand that we are under His protective shield. And then, wherever we are, we can feel safe in His embrace. Every year, in my succah at home, we sing an old Yiddish song called "Ah Sukkele ah Kleineh" - or, The Little Succah, the story of a dilapidated, barely-standing succah that is being threatened by gale force winds. The succah becomes the symbol of the Jewish condition, frail and vulnerable but, inevitably indestructible. No winds can destroy the Jewish succah. Our travelling tabernacle has given us shelter from the winds of change that swept through many continents over the centuries of Jewish journeys. When we remember that it is Hashem, the Guardian of Israel, who is our ultimate shelter and source of security, we find strength and serenity no matter what is howling outside. May we all enter the succah literally and figuratively and find the shelter and security we all seek in the warm embrace of the small but impregnable succah.

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# Keeping it together, all around the world

The international Shabbos Project will take place in over 200 cities around the world on the Shabbos of October 24/25 this year. The concept is simple: Jews of all walks of life, from across the spectrum - religious, secular and traditional, young and old, from all corners of the world - uniting to experience one full Shabbos together, in full accordance with halacha.

The Shabbos Project co-ordinators say in a media release that “in every corner of the globe, people are joining the biggest global Jewish identity initiative the world has ever seen”.

The Shabbos Project is a social movement developed by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein (pictured) in South Africa. The first took place in South Africa in October last year. On the Shabbat over which it ran, more than 75 per cent of South Africa’s 75 000 Jews kept a full halachic Shabbos, many for the first time in their lives.

The project drew people together in ways never seen before and news of its success spread rapidly, inspiring thousands of people around the world to bring the movement to their own communities. So, the idea of an international Shabbos Project, was born.

“The international Shabbos Project is an opportunity for the entire Jewish world to keep one complete Shabbos together - from Friday evening just before sunset on October 24, until Saturday night after the stars have come out, on October 25,” explains Rabbi Goldstein, “The beauty of this is that it is so practical and manageable. It’s only one Shabbos; it’s something everyone can do.”

The international Shabbos Project is being described as “an experiment that has no precedent in modern Jewish history”. Final preparations are underway, co-ordinated by 1 394 partners in over 200 cities and 34 countries.

Rabbi Goldstein explains the significance of the project’s tagline: “Keeping It Together”, saying: “Keeping it together means keep-

ing our lives together. Of course, there is the good food, sound sleep and deep relaxation we look forward to, but there’s more.

“Shabbos restores us, not just in a physical sense, but emotionally and spiritually as well, so that we emerge motzei Shabbos as new human beings ready to face the week with all of its challenges and opportunities.”

Rabbi Goldstein believes Shabbat has a special power and resonance for our time.

“Shabbos enables us to momentarily set aside the distractions, demands and pressures of daily life, offering us the time and space to renew our inner selves, and to revisit and reinvigorate our most important relationships. Shabbos can hold us together in a society where everything seems to be pulling us apart.”

The Shabbos Project is not merely about performing a symbolic gesture to acknowledge Shabbat, but rather about keeping it properly, in full accordance with the Shulchan Aruch.

“The power of Torah is dependent on how closely it resembles that which Hashem originally gave us. This approach is predicated on the idea that the real energy and kedushah of Shabbos - its transformative power - is wholly dependent on doing the mitzvah properly.”

A vital aspect of the Shabbos Project is the effect it can have - and did have in South Africa last year - on shomer-Shabbos Jews.

“Many observant Jews found it to be a very powerful experience. They took on projects to learn more hilchos Shabbos, and were strengthened by reaching out to family and friends and neighbours, not in a condescending manner, but by supporting them and offering to help them to feel part of the project.

“Ultimately, people drew newfound inspira-



tion from being around so many others who were experiencing Shabbos for the first time in their lives.”

Rabbi Goldstein believes The Shabbos Project is a stark reminder of the power of authentic, undiluted Torah to change the world; of its pressing relevance for all times and places.

A possible reason for the unique power of Shabbos is that it is a mitzvah that touches every aspect of the human condition.

“Shabbos has an intellectual dimension, which relates to our belief system; it attests to the fact that G-d created the world, as we say in the Shabbos Kiddush. It has a spiritual dimension as well; we say special prayers on Shabbos and we sing the Shabbos zemiros. Shabbos also has an emotional dimension; in terms of the bonding between parents and children, between friends, within families and communities. And of

course Shabbos has a physical dimension; we walk to synagogue, we eat delicious food, there is even a special mitzvah to sleep.”

Key to the success of The Shabbos Project will be for shomrei-Shabbos communities across all hashkafos to put aside any superficial differences, embrace one another and pour their collective efforts into making it work. This is about uniting for the sake of Klal Yisrael.

“At this moment in time, in the aftermath of the Gaza war and the pressures Jews everywhere have felt in its wake, the international Shabbos Project provides us with a unique, historic opportunity to give birth to a new sense of Jewish unity and Jewish identity. As Jews around the world, we will be doing this together. The power of that shared experience is unimaginable.

“Let us join hands for Shabbos Parshas Noach and keep one global Shabbos together. By doing so, we can recharge our communities with an electric energy, excitement and enthusiasm, the likes of which has never been seen before. We can change Klal Yisrael forever.”

## Cosatu digs in heels over the ‘unkindest cut’

An Israeli circumcision device to reduce the number of young males who die in botched initiation ceremonies and has been endorsed by the World Health Organisation, has been piloted at several sites across South Africa but has not yet been introduced in state hospitals, because Cosatu is opposed to the government doing business with Israel.

Department of Health spokesman, Joe Maila said the government was still studying the PrePex nonsurgical disposable device and had not yet decided whether or not to officially sanction its use and make it widely available. Cosatu’s stance, citing Israel’s “human rights violations” for the trade union confederation’s decision not to do business with Israeli entities, has put the Department of Health in a quandary.

“We have a problem that the device comes from Israel. We need to boycott everything that comes from that pariah state,” National Education Health and Allied Workers’ Union spokesman Sizwe Pamla said when asked for comment.

Pamla said if PrePex was introduced in state hospitals, nurses affiliated to Cosatu would refuse to perform circumcisions using the device.

PrePex allows circumcisions to be performed by nurses. This will free up doctors and operating theatres in government facilities.

South Africa has encouraged medical circumcisions over the less safe traditional practices and believes it could also help in the fight against HIV/Aids, which has infected at least 12 per cent of the South African population.

The WHO says male circumcision reduces the risk of heterosexually acquired HIV in men by about 60 per cent.



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# Yom Kippur

The Speaker and Members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament wish the Jewish community of the Western Cape an easy fast on Yom Kippur. G'mar Chatimah Tovah.

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# Abbas slams Israel, but Bibi's mind is elsewhere

URIEL HEILMAN  
NEW YORK

In the end, there was much to talk about at the UN General Assembly but few genuine surprises.

With an eye on the jihadist ISIS, President Barack Obama focused on the need for the international community to counter the dangers of violent extremism. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu likened Hamas to ISIS and depicted Iran as the vanguard of Islamic militancy.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani blamed the West's blunders for fomenting the terrorists of ISIS and characterised Iran as leading the forces of moderation in the region. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas attacked against Israel and its conduct in this summer's war with Hamas in Gaza, in stark contrast to his tone last year.

They all had said it before, but their General Assembly speeches were notable for their global audience, what they chose to focus on, what they omitted and, in some cases, how they said it.

Netanyahu brandished a photo during his speech on Monday, showing a rocket launcher in a civilian area of Gaza with children nearby. Netanyahu's main aim was casting Iran at the forefront of militant Islam.

"It's one thing to confront militant Islamists on pickup trucks armed with Kalashnikov rifles," the Israeli leader said. "It's another thing to confront militant Islamists armed with weapons of mass destruction."

In his General Assembly address on September 24, Obama said: "As we look to the future, one issue risks a cycle of conflict that could derail so much progress, and that is the cancer of violent extremism that has ravaged so many parts of the Muslim world."

Five days later, Netanyahu offered this echo: "To protect the peace and security of the world, we must remove this cancer before it is too late."

Obama's speech was especially notable for what it did not say. As expected, Obama talked about ISIS, and he took swipes at Russia, but he barely mentioned Iran, devoting just four lines to the subject of Iran's nuclear programme.

After a 50-day war over the summer that left some 2 100 Palestinians and more than 70 Israelis dead, Obama had considerably less to say about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than he did last year. "As bleak as the landscape appears, America will not give up on the pursuit of peace," he said.

He noted: "The status quo in the West Bank and Gaza is not sustainable. We cannot afford to turn away from this effort, not when rockets are fired at innocent Israelis or when the lives of so many Palestinian children are taken from us in Gaza."

In 2013, Abbas said: "I'm confident that the Israeli people want peace." This year, he accused Israel of a "culture of racism, incitement and hatred" and said the "racist occupying state" had waged a "war of genocide" against the Palestinians. Abbas had accused Israel of genocide in Gaza during this summer's war, too and at the General Assembly he spared no words lambasting Israel.

"I affirm in front of you that the Palestinian people hold steadfast to their legitimate right to defend themselves against the Israeli war machine and to their legitimate right to resist this colonial, racist Israeli occupation," Abbas said.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his address at the UN General Assembly, shows a photo of a rocket launcher in a civilian area of Gaza with children nearby.

"We will not forget and we will not forgive, and we will not allow war criminals to escape punishment."

Abbas made no mention of pursuing Palestinian membership in the International Criminal Court, which could lead to charges against Israelis for war crimes. Abbas has faced some domestic pressure to make such a move, and he has obtained the backing for it from various Palestinian factions. But a move to the criminal court also would open up the Palestinians to potential war crimes charges; for example, for firing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli civilian population centres.

As for Iran, many of the lines in Rouhani's September 25 speech echoed remarks that Obama had delivered a day earlier.

"If we do not muster all our strengths against extremism and violence today, and fail to entrust the job to the people in the region who can deliver, tomorrow the world will be safe for no one," Rouhani said. "To fight the underlying causes of terrorism, one must know its roots and dry its source fountains."

Obama had said: "Collectively, we must take concrete steps to address the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics and the trends that fuel their recruitment."

Though Rouhani sought to portray Iran as on the side of the moderates in the campaign against violent Islamic extremists, he accused Western policies of creating ISIS.

"The strategic blunders of the West in the ME, Central Asia and the Caucasus, have turned these parts of the world into a haven for terrorists and extremists," Rouhani said. "Military aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq and improper interference in the developments in Syria are clear examples of this erroneous strategic approach in the Middle East."

Tehran has shown little willingness to stop enriching uranium or building centrifuges, but Obama is focused on ISIS rather than Iran and there doesn't seem to be much international support for a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.

If nothing is done, Netanyahu warned, "then the ayatollahs will show their true face and unleash their aggressive fanaticism on the whole world." (JTA)

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# ‘Citizen Cohen’ asks important questions at Cape Conference

TALI FEINBERG

Under the title “Citizen Cohen”, the Jewish Board of Deputies’ Cape Conference on September 21, aimed to encourage discussion on the role of the Jewish community in South Africa today. This included confronting difficult questions on the extent to which the community should focus “outwards” or “inwards” and the role of the youth as current and future leaders of the community and in wider society.

In her address, SAJBD National Chairman Mary Kluk, explained that the Board had focused on both confronting anti-Semitism and building bridges. In this context, she reported on a recent meeting with President Jacob Zuma, where she said the Board’s concerns were “heard and understood”, and that the National Board was doing everything possible to ensure that the civil liberties of South African Jews were maintained and strengthened.

Cape Board Chairman Eric Marx’s report covered the breadth of work done by the 110-year-old Cape Board, ranging from interfaith initiatives to political lobbying; combating anti-Semitism to providing bursaries for needy students.

Particular highlights included the new Ignite! And Generation-Next projects, which aim to foster youth leadership; and the “Mensch” network, which will bring together Jewish community members working in outreach and activism.

Keynote speaker Dr Frans Cronje (CEO of the SA Institute of Race Relations) gave a presentation on South Africa’s future and current “state of the nation”. In his model of South Africa either taking “the narrow, wide, rocky or toll road”, he showed that there was much work to be done, particularly in education and job creation and that South African Jews could play their part.

Indeed, members of the community were contributing towards bettering the country, as demonstrated in the panel discussion “Making a difference, differently”, chaired by Howard Sackstein with panelists Michael Bagraim, Yoni Bass, Barbara Miller and Rael Kaimowitz.

Sackstein reminisced that “when a dry-cleaning van rolled down the



Yoni Bass; Michael Bagraim; Howard Sackstein; Barbara Miller; and Rael Kaimowitz, participants in the panel discussion “Making a difference, differently”

road to Liliesleaf Farm (in Rivonia) and the ANC’s top leadership were arrested, their names were like “reading the roll call of a shul minyan”. He asked if this legacy had disappeared from the community, with a deficit of Jewish politicians, justices and activists.

However, the panelists showed that although they were individual cases, they were each making a difference, and were all motivated by their Jewish identities.

Newly-elected DA Member of Parliament Michael Bagraim, looked to Pirkei Avot, which says that while we must be sceptical of government, at the same time we must pray for the welfare of the state.

He said that involvement in politics “has always been there in our history”, and challenged the audience to get involved, as “no one is stopping us”.

Barbara Miller of the Etafeni Daycare Centre Trust in Nyanga, told how her interest in activism was directly related to her Jewish roots. Many of her family members had been killed in the Holocaust, and she hoped to “live a life that honours those who perished”. She added that “we are enriched by those who are different to us”.

Yoni Bass of Equal Education described how he “grew

up aware of the conflicting realities of being a young Jewish South African, while also feeling uniquely connected to building a new, democratic, equal South Africa”.

He said many of his colleagues were Jewish, and that the “common denominator is that we all went to Habonim...”

Rael Kaimowitz spoke about how the Cape Board had taken on an active role in engaging with South Africans at all levels, emphasising that “Judaism is not a spectator

sport” and said that each individual could contribute to the community and the country.

Questions from the audience emphasised how young people working in civil society were often marginalised by the community. However, one audience member said: “We owe it to our young people to listen to them. We have to talk to them; they are our future leaders.”

The conference continued with a “Great Debate”, between Rabbi Jonathan Altman and Dr Rebecca

Hodes entitled “Looking in/looking out: Where should our focus be?” mediated by Justice Dennis Davis.

Dr Hodes proposed that it was vital that the community was engaged with wider society, and that in fact this was an essential aspect of being Jewish, based on notions of tikkun olam. Thus, she said, the community should encourage a more universalist perspective, where people could express their Judaism in a variety of ways and be able to engage with all sectors of society.

Rabbi Altman disagreed, saying that the question was not “if we should become more inward-looking, but when”. He listed a variety of factors that were negatively impacting the community today, particularly apathy, intermarriage and “Jewish illiteracy” and said that an inward focus would help solve these issues.

“We must repair ourselves more urgently than we must repair the world,” he said.

Questions from the audience included asking if a more inward approach would also be an inclusive one; and if a universalist perspective still included Jewish sources. Justice Davis pointed out: “When we are so few Jews in South Africa, the notion that we do not want to encourage everyone to participate, particularly the young, is something we should examine further.”

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Do BDS flashmobs in Woolworths matter?

Some Israel supporters tend to downplay the impact of BDS as a small group who make a lot of noise, but with little major impact. This is a mistaken attitude: In South African society, where most people know almost nothing about Israel and Palestine, the ground is fertile for uninformed people to become inherently anti-Israel without even realising it.

It is of great concern, for example, when a spokesman of the ANC Youth League in Cape Town, Braam Hanekom, publicly supports the BDS protests against Woolworths for selling Israeli products, and says: “The apartheid state of Israel should be boycotted economically. We should not be paying for the bullets and the bombs that are used against children in Palestine.” The company says it complies with government guidelines on Israeli products and the origin of every product was stated on the label.

Last Saturday, BDS staged a successful protest at the checkout queue leading at the huge, brand new Woolworths branch in Rosebank Mall in Johannesburg. A group of some 20 BDS protesters suddenly burst into wild song and dance, accompanied by a blaring stereo loudspeaker stuffed into a trolley. Onlookers initially thought this was a publicity stunt by Woolworths to draw attention to their new store.

But when 15 security guards in orange shirts converged on the dancers and began pushing them out of the store, and the slogan “Free, free Palestine!” was being shouted full-throat by demonstrators, it quickly turned into another full-blown protest.

For half an hour there was pushing and shoving, shouting and arguing, as security tried to eject the protesters from the mall corridors out to the pavement. They resisted forcefully, insisting on their “peaceful” intention to convince Woolworths to stop selling goods from “Apartheid Israel” and appealing to the black security guards that the Palestinian struggle was just like the black liberation struggle against apartheid in this country.



Photo: Geoff Sifrin

BDS wreaks havoc at Woolies, Rosebank.

The fracas ended with protesters sitting on the ground in the parking lot, singing African liberation songs, sprinkled with phrases about Palestine and “Apartheid Israel”, leaving it up to the security of the parking area to deal with them.

Among shoppers and clients in adjoining stores and restaurants, most were confused and others upset by the anger and brawling with the security guards; some were amused and a few even ended up dancing to the music with no connection to the politics which had prompted it; others who understood the politics, either shouted support, or asked why the demonstrators weren’t protesting against the hundreds of thousands of Syrians killed, or the barbarity of ISIS.

Are these BDS protests merely an irritation, a blip on the screen which will appear as nothing more than a tiny footnote in the history books? Or is the campaign against “Apartheid Israel” gaining enough ground here and worldwide to actually make a difference to the big picture?

If one looked at the Rosebank centre and the new Woolworths store five minutes before the demo, then five minutes after it had ended, it would seem to be merely an irritation. Shoppers continued shopping, coffee-drinkers

at the restaurants continued drinking their favourite brew, lovers continued strolling arm in arm, and all was “normal”.

That may be true. But it would be unwise for supporters of Israel to reject the BDS phenomenon as insignificant. The truth is that the world is sick and tired of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the ever-repeating rounds of futile “peace talks” leading nowhere, the refusal or inability of leaders on both sides to make the necessary compromises to actually make peace a possibility, and the predictable speeches at the UN always pointing blame at the other side.

Hanekom vowed on behalf of the ANCYL that the campaign would be intensified until Woolworths heeded its demands, notwithstanding President Jacob Zuma’s assurances to Jewish leadership about the ANC’s “balanced approach” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And many of Rosebank Mall’s customers who had hardly ever heard of Israel, have now heard “Apartheid Israel” as their introduction to it.

The passion of the BDS protesters at Woolworths shouldn’t be dismissed lightly.

– Geoff Sifrin, Editor

‘To pilger’ seems appropriate in Pilger’s anti-Israel diatribe

DAVID SAKS

It was the late Auberon Waugh who, in the early 1980s, coined the verb “to pilger”. Tongue-in-cheek, he claimed that its origin was “lost in the mists of time”, but it was, of course, aimed at the crusading leftwing journalist John Pilger (pictured), who already back then was becoming notorious for having few scruples when it came to selecting information that confirmed his thesis and omitting that which did not.

The word even briefly found its way into the 1991 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary of New Words, which defined it as “conducting journalism in a manner supposedly characteristic of John Pilger, or, more specifically, as presenting information in a sensationalist manner to support a foregone conclusion; using emotive language to make a false political point; treating a subject emotionally with generous disregard for inconvenient detail; or making a pompous judgement on wrong premises”.

Pilger was successful in getting the word removed a few years later and to date remains the darling of those for whom the Western, ethnically white democracies epitomise the ultimate in human villainy. It goes without saying that one of his regular targets over the decades has been Israel.

Pilger himself does not deny engaging in what some call “advocacy journalism” and which others - too few of them, unfortunately - more correctly describe as propaganda.

In a revealing interview with the Progressive, he dismissed the idea of impartiality and objectivity altogether, saying journalists who claimed to be objective were channels for the official, establishment point of view and therefore ciphers

and transmitters of lies.

In this respect, he strikingly resembles Ilan Pappé, the Israeli-born historian (the term, in his case, should be used with caution) who has quite unabashedly admitted to manipulating the historical record so as to conform with his ideological views

(“We do [historiography] because of ideological reasons, not because we are truth seekers... there is no such thing as truth, only a collection of narratives.”)

On September 11, Pilger delivered the Edward Said Memorial Lecture in Adelaide, Australia, speaking on the just-concluded Gaza conflict. His audience were given exactly what they expected and wanted to hear, namely a characteristically emotive, bizarrely one-sided narrative of wanton brutal crimes against a wholly innocent and helpless Palestinian population, not just in the late conflict but from Israel’s establishment onwards.

On September 21, an entire page of the Sunday Times was devoted to reprinting an edited form of his address, with accompanying images.

What can one say about the credibility and integrity of someone who, in commenting on the seven-week war between Israel and Hamas, cannot bring himself to even mention the missile barrage that preceded and thereby provoked the war, nor the sustained rocket fire at Israeli towns that continued right until its conclusion?

Pilger likewise failed to record the dozens of sophisticated infiltration tunnels leading deep into Israel that Hamas had constructed, nor the massive stockpiles of weaponry that these contained.

Information coming to light in the wake of the Israeli ground operation, suggests that a cam-

paign whose original aim was primarily to impair Hamas’ ability to fire missiles, had stymied at the eleventh hour what may well have been a catastrophe of 9/11 proportions. Chillingly, captured weaponry included items needed to carry out large-scale abductions: tranquillisers, handcuffs, syringes, ropes and the like.

None of this makes it into the Pilger thesis. In terms of his frankly defamatory screed, Palestinian citizens were wantonly slaughtered during the war. For Pilger and his ilk, Hamas is a democratically elected liberation movement, not the radical Islamist faction that initiated a conflict in the certain knowledge that Gaza’s civilians would be in the firing line.

It is inconsequential (or, more likely, Zionist propaganda) that Hamas deliberately buried its military infrastructure in residential areas, including in and around hospitals, schools and mosques, and openly called upon Gazans to ignore Israeli warnings to evacuate areas where attacks were imminent.

And how do the multiple warnings issued to Gaza civilians by the IDF, not to mention the last-minute abortion of attacks where civilians deaths were expected to ensue, square with the Pilger thesis of Israeli soldiers running amok, massacring helpless men, women and children at will?

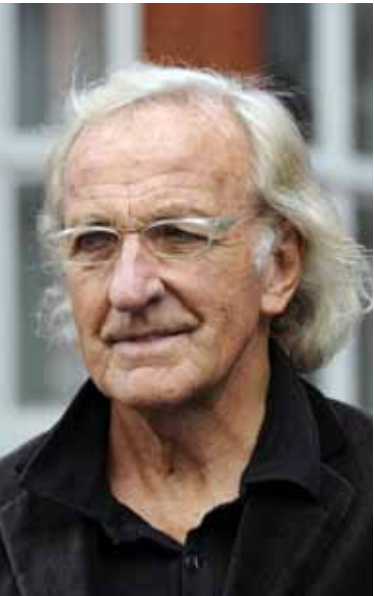
All of this information was readily available to any genuinely professional journalist who want-

ed to present as accurate a picture of what happened as he could. For “advocacy journalists” of the Pilger stamp, however, anything that contradicts the “essential truths” they believe they are preaching, are to be disregarded, or otherwise waved aside as lies emanating from the oppressor.

The flagrant abuse of the most basic journalistic standards when it comes to the Israel-Palestine question, something mirrored by the equally shameful distortion of fundamental academic principals on university campuses the world over, must rank as one of the greatest scandals of our age. Above all, it is not about being pro-Palestinian but about conducting an implacable ideological war against Israel.

When, in the latest conflict, the bombs started falling and women and children began dying, Hamas’ well-oiled propaganda machine quickly set about calling on the world to rescue them from Zionist “genocide”. Yet again, we saw multiple voices in the world media willing to play that game, regardless of the irony that by providing the Jihadist group with the propaganda victories they sought, they were making themselves complicit in encouraging the very deaths of innocents they purported to deplore.

It all suggests - if not demonstrates outright - that those excoriating Israel in such extreme terms, Pilger included, are not motivated by any real feelings of compassion for the Palestinians, but by their blinkered hatred of the Jewish state.





**Disclaimer** The letters page is intended to provide 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*

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WE ARE NOT JEWS - AN ANTI-SEMITIC LABEL - BUT ARE ISRAELIS

I have often wondered why there is such a very small percentage of Diaspora Jews under the age of 25 who do not, or have no intention of making Israel their home. I have come to the conclusion that the primary reason is due to a lack of self-identity.

For thousands of years there has been a perpetual distortion of history. But the fact is that we are not Jews; we are Israelis. The term Jew or Jewish is not mentioned even once in the Torah, which describes us as the People of Israel (for the nation), and/or the Children of Israel (for individuals), but never as Jews.

The term Jew is an anti-Semitic label that evolved during the Babylonian exile. The hero of the Purim saga, Mordechai, is known as Mordechai the Jew. After the destruction of the First Temple, he was exiled from Jerusalem and Israel with the captives who were carried away with King Yekhoniah of Judah.

Because the mass of exiled Jews were from the tribe of Judah, they were called Jews. Mordechai himself was from the tribe of Benjamin, but he too was called a Jew. The fact is that all the exiles were Israelis, or Israelites. In the ensuing exile we became known as Jews, a term that has stuck in every part of the Diaspora.

Many of today’s leaders, both inside, and outside of Israel consider themselves Jews first and Israelis second in relation to the firm Israeli Diaspora connection. They consider that to make this partnership flourish we must all understand that we are Jews first and Israelis second.

Sadly, these people have it upside down and this is a very important reason why aliyah is so low. We are Israelis first, second, and third. Some of us are Israelis, who have been blessed to live in Israel, and others live under the “curse” of exile in foreign lands. But they too are Israelis.

Now that we have sovereignty of much of Eretz Yisrael after nearly 2 000 years of exile, there is no need for the term Jew to be used for any Israeli, either in Israel or without.

The term “Jew” is the formula for the schizophrenic thinking that so characterises Diaspora Israelis, who think of themselves as American Jews, or French Jews, or South African Jews etc, when in fact they are the Children of Israel. Their nationality is Israeli. They are Israelis who live in the exile of foreign lands.

It is true that for many “mature” people who are long settled in their ways, as well as the elderly and sick, the challenge of aliyah is not easy, or possible. But in these uncertain and often dangerous times in the Diaspora, it is certainly the duty of Jewish organisations, particularly Torah leaders, to remind their communities of the true nature of their status in exile.

**Choni Davidowitz**  
**Golden Acres, Johannesburg**

*The letter has been shortened - Editor.*

AN ACTIVE JEWISH SCOUT GROUP IN PRETORIA IN THE ‘40S

In your pre-Yomtov issue on page 22, an article appeared by David Saks on “Gauteng’s first-ever Jewish Scout group”.

I am pleased to advise that, while this may be the first in what is known as Gauteng today, and it may be the first for many years, this Scout group is not the first Jewish one in South Africa.

I was a member of a very active Jewish Scout group in Pretoria around the 1940s, called the 21st Pretoria Judean Scout Troop, with well over 30 members. We participated in all the Scout activities and world jamborees.

I am attaching a photograph (I am third from the left, back row) and was about 15 years old at the time. Sadly, many of my friends in the photograph are no longer around today. Hirshel Nowosenetz (now 92) and his brother Sydney, both also members of the Scout group, still live in Pretoria today.

**Lou Michal**  
**Groenkloof, Pretoria**



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On the web this week

While there's no paper for the next two weeks, content posted daily on [sajr.co.za](http://sajr.co.za). Popular content exclusively on the web today are: Olga Meshoe at "Jewish Town Hall" meet; Zev on the security situation; and Cape Board chairman's report. On Israel: Intel & Israel's biggest investment ever;

China invests big in Israel; Record olim arrivals. On the lighter side there's the "SA moms do Rosh" and "New job for Perez" vids, Glatt kosher boerie on sale throughout US; and Top-10 US Jewish entertainment moments of 5774.



'Wheels of Love' for Jerusalem's Alyn Hospital children

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg businessman Steven Blend is passionate about Israel; he also loves cycling. What better way to celebrate both passions than through the 15th annual Wheels of Love Ride for the Children of Jerusalem's Alyn Hospital next month. He spoke to the SAJR about the upcoming ride and his wish to get more South African cyclists involved.

Having ridden in 2009 and 2011, he explained how participants become a community imbibing Israel's beautiful landscape. "Each year, the race is planned along alternating routes: I have done the central Jerusalem to North Israel twice, and will do the central Israel to South Israel this year. It goes all the way to Tel Aviv.

Mark Kruger, CEO of StopWash is joining Blend in what will be his second ride. "The idea of changing people's lives and still testing yourself, is a win-win situation," he said.

The paediatric rehabilitation section of the Alyn Hospital uniquely offers holistic support for the child patient and his or her family, and with a vehemently multicultural practice, it offers culturally sensitive facilities for everyone, from Ethiopians to Russians, Muslims to Haredi Jews. This cycle ride is its major fundraiser. Each year it raises upwards of \$2,5million.

"Many South African cyclists choose to ride off-road," adds Blend. "This year, the Alyn challenge has an off-road section. There are long, long days - some extending to a ride of over 160 km, but the main attraction of participation in this race is everyone is going for the cause.

"Israel's not exactly a society where on-road cycling is viable," he adds. "For this reason, a special effort is made by everyone, from people handling traffic directives to police escorts, to make this race work," and work it does, with incentives for cyclists of different strengths. "There are three groups of participants at different levels, the easier ones involve touring."

And the challenge of transporting a bicycle overseas? "El Al has



Mark Kruger (left) and Steven Blend after Jerusalem's 2011 Alyn challenge.

made a deal to transport the bikes of Alyn participants for free."

Two other South African cyclists join Blend and Kruger in this year's challenge: Capri Wheelers' Selwyn Sanders and Johannesburg businessman Steve Liptz.

Running from November 9 to 13, the Wheels of Love starts at the desert vista of Ben-Gurion's tomb and runs through Sde Boker, Mitzpe Ramon, Eilat and the Dead Sea.

Blend believes the recent war with Gaza put people off going. "Now that the war has subsided, there is still a change to register. Approximately 600 cyclists take part in this race."

And then, there's the culmination of the ride: "On the fifth day," says a media statement, "all riders cycle up to Jerusalem for an emotional ending ceremony. Alyn's children give each rider a medal, acknowledging their effort throughout the ride's five days.

• There's time to decide to participate: Blend may be contacted on 082-445-3528 or [steven@blend.co.za](mailto:steven@blend.co.za); the ride's URL is [www.alynride.org](http://www.alynride.org).

Zuma again endorses two states and condemns anti-Semitism

DAVID SAKS

President Jacob Zuma has reaffirmed that South Africa's long-standing policy on the Israeli-Palestinian question remains unchanged, despite the increasingly hostile stance being adopted by his party towards the Jewish state.

In a meeting with the leadership of the SAJBD on September 18, and again in his address to the 69th UN General Assembly in New York the following week, Zuma reiterated his government's support for a negotiated, two-state solution to the conflict, based on the 1967 borders, with Palestine and Israel co-existing side by side in peace.

He further condemned violence by both sides, saying that there could be no military solution to the issue. While calling on the international community to help bring about "peace, justice and self-determination" for the Palestinians, he noted at the same time that this needed to include addressing whatever security concerns Israel might have.

In his meeting with the SA-JBD, the President stressed South Africa's continued willingness to play a role in helping Israel and Palestine to re-

solve the issues between them.

Other matters discussed included the sharp rise in anti-Semitic activity in South Africa, including threats and intimidation against the Jewish community and its leadership.

Zuma assured the Board that his government remained committed to combating such prejudice, and further emphasised the need for there to be harmony between people of different backgrounds and opinions in South Africa.

The government's continued adherence to a policy of engagement with both Israelis and Palestinians, was contradicted by a statement issued by ANC Secretary-General Gwede Man-

tashe on September 22, which announced that the party was "joining the call for [a] cultural, academic and education boycott of Israel".

This boycott would include travel bans for members and leaders of the ANC, Cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament and government officials.

The SAJBD strongly criticised the ANC's stance, saying that a one-sided boycott would not only do nothing to help bring about peace to the region, but would cause needless polarisation and division within South African society. It would also undermine the government's attempts to play a role in the peace process, which they are doing through their Middle East envoys.



Raymond Goss; unidentified; Susan Shabangu; Jeff Radebe; Wendy Kahn; Jeff Katz; Zev Krengel; Maite Nkoana-Mashabane; President Jacob Zuma; Mary Kluk; Dr Cassius Lubisi; Ben Swartz; Jonathan Silke; and Eric Marx.



# Glenhazel residents reclaim their park

## OWN CORRESPONDENT

The small park located by Park Circle and Cross Road, in Glenhazel, is surrounded by apartment blocks and retail businesses. It is a popular venue for caregivers and toddlers to enjoy the sunshine.

The trouble was that the park was covered in litter and devoid of any seating accommodation. Local resident Julio Woznica and other residents from the area, with the assistance of the ward councillor, Steven Kruger, took up the matter with Jerome Ogle, Region E manager for City Parks.

In record time a team under Gary Andrews

The park is a popular venue for caregivers and toddlers.

provided benches and rubbish bins, changing the character of the park for the better.

Still on City Parks’ “to do” list for this area, is the promised step-over pole fence to stop kids running into the adjoining road, as well as additional playground equipment. A resident has also offered to donate a used jungle gym and slide to the park, but these still need to be

inspected by City Parks to ensure that they are safe.

Also over the last two years, Denny Rade-meyer, a resident of Jacinth Road, opposite the Japanese Gardens/Glenhazel Park, has been working to improve this park as well. This is a large park, which stretches nearly a kilometre from Northfield Avenue to Lyndhurst Road.

The park has recently had a facelift, courtesy of City Parks. Much overgrown vegetation has been removed and the lighting system was improved.

Johannesburg Councillor for Glenhazel, Steven Kruger.



## Confronting Woolies

A smattering of ANC Youth League supporters on Monday protested outside Woolworths’ head office in Cape Town, demanding that the retailer cut ties with Israeli suppliers.

They also called on South African consumers to boycott Woolworths for what they called “supporting an apartheid state”.

Woolworths stock Israeli imports such as pretzels, matzah, litchis, mangoes, cherries and other fruits and vegetables.

ANCYL spokesman Braam Hanekom, said the protest was part of a boycott of Woolworths led by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in South Africa. He said Woolworths generated a R12 million profit a year from Israeli products.

“The apartheid state of Israel should be boycotted economically. We should not be paying for the bullets and the bombs that are used against children in Palestine.”

He said Woolworths could easily withdraw those products. Instead it wants its franchises around the country to lose hundreds of millions of rands because “we will shut down many, many Woolworths stores. We have been discouraging all members of the Youth League, the Young Communist League and the SA Communist Party, from buying from Woolworths.”

Hanekom vowed that the campaign would be intensified until Woolworths heeded its demands.

Woolworths said (on Monday) it had been inundated with views on the issue. The company said it complied with government guidelines on Israeli products and the origin of every product was stated on the label.

“Woolworths abhors violence and loss of life, particularly of children, in any circumstance and we are deeply saddened by the tragic consequences of the conflict in Gaza,” the company said.

“Many of our customers have asked if we source from the occupied territories. We do not. We cater for a wide range of customers in our stores and try hard to acknowledge and celebrate the various beliefs and traditions of each group.”



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\*  
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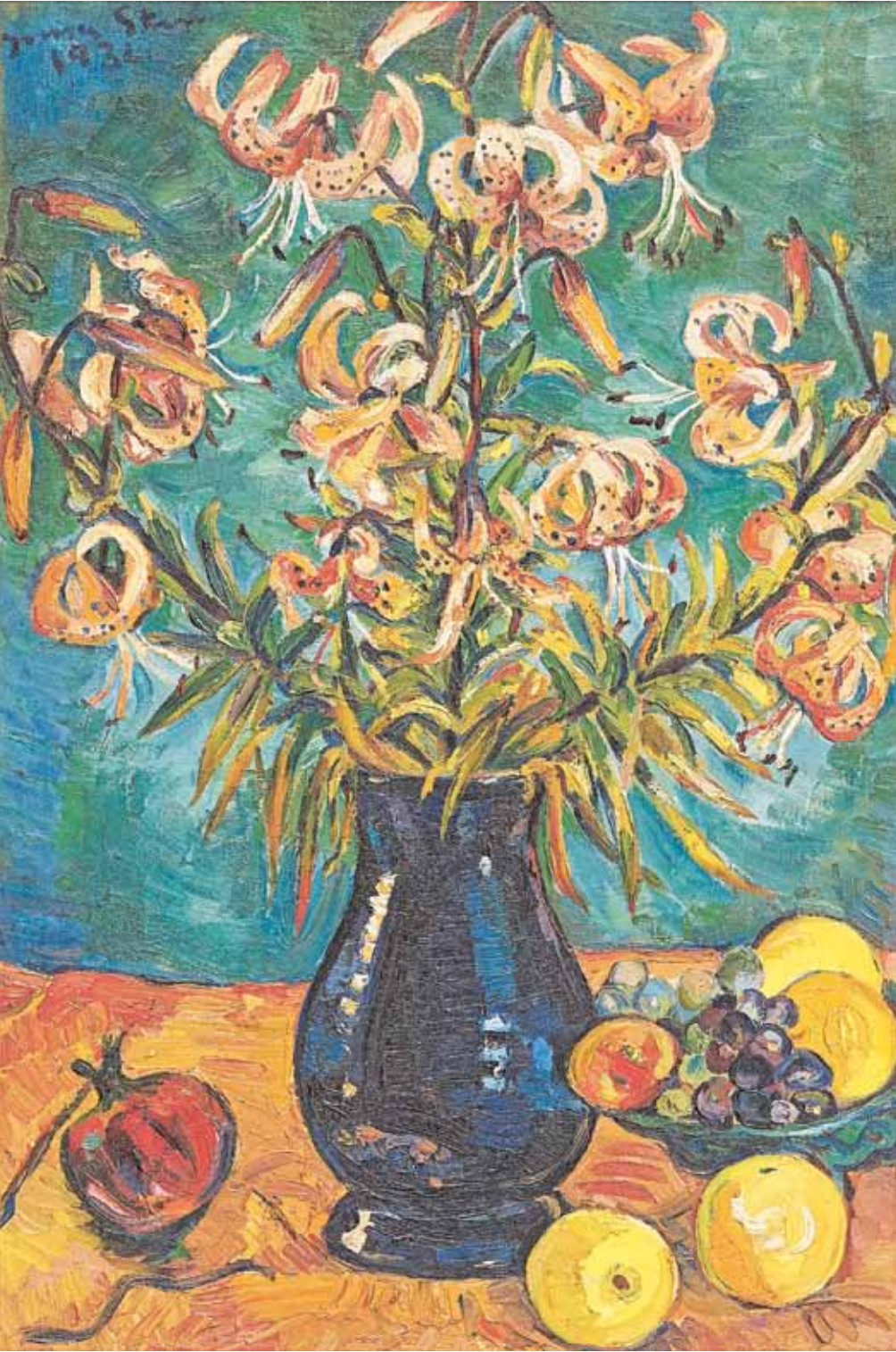
# KDL tots learn all about Rosh Hashanah

SHEVA MESSIAS

Rosh Hashanah at King David Linksfield Preprimary School, created a lot of excitement. The children have been preparing for Rosh Hashanah for the past month, since Rosh Chodesh Elul. We have been privileged to have Rabbi Pini Pink of Chabad come and blow the shofar each morning. We learnt about trying to be a better person and put messages on our mitzvah trees. We learnt about tefillah, teshuvah and tzedakah, baked round challah, visited the shul, made beautiful gifts for parents and heard Rosh Hashanah stories. It all culminated in us setting our tables and noticing the differences between a Shabbat table and a Rosh Hashanah one. The children so enjoyed eating the round challah and apples dipped in honey. Everyone went home well prepared for the special days ahead.



Senior group boys Jacob Boyer; Asher Freedman; and Aaron Segev, enjoying eating their challah and apples dipped in honey at their Rosh Hashanah table.



# To be caught being kind...

SUE BENJAMIN

We at Sydenham Pre-Primary School are very excited about the launch of our new project, SKE, Spreading Kindness in Elul (and always). Judaism teaches that the world is built on kindness and Elul is the most opportune time to do teshuva: to take stock of ourselves and the lives we lead, to look at where we have fallen short of our spiritual aspirations and what we can do to improve ourselves. The entire Sydenham campus is participating in this project. Children naturally look to their surroundings for a role model; it is therefore imperative that they be exposed to be good role models who can guide them to develop their maximum potential in all aspects of their lives. Acts of kindness are being encouraged both at home and at school. Should anyone be “Caught Being Kind”, wherever they are, the act of kindness has been documented and is on display in the classroom.



Jessica Cohen; Keren Kalmek; Jemma Paiker; Leah Sassoon; Zach Nerwich; and Gavi Gosher at the launch of our project, Spreading Kindness in Elul.

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Above Board  
Mary Kluk  
National Chairman

In the week preceding Rosh Hashanah, the senior leadership of the Board and representatives of the SAZF met with President Jacob Zuma and members of his Cabinet at the president’s Mahlamba Ndlopfu residence in Pretoria. Discussion focused mainly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the sharp rise in anti-Semitism in South Africa over the past several months, two issues that were obviously related to one another. Most anti-Semitic activity in this country today is in some way connected to the Middle East question and, as we saw again during the Gaza war, intensifies at times of increased conflict in the region. It is therefore naïve to treat anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism as two completely separate things, since in practice there is a constant overlap between the two. It is also unrealistic to believe that constant attacks on the Jewish homeland, particularly when perceived to be coming from members of government, will not negatively impact on the Jewish community. Our comfort and security, and how we feel about our place in South Africa, is unavoidably tied up with Israel and our government’s relationship with it. During the Gaza period, we were encouraged by the generally balanced stance taken by government, which focused on calling on both sides to cease their attacks rather than playing the blame game. During our meeting, President Zuma reiterated the statements he made during this time. His strongly-held view and that of his government is that there can be no military solution to the conflict; rather, there has to be a negotiated process aimed at achieving a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with an Israeli and

a Palestinian state co-existing in peace alongside one another. The President also expressed a strong desire for South Africa, with its experience in conflict resolution, to play some kind of a role in this process, if at all possible. Overall, we came away from the meeting feeling that the President genuinely understood our concerns and that South Africa’s policy on the Israel-Palestine question remains unaltered, despite the pressure brought to bear on it during the Gaza war to break off its ties with Israel. We were also very warmly received, and assured of how much the contribution our Jewish community is making to building South Africa, is appreciated. Government’s reaffirmation of its support of the two-state process and of its wish to engage with both parties in helping to advance it, is particularly welcome in light of various contradictory messages that have been coming from the ANC. Shortly after our meeting, the ANC issued a statement announcing its support for a cultural, academic and education boycott of Israel, including travel bans for party members and government officials. The ANC has also co-signed a declaration suggesting that the very establishment of Israel was illegitimate. In our response, we said that apart from doing nothing to bring a peaceful settlement closer, boycotts would only stir up hostility and division within our own society, something that indeed has been happening. While we understand that there is a difference between government and the ruling party and that it is the former which determines official policy, we are obviously concerned about the increasingly hostile stance taken by the ANC and are in communication with the party’s leadership to obtain further clarity on their position.

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

This column paid for by SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# 70 years on, Jossels still in love

OWN CORRESPONDENT

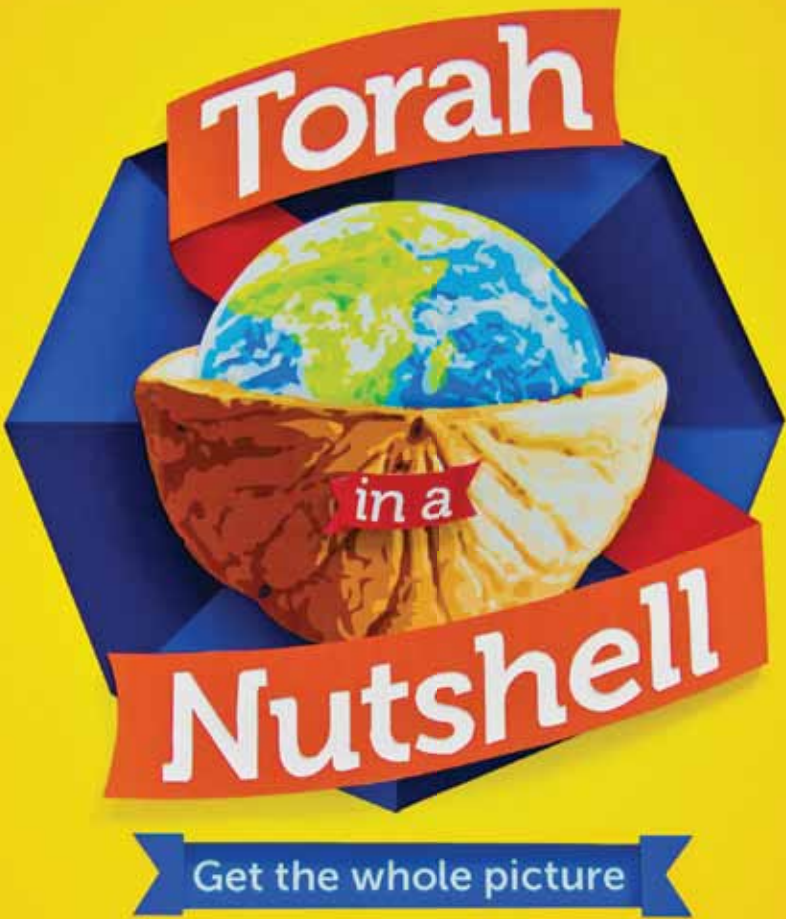
Recently, Killarney residents Solly and Sylvia Jossel celebrated 70 years of marriage and Solly turned 100. “I believe Hashem joined our souls,” says Sylvia (89), as they told their extraordinary tale of romance, loss, love and victory. Rabbi Avraham Hyam Lapin married them on August 13, 1944 at Yeoville Shul. Solly went to Johannesburg’s only yeshiva - opposite Wolmarans Street Shul - alongside the men who were to become Johannesburg’s leading rabbis. “I was the outsider. I studied Tanach, Gemorrah... And then I became a despatch clerk in Johannesburg. I was promoted to a job in Springs and then to a wholesale business which became Cash and Carry. Insurance and finance were my bag.” Solly, born Shleyne Neustyn is one of the two remaining Ochberg orphans. He remembers as a five-year-old, waving goodbye to his mother at the station in Poland. Cossacks killed his father before he was born. Having earned her keep by baking bread, and burdened with three other children, his mother could not afford to keep Solly and placed him in an orphanage, as a two-year-old. “Ochberg was allowed to take 200

children, with the permission of Field Marshall (Jannie) Smuts. I left Poland in shorts and a shirt.” They travelled six weeks through Europe. When they arrived in South Africa, 100 were sent to Johannesburg and 100 to Cape Town. “I chose Johannesburg. The older children said you’re mad, there are lions in the street, they will eat you up. But I couldn’t change my mind. When we arrived, they put us up on the floor of an old aged home in Doornfontein. Mr and Mrs Josselowitz, Lithuanian grocers” - he indicates a photograph - “came to visit. And I grabbed Mrs Josselowitz and wouldn’t let her go, not even to eat my supper. “They took me home. When I was 15, they said they couldn’t afford to keep me any longer; I had to find a job, which I did. I studied at night.” Solly cut his surname to Jossel when he was 21, “for business reasons”. After Sylvia’s mother was widowed, Sylvia became a driver in the army. “One day, I was standing on the corner waiting for a troop carrier to take me to the depot,” she said. “Solly walked past.” Calling it “love at first sight”, she describes the romance that led to 70 years of marriage. They have three children, 14 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.



Sylvia and Solly Jossel

Photo: Robyn Sassen



What would it be like to comprehend the Chumash (the first five books of the Torah) as a complete, organic entity? Not a bit here and a bit there, but a solid grasp of how it all fits together along with a grounding in all the foundation concepts?

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# Joel Alswang - educationist and religious leader - passes on

MELANIE ALSWANG

Joel Alswang, who passed away recently at the age of 94, was a man that not too many people could emulate. As a teacher, author and religious leader, he was unique.

He was born in Pretoria and educated in Johannesburg. As a young man, he forged his mother’s signature because he was too young to join the Air Force to fight in the Second World War, where he later became a lieutenant. He fought in North Africa, Italy and the Far East.

When the war was over, Joel rose rapidly in his career as a teacher, then vice-headmaster of Eastleigh Primary School, headmaster of Bryanston Primary School and he then founded Bryanston High School.

Later, he was appointed as an inspector of education and finally became superintendent of education, a position he held until he retired.

Thereafter, not one to sit and do

nothing, he tackled the arduous task of compiling dictionaries, such as the New English Usage Dictionary, while at the same time he travelled all over South Africa, lecturing at various schools.

Joel loved all sports and participated in many, and as a result, also compiled The South African Dictionary of Sport.

While he was an inspector of education, he saw the need for a better quality of textbook and was responsible for making these available to schools. He wrote many textbooks himself, mainly on English usage, as well as the New English Usage Dictionary which he compiled with A van Rensburg, The Dictionary of Sports in South Africa he compiled, included a description of every sport played in the country, with the rules, including such games as kennetjie, Zulu dancing and Jukskei.

Joel’s main activity as a young man was in religion. Rabbi MC Weiler, who started the Reform movement in South Africa, named Joel as one of the people

who would be effective in its growth. He later became principal of the Hebrew School, chairman of the committee at Temple Shalom and was very active in the running of the United Progressive Hebrew Congregation.

He became an honorary life member and was part of the congregation for over 65 years. He was also involved with the Alan Isaacs Camp in Margate.

Joel always had time for everyone, helping wherever he could. Nothing was ever too much for him.

He had a wonderful sense of humour and was highly respected and loved by all - he never demanded respect, he commanded it.

He was an incredible husband to his late wife Doreen; his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren adored him and he was an amazing role model for them. He is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, colleagues and past pupils.



Joel Alswang: teaching was in his blood.



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## Olga Meshoe kicks off ‘Likud Town Hall Meeting’

Likud SA Johannesburg, is starting a programme of holding a “Likud Town Hall Meeting” every month on the first Sunday evening of the month, whenever possible. There will be a guest speaker at each meeting after which other matters relating to Israel affairs, Likud SA and Betar, will be discussed.

Likud says in a media release that the first event will take place on Sunday October 5, at 18:00 at Beyachad, with the guest speaker being Olga Meshoe, COO of “DEISI” (Defend, Embrace, Invest, Support Israel). Entrance is free, but names and ID for security purposes, are required. These meetings are aimed at the broader Jewish community and not only members of Likud.



Meshoe describes herself as “adventurous, energetic and possibly a little bit of a workaholic”.

Before leaving seven years of fulltime legal practice to pursue her passion, Olga was a partner at Webber Wentzel Attorneys acting inter alia on behalf of blue chip clients such as Standard Bank and Anglo American Finance, as well as state-owned entities such as Transnet.

Olga now serves as a senior transformation facilitator and manager at Transcend Corporate Advisors, advising on all aspect of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment. She also serves as an in-house legal counsel for Transcend Capital.

She is a director and trustee of numerous companies and trusts focused on community work and is also the leader of Vessels of Honour, a youth arts organisation, aimed at giving young people who are gifted in the areas of music, drama and dance, a platform to showcase their talents and opportunities be trained and mentored.

### KASHRUT ALERT

The Cape Beth Din has withdrawn certification from Mrs Katz’s Chickens. Chickens purchased from Mrs Katz’s Chickens prior to September 18, are kosher, the kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues has announced.

Read the South African Jewish Report online

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Sunday (October 5)

- Second Innings hosts Bev Goldman on “Israel Update - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly” . Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea, light refreshments). Contact: Hylton Marks, (011) 532-9616.

Sunday (October 12)

- Second Innings hosts Victor Gordon on “The Shame of the United Nations” . Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea, light refreshments). Contact: Hylton Marks, (011) 532-9616.

Tuesday (October 14)

- WIZO Forum invites you to a “Succah Party”, celebrating “The Power of Women” with Bev Goldman. Rebecca Sieff Awards and World WIZO Bible Day. Venue: Oxford Shul Succah. Contact: Sandy (011) 645-2515.

Sunday (October 19)

- Second Innings hosts Shirley Zar on “The Influence of the Jewish Entrepreneurs and Architects in Johannesburg, Before and After the Second World War” Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea, light refreshments). Contact: Hylton Marks, (011) 532-9616.

- Jewish Genealogical Society of SA presents Arthur Oppenheimer on “In Search Of My Roots” . Venue: HOD, Orchards. Time: 19:30. Donation: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: Mo (011) 887-7764.

Friday (October 24)

- UZLC hosts Prof Barry Schoub on “Ebola - Do We Need to be Afraid?” Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria, 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

# Jerusalem Marathon - where history and sport meet



Back: Joshua Gavronsky; Mystery Celeb Runner; and Rabbi Ramon Widmonte. Front: Ben Swartz; and Nicci Raz.

“Running through history is the only way to describe the Jerusalem Marathon,” said Nicci Raz, organiser and runner in last year’s Jerusalem Marathon.

After a highly successful 2014 event, the Unity Challenge with ORT SA, Mizrachi and SAZF, is back with an exciting 2015 agenda, which will include a new and improved pre-marathon tour programme called “Seeking Jerusalem”, ORT SA says in a media release.

“The Jerusalem Marathon is one of the top 10 international spring running events around the world and the route is especially selected to recount Jerusalem’s 3 000-year history and is spectacular,” says Ben Swartz, vice chairman of the SAZF, who will also run the marathon as part of the Unity Challenge team.

Last year, more than 25 000 runners from 54 different countries participated in the marathon, including a 50-strong South African contingent, most of whom travelled as part of the Unity Challenge Campaign.

In light of the recent events in the region, the fifth Jerusalem Marathon, to be run in March next year, is expected to be an extraordinary experience with Jews from all over the world flocking to show their support for and solidarity with Israel.

The race is designed to include all levels of athletes - amateurs and professionals alike, individuals, groups, families and students of all religions and ethnic backgrounds.

“Join the tour as we unite in the journey of a lifetime and at the same time raising money for these worthy organisations whose work is impacting the lives of so many every day,” says Rabbi Ramon Widmonte, executive director of Mizrachi.

If you would like to get more information and meet the organisers, the Johannesburg launch will be taking place on September 18, at 19:30 at the Creative Counsel building on Corlett Drive, or visit the website for information or to sign up - [www.unitychallenge.co.za](http://www.unitychallenge.co.za)

# Chai Seniors in for a Succah party of note

Chai Seniors’ annual Succot Party takes place on Monday, October 13, at the Chabad House Succah in Savoy in Johannesburg, from 11:00, complete with delicious food, entertainment and inspiration, according to a Chai Seniors media release.

Says Chabad’s Rabbi Ari Kievman: “Gather with friends, enjoy live entertainment with the renowned Helen Heldenmuth and the legendary Magical Marc, a scrumptious feast to enjoy, and prizes to win! All this and much more at Chabad House’s titanic Succah in Savoy.”

The party is free of charge, but booking is essential for catering purposes. RSVP (011) 440-6600 / [rak@chabad.org.za](mailto:rak@chabad.org.za)



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# Hank Greenberg honoured, 80 years on

JACK MILNER

There are certain defining moments in sport, those that change the opinion of thousands of people and are remembered forever.

For American Jewry it was baseball great Hank Greenberg’s decision to play for his team, the Detroit Tigers, on Rosh Hashanah, and then refuse to play 10 days later - on Yom Kippur. The story is legendary and I have written about it before, but it is now 80 years since Greenberg made those two decisions and the Detroit Tigers took it upon themselves to commemorate the occasion.

There has also been a new book released on Greenberg that has given a lot more detail as to what happened on September 10, 1934 and September 19 the same year.

The book is called “Hank Greenberg: The Hero of Heroes”, by John Rosengren and it explains how difficult both decisions were for Greenberg.

In September 1934, many in Detroit’s Jewish community were anxious. It was the Great Depression and Detroit was home to two of America’s well-known anti-Semites, Henry Ford of Dearborn and Father Charles Coughlin of Royal Oak, both of whom had national audiences for their rants against Jews. To make matters worse, in Europe the

Nazis were on the rise...

Greenberg faced a lot of anti-Jewish slurs and insults, both from fans and opposing players. The insults were a constant part of his career. Except for Jackie Robinson, there was nobody in the history of the game who took more abuse than Greenberg, his teammate, Birdie Tebbetts, recalled.

There was a belief that pitchers were deliberately having a go at him in 1938 because he was Jewish and he closed in at Babe Ruth’s home run record.

But Greenberg ignored most of the racial insults and taunts and just focused on his game. He also never used his Jewish heritage as an excuse for any of his failures. He also found support from many, including the Detroit Free Press, who ran a headline in Hebrew wishing him a happy New Year the day before the game on Rosh Hashanah in 1934.

That Rosh Hashanah game was massive for the Tigers, as they needed to win it to qualify for the World Series. The game was about to start, but Greenberg still had not decided whether he was going to play or not.

“I don’t know what to do,” the son of Jewish immigrants said in the locker room to the third baseman as his teammates got ready. Greenberg had been flooded with advice from Jews and rabbis across the country, some telling him to honour his faith and sit out the game, while others said he should help his team, Rosengren reveals in his book. In the end, Greenberg did play, and belted two home runs to beat the Boston Red Sox 2-1.

Nine days later, Greenberg sat out for Yom Kippur, though by then the Tigers had almost clinched the playoffs. The Tigers lost that day.

To celebrate the historic occasion last week, the Detroit Tigers hosted its first Jewish Heritage Day, handing out plaques recalling how Greenberg helped the Tigers reach the World Series in 1934.

Rabbi Elliot Pachter of Congregation B’nai Moshe of West Bloomfield, threw out the ceremonial first pitch on September 14, and Greenberg’s accomplishments were announced as videos of him were displayed on the screen at Comerica Park.

The legacy of Greenberg is that “we are proud to be American and Jewish at the same time”, Pachter said. “We don’t have to give up one for the other. We can take pride in both cultures.”

Greenberg’s decision not to play on Yom Kippur has become part of the narrative of Jewish-American identity for many in



The Detroit Tigers have commemorated Hank Greenberg’s commitment to his team and religion, 80 years later.

metro Detroit. Eighty years later the Detroit climate has changed, with Greenberg having played a role in that, say writers and Jewish leaders. The CEO and President of Ford Motor Co, founded by Henry Ford, is now Mark Fields, who is Jewish.

Tigers manager Brad Ausmus also is Jewish, as is their second baseman, Ian Kinsler. Ironically Kinsler belted a two-run home run to put the Tigers ahead on September 14, the same game that was honoured as Jewish Heritage Day by the Tigers.

Before the game started on September 10, 1934, Greenberg went to Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Detroit. He prayed and tried to focus on his religious duties, but fans couldn’t help but stare at him, wondering whether he was going to play.

When Greenberg decided to play and end up hitting his two home runs, fans and newspapers in Detroit across the US cheered him. But Greenberg was conflicted.

“I hope I did the right thing,” he said later, according to Rosengren’s book. “Maybe I shouldn’t have played. It’s a sacred day. There wasn’t any way of getting a dispensation or anything... I got thinking about the team, and I didn’t want to lay down on the team. But it’s on my conscience.

“I caught hell from my fellow parishioners; I caught hell from some rabbis.”

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