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Jewish Report

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The King David Victory Park grade 8s enjoyed an exciting view of Johannesburg last week Thursday and Friday by going on the City Sightseeing Bus Tour. The open-top bus - in glorious Highveld spring weather – passed many important landmarks such as the Mining District, Gandhi Square, Carlton Centre and Constitution Hill.

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The impact of chesed



Parshat Shoftim
Rabbi Shmuel Bloch
Hazelwood Shabbos Minyan

In this week’s parsha, the Torah discusses a situation where a Jew has been murdered and the identity of the assailant remains unknown. In such circumstances, the elders of the town nearest to where the murder took place are required to perform a public ritual in which they state emphatically that they are not guilty and bear no responsibility for such a terrible crime taking place.

“They shall speak up and say: ‘Our hands have not spilled this blood and our eyes did not see.’” (Devarim, Chapter 21 verse 6-7).

Rashi based on the Talmud (Sotah 45B) asks with incredulousness: “Would it occur to anybody to think that these elders are guilty of murder?”

Rashi explains that the declaration of innocence that these elders are making is that they did not see the victim leaving and sent him off without food and without an escort.

If they had been guilty of such neglect, then they would have committed a horrendous deed tantamount to murder.

In the collection of Torah insights called “Majesty of Man”, Rabbi Alter Henschel Liebowitz points out that Rashi is teaching us that inattention and disregard in feeding a guest from another place can have disastrous and dreadful consequences and can tragically result in a person’s untimely demise.

Rabbi Liebowitz explains further the importance of escorting a guest from one’s house and notes that when a host escorts a person from his home, he does not physically aid the traveller.

Nevertheless, accompanying one’s guest does show incredible sensitivity and underscores the fact of the host’s care and concern for his visitor’s wellbeing. By walking with one’s guest, one instils within him courage to meet and beat any challenge waiting for him on his way.

If this is not accomplished, it was quite possible that a dire and terrible outcome could occur.

The Torah is teaching us that merely giving moral support and displaying concern for a

person’s welfare is as important as feeding him and taking care of his material needs. Both these acts are acts of chesed (lovingkindness) and chesed such as this can literally save a person’s life.

Chesed when performed properly, changes us in the most dramatic way. The impact of one “insignificant” act of chesed is beyond calculation. By showing warmth, care and concern, we can infuse the world with unlimited goodness and alter the destiny of the Jewish people.

We are now in the month of Elul and Rosh Hashanah is fast approaching. We have a golden opportunity to show Hashem that we really do want to perform mitzvot and acts of chesed and become the people we were meant to be.

We want to show Hashem how we take care of others and in the merit of such actions, we ask Hashem to do chesed with us.

Every morning think about one small act of chesed that you can do. Internalise as well that when you carry out this act of chesed, you are changing the world for the better, forever.

Reuben’s Haftorah trop class now spans the world

BRIAN JOSSELOWITZ
CAPE TOWN

Since Rosh Hashanah last year, students from Reuben Wagenheim’s Haftorah trop classes have read 64 Haftorot in nine shuls, including five in December on Shabbat Vayeshev, and to celebrate 10 years of learning each shul will be presented with a Book of Haftorot.

Wagenheim’s trop class is, as far as could be established, the only one of its kind in South Africa. It started 10 years ago when a few of his friends asked him to teach them the Haftorah trop and from small beginnings with three students at his Camps Bay home, it has gone international thanks to Skype.

“There’s a difference between the Haftorah trop and the Torah trop: the Torah trop also sounds different and is read by a strictly observant Jew, usually a rabbi. The Haftorah is read in shul every week and on special days and festivals.

“Some people learnt their Haftorah portion by repetition, CD or tape, so can only recite the one they have learnt. On the other hand, I teach the Haftorah trop, so the “student” can recite any Haftorah. This is how Cantor Jacob Lichterman of Vredehoek Shul taught me my barmitzvah Haftorah.

“So I am able to read any Haftorah with minimal preparation,” said Wagenheim.

The Haftorah trop is the musical notes and their sounds give meaning to the readings.

“You do not have to have a musical ear to recite the Haftorah, but the more musical you are, the more pleasant it will sound. I have had students who were tone deaf, and they sounded fine because the word pronunciation and the pauses were appropriate,” Wagenheim said.

Wagenheim teaches students who are learning for their second barmitzvah (at age 83) or because they want to recite Haftorah flu-

ently. The youngest in his class is 39 and the oldest turned 88 on September 1.

“Until now I have taught three people for their second barmitzvah, including my cousin in Port Elizabeth via Skype and two more students will have theirs in the next eight months.

“Thanks to Skype, students have read Haftorot in shuls in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Umhlanga, and even in Sydney, Melbourne, Dallas and Vancouver.

“I also taught my brother Morris in Sydney, who then read the Haftorot in Sydney at the ufruffs



With Reuben Wagenheim, in the front row, right, with some of his students.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Shoftim		
September 9/6 Elul		
September 19/7 Elul		
Starts	Ends	
5:41	6:30	Johannesburg
6:15	7:08	Cape Town
5:28	6:18	Durban
5:47	6:37	Bloemfontein
5:47	6:39	Port Elizabeth
5:39	6:30	East London

both his daughter and son before their weddings, and also at the Marais Road Shul when he celebrated his 38th wedding anniversary,” said Wagenheim.

Over the years there have been some funny and poignant moments. “Once, one of my students stopped two sentences before the end of the Haftorah and froze and just couldn’t finish. He did eventually. It was scary then, but very funny in retrospect - like ending a 10 000 metre race after 9 500 metres.

“A sad moment was when another student who had worked very hard to reach proficiency and looked so forward to making his post-barmitzvah debut, hosting family from all over for what was to be a big occasion, had to do it without his wife who had died some weeks earlier.

“I feel privileged to be part of this group, to teach and learn. The sound of men singing from the Books of Prophets in one’s own home is uplifting and a thing of spiritual beauty,” said Wagenheim who is a member of the Marais Road Shul, where he regularly leads the davening during the week.

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SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn, along with Chaya Singer (SAJBD diplomatic liaison), presenting on the Films and Publications Amendment Bill in Parliament last week.



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A concerted effort is needed to fight scourge of cyberhate

STAFF REPORTER

Local law enforcement agencies need to be much more involved in efforts to confront cyberhate, particularly on social media, if South Africa’s anti-hate speech laws are to be effective. This was one of the main recommendations made by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies in its presentation on the Films and Publications Amendment Bill in Parliament last week.

The Board was one of some 20 organisations that made oral submissions to the Portfolio Committee on Communications, together with the SABC, e.tv, Right2Know, Internet Service Providers’ Association, SA National Editors’ Forum and National Association of Broadcasters.

SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn stressed that South African law in terms of how it deals with balancing the right to freedom of expression with laws outlawing incitement to hatred, has to be informed by the country’s own historical experiences of racism and racially-motivated oppression and violence.

In this regard, she cited recent comments made by German Justice Minister Heiko Maas, who said that Germany, because of its Nazi past, has zero tolerance for racist and hate posts and expects Facebook to abide by stricter German laws banning racist sentiment, even if it is allowed in other countries.

“We in South Africa, with our apartheid past, should be equally vigilant against hate and should hold social media companies and electronic media to our standards” she said.

Kahn described how individuals are able to get away with making racist and threatening comments on social media through assuming false identities, including fraudulently posting in the name of other people or organisations.

Only the relevant online media services provider is able to release the correct ID information on those responsible, but it will only do so once it received an official request from law enforcement in the country concerned. Unfortunately, Kahn said, local law enforcement officials often do not have the expertise, or will, to obtain the necessary information.

“The result is that individuals, by concealing their identity, can propagate hate, incitement and threats with impunity,” she said.

To illustrate how difficult, if not impossible, it is to obtain the necessary assistance from government departments, Kahn presented a case study concerning a threatening message against the Jewish community that was posted on the SAJBD Facebook page in August 2014.

The message inter alia stated: “We will ambush you in your homes and rape you and drive you into the sea... WE ARE COMING AFTER YOU.” Several Jewish leaders were identified by name in the post, which it transpired had been sent under a fictitious name.

The Board embarked on a lengthy process aimed at getting the correct information released, in the course of which it laid a criminal charge at the Sandringham police station and engaged with the Hawks, Department of Justice, Interpol and State Security.

To date, however, it has been unable to make headway. Among the recommendations made by the SAJBD are that the Film and Publication Board Council and Appeal Tribunal be broadened to include at least one member of the SA Police Service who would be responsible for obtaining investigative documents.

The Tribunal should also include individuals with expertise in IT and electronic communications, Internet service providers, legal academics and human rights activists with a background in fighting racism and prejudice. Different government departments (Communications, Justice and Law enforcement) should also be included in the consultation and composition of the tribunal.

Kahn further identified the need for existing hate speech definitions as they appear in the SA Constitution and supporting legislation to be relooked at and if necessary adapted to the specific features and requirements of electronic media.

In this regard, she referred to the working definition used by the Anti-Defamation League, which described cyberhate as being “Internet or other digitally transmitted content attacking people based on their actual or perceived race, age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability or disease.”

Included under this are attempts to intimidate or promote violence or prejudice against people on the basis of such core characteristics.

US drove Israel to abandon Gaza - Bedein

ANT KATZ

David Bedein, the director of the Centre for Near East Policy Research in Jerusalem, says that the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Haifa and President of Israeli rabbinical courts, Rabbi Eliyahu Yosef She’ar Yashuv Cohen, in passing away this week, took one of the “most stirring episodes in the history of the modern state of Israel” to his grave with him - the fact that the US had ordered Israel to pull out of Gaza in 2005.

Bedein claims in a statement published on Tuesday in Jerusalem that the 89-year-old Jerusalem-born rabbi - an 18th-generation descendant in a family of rabbis - had heard and protected the real reason why then-Prime Minister Arik Sharon had pulled out of Gaza in 2005.

Rabbi Cohen’s father was wounded in the battle for the Old City in Jerusalem in the War of Independence in 1948. He was the last Jewish civilian who left the Old City as it fell, carried on a stretcher into captivity. And so it was fitting that Rabbi Cohen the younger, then the deputy mayor of Israeli Jerusalem, was given the honour of being the first civilian allowed to enter the Old City on its liberation during the Six Day War in 1967.

But there is yet another mission to Jerusalem which went little reported. In August 2005, Rabbi Cohen travelled to Jerusalem to make a last minute plea with Sharon to reconsider his plan to retreat from Gush Katif, which involved Israel’s obliteration of the 21 Jewish communities, including 325 thriving

farms and 86 shuls.

“Rabbi Cohen told me at the time that the chemistry that remained between him and Arik Sharon had lasted since his days of captivity after the 1948 War and that She’ar-Yashuv was the only rabbi who was ready to speak with him at the time,” says Bedein.

Sharon gave a clear answer to Rabbi Cohen: “This is what the US is demanding that I do and I must do it.” Bedein says it didn’t matter that half of the 9 000 Jews who lived in Gush Katif had nowhere to go.

Bedein says that “the Israeli government gave each family two containers to help them remove their possessions”. The “security establishment” warned that a hasty retreat would create a new Islamic terror base, says Bedein, adamant that Rabbi Cohen heard Sharon making it clear that he was under pressure from the US government and that was that.

“The myth of an autonomous Israeli policy in this regard had nothing to do with reality,” says Bedein.

He also says that, while often suspected, “it can now be determined that the US government was behind it all along. In meetings with concerned American citizens, Danny Ayalon, the Israeli ambassador to the US at the time, clearly stated that Sharon’s retreat plan was part of an overall Israeli-American agreement.”

Bedein says that in June 2005 Ayalon met with representatives of the Orthodox Union (the counterpart of South Africa’s UOS) and told them clearly that Prime Minister Sharon was left with no choice. “He is doing exactly what the US expects him to do.”

Community Voices

Louis Botha corridor development: Community sceptical

SUZANNE BELLING

The roadworks and construction taking place on Louis Botha Avenue in the northern and north-eastern suburbs of Johannesburg - to create a middle lane for the operation of Rea Vaya buses - is at present playing havoc with the traffic, inconveniencing drivers and pedestrians alike. It is also a nightmare for parents dropping their children off at schools in the area. The closure of several roads and the island in the middle of the road running from Yeoville to Alexandra township and resulting traffic jams, have forced people to take circuitous routes to reach their homes in the streets running off the main avenue. Most readers approached by the SA Jewish Report were pessimistic about a quick solution. This is what they had to say:



Rebecca Sarchi, principal of Torah Academy Girls' High School, which is on Louis Botha Avenue with the entrance to the school in a side street, said: "It is one billion per cent inconvenient because

the island in the road is much too far forward and has blocked off access to the school.

"People are doing U-turns and there is nowhere for parents to drop off kids." She was appalled by the number of taxis skipping red traffic lights and having to go "all the way around the block to get into the school. It is simply a disaster."

Sarchi is contemplating changing her timetable to add on five minute breaks for the teachers to make it in time from the Girls' High to the Boys' High to give lessons. She does not think the situation is going to change.



Esther Bassin, who lives in Boundary Road, Rouxville, walks from there to Pine Street Shul on Saturday mornings. "I wrote a letter about a year ago to complain, but received no reply. I walked the

route with obstacles all the way - pipes sticking out, bricks lying in the road. And now that is over, everything is full of red sand."

This she attributes to the clinic being built on the corner of Louis Botha Avenue and Oaklands Road. "It doesn't help to walk on the other side. Taxis go through red traffic lights and, while I am walking - or driving - I wonder why I should be inconvenienced.

"Only time will tell if there will be an improvement."

Meyer Slonim, who lives close to Louis Botha Avenue, said that the development taking place was "a hegdish" at the moment. "It is a nuisance.

"On the other hand, I suppose it will be for the better. Once they have got the buses running, maybe things will improve. At least we won't have the mess we have now.

"In the meantime, it is very inconvenient and I think it is going to take ages."



David Gluckmann called it "balagan". "It's causing a lot of traffic jams. I have been delayed if I go up Louis Botha Avenue. It's the worst street in the world. I say if you can drive on Louis Botha Avenue, you can



drive anywhere in the world. "I try to avoid it. I will take other roads, Joseph Street and Sixth Avenue, all the way down through Highlands North, or even go up via Sylvia Pass.

"I don't know if it's going to come right. I hope so. If it does, it will alleviate the general traffic situation."



Marcelle Ravid, former city councillor for Ward 73 (which includes Orange Grove, Norwood, Houghton and Oaklands), explained: "The Rea Vaya bus lane is in the middle of Louis Botha. In order for it to work

optimally, the buses need to travel fast to get to their destinations quickly and safely.

"The construction work will eventually go away - for now people will have to go out of their way."

She foresees problems with taxi stops and if there are breakdowns on the road. Taxis are not supposed to travel on the road - the operative word is "not supposed to".

Because of the construction and chaos, she missed an important appointment in town.

She does envisage the situation improving "depending on traffic enforcement and how effective policing will be".



Greg Cowan, who lives in a crescent off Louis Botha is frustrated.

"I am an old man, pushing 80. If I were 10 years younger, I would be interested to ask the workmen what is going on with all this chopping and changing to the configuration of Louis Botha Avenue.

"It comes across as confused and therefore confusing. I doubt if I will ever understand. I am as confused by all of this as I am by the machinations of our national and local government."



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Chief Rabbi's input to varsity fee crisis gets good response from Blade Nzimande



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Rabbi Gideon Pogrud with leaders of other faiths and the Ministry for Higher Education.

ANT KATZ

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein accompanied by Rabbi Gideon Pogrud formed part of an interfaith meeting called by Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande in Johannesburg last week. Dr Nzimande is currently seeking the broadest possible community input into his quest to solve the crisis over university fees and student demand that there should be no increase at all - for the second year running.

Rabbi Goldstein was one of 10 delegates of the National Religious Leaders Council (NRLC) who was invited to discuss the matter with Nzimande and some of his most senior officials.

The Minister presented the problem as well as a solution he is working on - but stressed that he wanted honest feedback from the group of faith leaders.

Nzimande's current thinking is that fees would increase as normal, the Chief Rabbi told the Jewish Report, but that the increases would only apply to those who could afford it. Those who can't would continue to pay the same fees as they did in 2015. The education institutions would get the fees they require as the subsidised students' shortfalls would be funded by the State.

The reason for his plan, Nzimande told the meeting, was to ensure that the wealthy are not getting subsidies which they don't need.

Seated opposite Nzimande at the table, the Chief Rabbi proposed a concept of "soft loans for students" which, he later told Jewish Report, means that "those who do well financially after studying will repay

their loans" and could become part of what can eventually become a self-sustaining system.

Rabbi Goldstein said the Minister really liked the idea and asked his deputy to make note of it.

Another of Rabbi Goldstein's suggestions is already being actioned. The Chief Rabbi wrote a Bill of Responsibilities in 2009 (co-drafted with then-Minister of Education Naledi Pandor) which is now part of the primary school curriculum in South Africa and suggested its distribution should be expanded to higher education institutions, workplaces and the like.

The deputy director general in Nzimande's ministry, Dr Dianne Parker, was tasked to work with Rabbi Goldstein to take the idea forward - and they are already in touch.

Nzimande said there is a gap the religious leaders could assist him with; there had been very little input into the debate from parents, resulting in a situation where educators, government and students are left to work out the answers without guidance from parents. He asked the faith leaders to please pass the message down the line so that community clergy could raise it with their individual congregations.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Chief Rabbi pleaded with the Minister to express the grave concerns of the country's religious leaders to the President and his government "regarding the actions being taken against Minister Pravin Gordhan". Dr Nzimande promised that he would convey the message.



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Four bodies pulled from rubble of collapsed parking garage

JERUSALEM (JTA) - The body of another worker was pulled from the rubble of the collapse of a four-level underground parking structure under construction in Tel Aviv on Tuesday evening bringing the death toll to four. The third and fourth bodies were located several hours apart.

Three other workers, Israeli and Palestinian, are believed to still be trapped under the rubble more than 24 hours after the collapse at the building site late Monday morning. At least 20 people were injured in the accident.

One of the dead has been identified as a Ukrainian worker.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the site late Monday night, eschewing the Fifa 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Israel and Italy being held in Jerusalem. The site was swarming with search-and-rescue personnel.

“I am constantly monitoring the rescue efforts at the disaster site in Tel Aviv,” Netanyahu said on Tuesday morning as he boarded a flight for a two-day state visit in the Netherlands, adding that he was “deeply impressed by the work of the rescue units led by the GOC Home Front Command”.

“The people are doing exceptional work on the highest professional level to be found anywhere in the world,” he said. “There are still people trapped; we are making every effort and are not giving up on anyone. We will reach them all.”

Dudi Mizrahi, the head of the Israeli Army’s Home Front Command Search and Rescue Unit, said on Monday evening that the search-and-rescue operation could go on for days. He said, “the chances of finding anyone alive” were less likely with each passing hour, according to The Times of Israel.

Some 300 Israeli army search-and-rescue personnel have been involved in the search, as well as 160 rescue workers from the fire department. A K-9 unit also is on the scene to assist in locating the missing workers.

Police have placed a gag order on details of the investigation into what caused the collapse, according to Haaretz, which reported that a number of serious safety accidents have occurred in recent months at sites under construction by Danya Cebus, the company operating the site where Monday’s collapse occurred. An accident three months ago occurred at the same site, according to Haaretz.

The collapse sent a large plume of dust floating over the area. Officials were trying to determine the cause of the collapse as rescue crews and medical workers converged on the scene.

Lior Teherani, a fire official, told Channel 10 TV that the collapse of the parking garage brought down a crane, which then caused part of a building to collapse as well.

Aerial images released by police and shown on Israeli TV showed a large, crater-like hole in the ground.

At least 24 workers, Israelis and Palestinians, were injured in the collapse.

Some 18 construction workers were rescued in the hour after the collapse late Monday morning.

A Tel Aviv Police spokesman said there is danger that the structure, in the northern part of the city, will collapse further.

The parking garage, for which construction began in November 2014 and was to be completed at the beginning of next year, was slated to have four levels. (JTA and wire services)

6

SA JEWISH REPORT

Opinion and Analysis

9 – 16 September 2016

The battle in the bowels of the ANC injures all



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

An old Swahili proverb reflects South Africa today: Wapiganapo tembo nyasi huumia - “When elephants fight, the grass gets hurt.” It refers to the damaging consequences for weaker individuals and groups in the midst of stronger forces, such as warring government officials and leaders.

Every day brings a new scandal in the clash of powerful factions in the ANC. One component is President Jacob Zuma’s camp of patronage politics, his friends the Guptas and other cronies playing dirty tricks to keep themselves at the feeding troughs of state money and who don’t care about the liberation movement’s proud heritage.

On another side are those trying to rescue the ANC’s moral standing as the nation’s saviour - various Struggle stalwarts, young people fed up with its failure to deliver on its multiple promises, embattled Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, and others.

White minority groups like the Jews, Greeks and others are aware that all the elephants are strong and will not easily succumb. And knowing how badly hurt the grass can get in this fight, they are tempted to sit quietly on the sidelines, fearing that if they back the wrong side they will pay for it later.

A similar stance was taken during apartheid, when many members of fearful minorities chose silence rather than publicly opposing immoral government behaviour.

While the ANC elephants fight, millions of ordinary South Africans are getting more desperate, without jobs, proper schools and other basic needs.

It is often hard to tell the good guys from the bad. Aside from the familiar major figures of the older generation, there are also younger people such as Mcebo Dlamini, an organiser of the campaign on Monday to occupy the ANC’s Luthuli House headquarters in Johannesburg, with the message of getting rid of Zuma.

Many people applauded the group, though it failed in its aim after being blocked by Zuma supporters amid threats of violence. But this is the same man who, as Wits SRC president last year, expressed admiration for Hitler: “What I love about Hitler is his charisma and his capabilities to organise people. We need more leaders of such calibre. I love Adolf Hitler.”

And there is Julius Malema, who is no longer an ANC member after his expulsion in 2012 for “sowing divisions” and bringing the ANC into “disrepute”, but remains tied to the struggle over its soul.

Some people still say his expulsion was a gigantic blunder by the ANC. A few years ago he was laughed off as a buffoon. People said: “He couldn’t even pass his woodwork course in school.” Since then he has become a canny politician leading a growing political party and a major player in national politics.

When Malema condemns corruption, calls for Zuma to resign and demands the Guptas leave the country, he evokes cheers. But when he spouts anti-white rhetoric and says he wants to nationalise the banks and mines and expropriate land without compensation, and his party members behave like thugs, he evokes dread, particularly among urban blacks and whites - including Jews.

One member of the older generation who has been a disappointment is Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa. Once touted as the man to take over from Zuma, he has been disgracefully silent while the president rapes the country.

Ramaphosa looked undignified last Thursday in parliament when he triumphantly held up new government-sponsored, flavoured condoms intended to replace the older model which has been distributed until now. Meanwhile, South Africa is hurting, waiting for a real leader to emerge.

It is likely the battle between the elephants will continue for some time before one side wins or sanity prevails. The question is how to protect the grass - the citizens - while it is going on.

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



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King Kong – a signifier of black aspirations at the time

SUZANNE BELLING

Louise Bethlehem (pictured), who lives in Israel and describes herself as a “long-distance South African”, has been appointed associate professor in the department of English and programme of cultural studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The daughter of Dr Brian and Marlene Bethlehem of Johannesburg, she addressed members of the community at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre, of which her mother was recently appointed chairman.

Speaking on “Dissent by Design; Arthur Goldreich and King Kong - the Jazz Opera”, Bethlehem called Goldreich a man with a vision ahead of his time.

He was involved as a costume and set designer in the 1959 production of King Kong - a musical with an all-black cast, based on the life of a champion black South African heavyweight boxer, whose career was cut short by apartheid and whose life ended early as a result of drugs, gangs and violence.

King Kong was “the concentrated essence of black culture”, she said, although several prominent whites also played a major role in it, including Goldreich. All involved “made their mark in contravention of the policy of segregation - an anathema to the apartheid government”.

The musical was an immediate success, later going onto the London stage. It was a display of the best of black jazz talent that led to global acclaim - and exile for several of its stars, including Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela.

She maintains an active research presence in South Africa, including a long association with the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER).

The musical showcased the black cultural renaissance in Sophiatown in the 1950s. “Jazz was probably the key signifier of black aspirations at the time,” Bethlehem said, “a mark of urban sophistication and status.”

A few years later Goldreich moved to Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia, where he pretended to be a wealthy white living a good life. This façade covered the use of the premises by the Umkhonto we Sizwe leadership, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki.

After the arrest of almost the entire leadership on the farm in 1963 (Mandela had been arrested earlier), Goldreich engineered his dramatic escape from custody



prior to the Rivonia Trial and made his way to Israel, where he had lived previously, enlisting in the Palmach and fighting in the 1948 Israeli War of Independence.

In Israel he later became head of architectural design at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.

After the Six Day War Bethlehem said Goldreich maintained his “sustained and principled criticism of the Israeli occupation”.

Bethlehem has had a distinguished academic career, graduating with a BA magna cum laude from Wits in 1984 as the top graduate in the faculty of arts. She obtained a masters degree (summa cum laude) and Ph D (with distinction) from the programme in comparative literature and poetics at Tel Aviv University.

She maintains an active research presence in South Africa, including a long association with the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER). She was in South Africa to attend its conference.

In Israel she was a member of the original group of scholars who instituted the inter-university programme in African studies, at present running in three universities.

With regard to the situation in South Africa, she told Jewish Report: “I think mistakes have been made, but I witness with optimism the groundswell of opposition arising out of the #Fees Must Fall movement, black feminist opposition to patriarchal domination and a new desire to reinstate the principles of the Freedom Charter.”

Introducing Bethlehem, Hazel Cohen, director of the RCHCC, alluded to Bethlehem’s wide fields of expertise, including literary theory and historiography, South African cultural history, the history of the Jewish community in South Africa, cultural studies, post-colonialism, visual culture, memory studies and trauma studies.



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DL Link’s fundraiser literally a rip-roaring success



Maseratis, Lamborghinis, Ferraris and Porsches all revving up for a good cause.

In a very successful event, the DL Link last week brought together hundreds of friends and family members to support 500 adults and children fighting cancer and life threatening illness in Johannesburg.

The non-profit cancer support organisation said in a media release that the event, “Super Cars for Super Stars”, held at King David Linksfeld, featured “an exhilarating morning of helicopter flips and thrill rides in a range of impressive machines ranging from Ferraris, Maseratis and Lamborghinis, to Porches and McLarens!”

Said the DL Link’s Terri Fleishman: “We wanted to give our DL Link warriors a day out to remember. It was a space to forget their worries and the stress of their diagnoses and see how much people want to be there for them.”

Around the field over 40 volunteer drivers started their engines together with a powerful roar.

Touched by the DL Link’s valuable work of supporting cancer patients and their families, Darren Fresco, Saul Jassinowsky,

Michael Salomon and Jarred Friedland helped drive the event from inception, roping in friends to share their prized possessions, including a Bentley driven by Saul Marks, Ross Lazarus’ one-of-a-kind Jaguar Project 7, a Pontiac Firebird and many more stunners.

Helicopter owner and pilot Joel Newhouse donated rides, while David Sacks flew Henley Air’s Jet Ranger.

Spectators and children were kept busy with jumping castles, slush, candy floss, Chip N Dip and boerewors rolls, with DJ Jarred Kruger creating a festive atmosphere. Proceeds of sales went to the DL Link. A moment’s silence was held for Linda Hurwitz, Christopher Sherlock and Bernice Davitz, who were at last year’s event but tragically have since succumbed to their illness.

“We move forward in honour of these special people, and to make every day of the journey that much easier for those still battling. The day was to show there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’, no separation. With the DL Link, nobody has to be alone.”

ORT SA’s new academy puts emphasis on coding



Teachers at Bonwelong Primary School attending the ORT SA coding workshop connect LED’s (light emitting diodes) and code them to follow a certain blinking pattern.

The new ORT South Africa STEM Academy is committed to driving STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) programmes to promote coding, robotics and 21st century skills among young people, ORT said in a media release.

“These skills are necessary in order to make people employable in tomorrow’s world,” says Ariellah Rosenberg, CEO of ORT SA.

“According to the World Economic Forum, when compared with previous industrial revolutions, the fourth is evolving at an exponential rather than a linear pace. Moreover, it is disrupting almost every industry in every country. And the breadth and depth of these changes bear the transformation of entire systems of production, management, and governance,” said Rosenberg.

“In some countries, robotics and coding are already part of the school curriculum as governments have acknowledged this as crucial to supporting their nations for generations to come.”

The new ORT SA STEM Academy will be taking this line of thinking and will be holding workshops and lectures in the relevant disciplines. ORT SA already runs coding workshops for teachers in the Ivory Park area where ORT SA runs mathematics projects.

The participating teachers have started coding as an extramural for grade 5s and a “destructobots” club has been started.

Rosenberg says in South Africa the challenge is the skills gap experienced in the job market. “How do we get more people to turn from consumers of technologies and social media to creators and thinkers?”

“Governments and education systems around the world have identified computational thinking, coding and robotics as essential and relevant subjects to develop higher thinking skills which are required for the future workplace.”

Kevin Cummins, an expert in teaching computational thinking, robotics and coding at schools, finds that such subjects encourage learners to explore solutions to problems which remain unsolved. It inspires innovation and supports problem-solving skills which form the basis of advanced mathematics and science.

Coding can embed thought processes which will be essential to any future tradesperson, CEO or surgeon.

“In addition to preparing ourselves for these changes and the implications that new technologies will bring with them, we also need to be getting ready for the reality that many professions are going to become redundant.

“Society has a responsibility to ensure that the next generation is equipped with the skills required to solve, create, invent and reinvent ideas, problems and ourselves. This is exactly what ORT SA is doing,” says Rosenberg.

Arnold Basserabie is Afrika Tikkun’s new chairman

Arnold Basserabie (pictured) has been appointed outreach organisation Afrika Tikkun’s new chairman. He fills the position left vacant by the recent passing of Dr Bertie Lubner.

Insurance Man of the Year, Marketing Man of the Year, Jewish Business Achiever of the Year, Jewish Lifetime Achiever, International Best of the Best Regional Chairman of the World Presidents Organisation - are some of the accolades and recognitions indicative of the calibre of man Basserabie is.

Basserabie’s involvement with Afrika Tikkun began at its founding in 1994, when Bertie Lubner approached him to become a patron. About 10 years ago, he joined the board where, for the last few years, he acted as chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee.

He was also part of the committee that chose Marc Lubner as chief executive of the organisation.

When Bertie passed away, Basserabie was approached to take up the position of chairman. “I thought about it,” he said, “and felt privileged to be offered the opportunity to continue to contribute to the growth and development of Tikkun.

“The organisation has been doing such good work in developing youth using the ‘cradle to career’ concept. It’s such a good cause, and represents a positive response to a great need in South Africa. To be able to play a meaningful role in pursuing that vision is very appealing.”

He added: “Without trying to replicate the creativity and passion that Bertie brought to

the organisation, I welcome the opportunity to continue to contribute to its growth, and support the Lubner family in their endeavours and objectives relating to Tikkun.”

Afrika Tikkun’s model is about strategic investment in young people from infancy, ultimately striving to deliver well-developed, enthusiastic and educated young people to the workplace. Arnold is a vocal proponent of the much needed work which Afrika Tikkun does: “Their strategy augurs well for their future and the role they play, in society and in enabling their donors and partners to achieve their own CSI objectives.

Said Basserabie: “Afrika Tikkun has become a multi-faceted organisation and as it continues to achieve its objectives, can only go from strength to strength.”





Police protecting Jewish MP after anti-Semitic death threat

LONDON - Ruth Smeeth, the Jewish MP for Stoke on Trent North, has been given police protection after receiving an anti-Semitic death threat on Facebook.

The 37-year-old was repeatedly referred to as a “Yid” in the abusive message which claimed “the gallows would be a fine and fitting place” for her “to swing from”.

The Sun reported Smeeth, who has previously worked for the Community Security Trust and is a former director of anti-extremist group Hope Not Hate, has had panic buttons and CCTV cameras fitted at her home.

Smeeth said on Twitter: “Huge thanks for the solidarity and supportive messages. I’m very touched and will keep fighting the good fight against abuse.”

The death threat expressed strong support for Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, referring to a “hatchet job” against him by the “right-wing, neo-con, Nazi-Zionist outfit Portland Communications”.

In June, Smeeth was verbally abused by a supporter of Corbyn at the publication of Shami Chakrabarti’s report into anti-Semitism in the party.

The online death threat rant referred to the incident, describing the “crocodile” tears “she concertedly and duplicitously shed at the irrelevant, anti-Semitic meeting she deceitfully attended”.

Smeeth told the Sun she held Corbyn “personally responsible” for the threats she had received.

“He must stand up and say enough is enough, and he has done nowhere near enough yet.”

Counter-terror police have conducted two investigations into threats against Smeeth since July. -Jewish Chronicle, London

DNA of 6 000-year-old barley near Dead Sea reveals its secrets

MASADA - Barley grains from the Chalcolithic period 6 000 years ago have become the oldest plant genome ever to be sequenced, announced a team of Israeli and international researchers in the journal Nature Genetics.

The barley grains and tens of thousands of other plant remains were retrieved from the remote Yoram Cave near one of Israel’s most popular heritage sites, the famous Masada fortress overlooking the Dead Sea.

The painstaking excavation process was headed by Uri Davidovich from the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Nimrod Marom from the Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa. Ehud Weiss of Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan led the archaeobotanical analysis.

“These archaeological remains provided a unique opportunity for us to finally sequence a Chalcolithic plant genome. The genetic material has been well-preserved for several millennia due to the extreme dryness of the region,” explained Weiss.

In order to determine the age of the ancient seeds, the researchers split the grains and subjected half of them to radiocarbon dating while the other half was used for DNA extraction.

“For us, ancient DNA works like a time capsule that allows us to travel back in history and look into the domestication of crop plants at distinct time points in the past,” said Johannes Krause, director of the department of archaeogenetics at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, Germany. - Israel 21c

Canadian footballer monitored over anti-Semitic tweets

TORONTO - The Canadian Football League (CFL) says it’s keeping an eye on Khalif Mitchell, the defensive lineman recently signed by the Saskatchewan Roughriders, who has a history of posting anti-Semitic tweets.

CFL commissioner Jeffrey Orridge issued a statement saying the league and Roughriders management will monitor “any commentary [Mitchell] may make



as a member of our league” and that any behaviour deemed inappropriate will result in Mitchell’s immediate dismissal from the team.

“There is absolutely no place in our league for commentary used to divide or disparage people on the basis of their religion, race, gender or sexual orientation,” Orridge said.

“Our social media policy expressly prohibits a current player, team or league employee from using social media, including the retweeting or reposting of someone else’s comments, to condone discrimination, harassment or violence.”

Mitchell, 31, last played in the CFL for the Montreal Alouettes in 2015, when he also found himself in hot water for his anti-Jewish statements on Twitter.

He was signed by the Roughriders on August 31. That day, media outlets across the country reported that as recently as two weeks prior to being signed, he had unleashed another string of anti-Semitic tweets and retweets.

One of them declared that the Islamic State is “really a Zionist-controlled terrorist organisation run by Jews”.

Another tweet, which Mitchell wrote on July 27 in response to an article titled “Zionism Goes from Bad to Worse, Taking Judaism With It,” reads: “Zionism isn’t bad to worse. That’s like poop to dung. It’s the smell that’s the worse.” - Canadian Jewish News

LOS ANGELES - On August 24, Milan Chatterjee, a former UCLA Graduate Students Association (GSA) president and third-year law student, sent a letter to UCLA Chancellor Gene Block informing the university that he is “leaving UCLA due to [a] hostile and unsafe campus climate”.

In a phone interview Chatterjee said he was beginning classes at New York University School of Law.

“It’s really unfortunate,” he said of his departure. “I

Ex-student association president, claiming BDS harassment, leaves UCLA

love UCLA, I think it’s a great school and I have lots of friends there. It has just become so hostile and unsafe I can’t stay there any more.”

Chatterjee is Indian-American Hindu and was president of the GSA during the 2015-2016 academic year, during which time he made a distribution of GSA funds for a November 2015 UCLA Diversity Caucus event contingent on its sponsors not associating with the divest-from-Israel movement.

The move brought protests from supporters of the Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) movement, who advocated for his removal from the presidency. The GSA board of officers censured Chatterjee in April 2016, and a June 2016 investigation by the UCLA Discrimination Prevention Office (DPO) concluded that Chatterjee’s stipulation violated a University of California policy that requires viewpoint neutrality in the distribution of campus funds.

In a statement sent to the Journal by UCLA spokesman Ricardo Vazquez, the university expressed disappointment at Chatterjee’s decision to leave, but stood by the findings of the DPO report. - Jewish Journal, Los Angeles

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Isaac Ochberg - a philanthropist of immeasurable value

SUZANNE BELLING

Few people are aware of the immense contribution of one man - Isaac Ochberg - who in 1921 saved almost 200 orphaned children from the ravages of war, death, devastation and disease, as well as anti-Semitic pogroms, at a time when civil war was raging between the Red and White armies in Russia, Poland, with Lithuania and Germany in chaos.

Thousands of Jews had died in the First World War and thereafter and horrendous stories of sick, dying and abandoned orphaned Jewish children filtered into South Africa. Estimates of the numbers of Jewish orphans ranged from 300 000 to 400 000.

Ochberg, who in 1895 came to South Africa from the Ukraine penniless and speaking no English and by 1920 was one of the richest men and the richest Jew in South Africa, decided to do something about it.

Understanding the plight of the children he appealed to then South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, for permission to bring, at his own expense, some of the orphans to this country.

Smuts limited the numbers to



Sheryl Benjamin; David Kaplan; Ryan Jossel, (great-grandson of an Ochberg orphan); and Lyanne Kopenhager.

Photo: Yael Gordon

200, stipulating that the children had to be under 16, be well, and have no mental or physical defects.

Risking his life, Ochberg travelled to Eastern Europe, visiting synagogues, where many of the children had gathered, bringing them to South Africa after a hazardous journey by cattle truck and boat, eventually sailing for Cape Town in the Edinburgh Castle.

“Daddy Ochberg” arrived with the children in Table Bay. Some of them were accommodated in the Oranjia Cape Jewish Orphanage, while the overflow went to Arcadia, the Jewish orphanage in Johannes-

burg, with a few being adopted by individuals.

The story of the Ochberg orphans was told recently by former Capetonian David Kaplan to Limmud audiences, illustrated by a film directed by Oscar-winner Jon Blair.

Two Limmud volunteers, Lyanne Kopenhager and Sheryl Benjamin, felt this was the ideal opportunity for Kaplan to visit the Jewish day schools to tell the story to the learners.

Kaplan, a former Cape Town lawyer, who made aliyah at the end of 1986, was ideally placed to impart information on the Ochberg

orphans to high school learners who had never heard of the philanthropist. But one child, Ryan Jossel, of King David High School Linksfield, put up his hand to say his great-grandfather had been one of the orphans.

Kaplan, a former chairman of Telfed, the South African Zionist Federation in Tel Aviv, established the Israel Centre in Cape Town and Johannesburg, feeling that Zionism in this country needed a boost.

After initial difficulties, he finally obtained the endorsement of Salai Meridor, then executive head of the Jewish Agency.

In Israel, where he works as a journalist and editor, Kaplan was a founder member of Truth Be Told (TBT), responding to anti-Israel reports in world media. He is on the board of Beth Protea in Herzlia and is involved with IDC Herzlia, an institute for higher education, offering studies in English in Israel.

He was involved in the establishment of a park in 2011 in northern Israel named after Isaac Ochberg and with former Pretorian Benny Penzik, whose parents were Ochberg orphans, he arranged an event in memory of Ochberg - attended by one survivor, Cissy Harris from Haifa, who was 93 at the time and is still alive.


Kaplan termed Ochberg “the greatest South African Jew in the greatest chapter of South African Jewish community history. Too few know about him.”


When Ochberg died in 1936 he left what is regarded as the largest individual donation ever to the JNF - half a million pounds, calculated in today’s values at over \$60 million.

Kaplan concluded by saying: “Today there are over 4 000 descendants of the Ochberg orphans who would not be alive today were it not for this great man.”

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Ensuring that Jewish memory in Birzai will live on, through a memorial

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Merunas Jukonis, co-ordinator of the project; Abel Levitt and Vidmantas Jukonis, at the existing memorial that commemorates the 2 400 Jewish and 90 Lithuanian victims who were murdered there.

Sheftel Melamed, the last Jew in Birzh (Birzai), passed away last year, but the Jewish presence in the town near the north-eastern border of Lithuania, will not be forgotten, thanks to an enhanced memorial to the 2 400 Jews who were murdered there on August 8, 1941.

The ambitious project is being spearheaded by philanthropist Benny Rabinowitz, whose grandfather, Faivel Rabinowitz, came to this country from the small shtetl.

A monument will be erected at the mass graves; a panel on the history of the Jews of Birzai reflecting their 500-year presence in the town will be added at the local museum; a Tolerance Education Centre at the high school where the history of the Holocaust is taught will be equipped and annual trips for the learners to visit one of the major centres of Jewish life before 1941, either Vilna or Kovno, will be sponsored.

The hope is also to publish an English translation of a recently published book about Birzai, as well as a book on the Jews from the shtetl who immigrated to South Africa.

Abel and Glenda Levitt, former Capetonians living in Kfar Saba, who unveiled a similar project in Plungian in

2011, are consultants to the undertaking, while Lithuanian Merunas Jukonis is the co-ordinator.

Abel has seen a “significant change” in the attitude of the Lithuanians since their first visit 18 years ago. “Of course there is still anti-Semitism at various levels, but the Lithuanians have come to realise that the murder of our people was not only done by the Germans but was perpetrated by them,” he says, crediting the 140 Tolerance Centres across the country today.

“The children today go to the mass graves and they hear and see the story.”

So far the names of 1700 of the 2 400 victims have been obtained from Yad Vashem and contact has been made with descendants of Jewish families from Birzh worldwide. A campaign is now being launched to fund the project.

The monument at the mass graves, designed by Cape Town born and bred architect-urbanist Joe Rabie whose great-grandfather hailed from the shtetl, will be in the form of a winding metal ribbon inscribed with the names of the victims.

An eight-day tour of Lithuania starting in Vilnius and ending in Birzai is being planned to coincide with the unveiling of the monument in August next year - 76 years after the massacre.

Ex-London Mayor Ken Livingstone bolsters claims of Hitler support for Zionism

LONDON - Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone bolstered his claims that Hitler supported Zionism using Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum.

On Monday, Livingstone returned to the BBC London morning radio show where he made the original remarks five months ago in defence of Labour Party lawmaker Naz Shah, who was suspended over a 2014 Facebook post suggesting that Israelis should be moved en masse to the United States.

“The fact that during the 1930s Hitler collaborated with the Zionists and supported them because he believed that a solution to his problem - the Jews - was that they should all move to Palestine. Then in the 1940s that changed and he decided on genocide,” Livingstone told his interviewer, Vanessa Feltz, this week.

“And that’s the point I made on your programme. I’m just surprised that people didn’t check that it was true before they started screaming ‘Nazi apologist’.

“If you go to the Holocaust Memorial at Yad Vashem in Israel, one of the pamphlets they sell to tourists there is one that talks about the deal that was done between Hitler and the Zionists in the 1930s. If you are being given that at the Holocaust memorial. I think you might suspect it is true,” he concluded.

After making the original comments in April, Livingstone was suspended from Labour amid accusations that the party and its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, had not done enough to curb rampant anti-Semitism among



Ken Livingstone with Naz Shah, in April.

party members.

A government inquiry into anti-Semitism was launched in April to determine whether anti-Jewish prejudice has increased in the United Kingdom and to assess the particular dangers facing Jews.

During an interview as part of the inquiry, Livingstone said he regretted his remarks because of the “hysterical response” to them.

“I am horrified by the way my remarks have been interpreted and twisted,” he told the government panel. “I cannot think of a worse insult than to be called a racist or an

anti-Semite. And I am sorry if what I said has caused Jewish people, or anyone else, offence. That was not my intention.”

Livingstone faces expulsion from Labour for doubling down on the remarks, but told Feltz that would be “very difficult for them to expel me from the Labour Party when I’ve got this whole sheaf of documents and papers which shows that what I said was true.”

The Board of Deputies of British Jews called on Labour to expel Livingstone, the London-based Jewish Chronicle reported.

Marie van der Zyl, vice president of the Board of Deputies, accused Livingstone of attempting to “rewrite history to make it seem like Zionism was responsible for the Holocaust, which is as false as it is grotesquely offensive.”

“Every day that Labour does not expel him is a stain on the party,” she said, according to the Chronicle. (JTA)

Community

When life deals you lemons, use it to make lemonade

RIVKA MAZEL AND TALIA SOLOMON

When Ivan Sacks got cancer, he didn’t curl up and didn’t die. Sacks, a former South African now living in Dallas, Texas, last month under the auspices of the Union of Jewish Women, told his audience at the Hebrew Order of David venue in Johannesburg of his long uphill battle against non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, never giving up and making the best of the challenging situation he found himself in.

The theme of his talk was the importance of attitude over circumstance. He covered the varied aspects of his illness: from the shock of finding out he had cancer, the decision whether to share his diagnosis publicly or keep it private, the conscious effort he made to not allow the illness to define him and more.

When life deals one a hand of cards that are “less than ideal”, Ivan emphasised the importance of purpose and

meaning in one’s life. His purpose was derived from his close relationship with his local rabbis and the yeshiva he had helped to establish.

Another important denotation for those who are exposed to an ill person, says Sacks, is to always be sensitive to what that person’s family is going through. The family is often fighting an even tougher battle by watching a loved one suffer and not knowing how much longer they may have him or her with them.

Sacks said that when one is dealt a challenge, instead of asking, “Why me?” one can reframe the question to the statement “Try me”.

This is one of the many ways of reframing a situation to not position oneself as a victim, but rather as a warrior. All of this mental reshaping is important when it comes to the mind/body connection for increasing wellbeing and survival.

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**NEXT
STEPS** | Heritage and Beyond

INTOLERANCE OF A DISSENTING VOICE ON THE AIRWAVES REGRETTED

Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP) has previously written to Jewish Report detailing the tradition of Talmudic debate and the history of diverging views between the great scholars Hillel and Shammai.

It therefore pains us, to once again write about the shutting down of spaces in the South African Jewish community. This time, on ChaiFM, which as a community radio station, should allow for a multiplicity of views and plethora of voices.

Damon Kalvari, a seasoned radio presenter was taken off air within two weeks of presenting a show, seemingly not for saying anything anti-Israel but for having in the past adopted a pro-peace position.

Some community members, who we unfortunately can only compare to the thought police, complained to the station manager Kathy Kaler, to the extent that she had to remove him.

Many Jewish activists during apartheid, risked their lives to fight for the freedoms we enjoy; freedom of expression and a free press. Indeed, community radio is born out of a vision for diversity and servicing of different community needs.

During the apartheid era, broadcasting was tightly controlled by the regime through the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Post-1994, hundreds of community radio stations opened with the primary objective of being representative of particular communities.

We believe Damon’s axing has left ChaiFM poorer without his talented voice as well as showing the South African Jewish community to be one that only accepts Jews who adopt a certain position.

As comedian Daniel Friedman posted on Facebook: “The irony is that people who criticised Kalvari... have so much to say about the situation in South Africa and would probably tell you that you have a right to criticise the government in a democracy. Well then, if Israel is the amazing, progressive democracy that it gets painted as, then why is no criticism whatsoever of it tolerated? Why are any dissenting voices silenced?”

The tenets of Judaism are debate and discussion. We once again appeal to the community not to allow this small but vocal, bullying minority to represent us all and instead, allow the Jewish tradition of deliberation and dissent to continue.

JVJP will be holding an event to discuss freedom of expression in the Jewish community on Sunday evening September 18 at 38 Oxford Road in Parktown in the community centre behind Beit Emanuel. Everyone is welcome to come and join the discussion.

Jessica Sherman and Rina King
Jewish Voices for a Just Peace

south african

Jewish Report



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TIME TO GET FIRED UP ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING

We are often told how difficult it is to give up smoking. When I was still smoking about 40 cigarettes a day, this discouraged me from making a winning effort to kick the habit. Yet where does the idea that it is so difficult originate?

If you are above the age of 45 you are likely to remember how glamorous and exciting smoking was made to seem. Those were the days when it was considered to be fashionable to light up and most adults smoked.

Adverts showing handsome, sophisticated people in exotic locations sharing a smoke were all over the place. Major sporting events were often sponsored by tobacco companies.

If you watch an old movie, the hero - and often the heroine - might be seen enjoying a cigarette and no-one minded if they were smoking indoors. Some doctors even recommended it!

Since then medical science has

come to realise how unhealthy smoking really is, but the idea that it is so difficult to give up still remains from the times when it would have been more difficult to do so.

Nowadays cigarette adverts are banned and smokers are made to go outside. This dramatic change is a shock for many of us but if we let go of the previous view about smoking it would be easier to kick the habit and enjoy fresh air, an enhanced sense of taste and improved health instead.

While on the subject of shock, a visit to the ICU would cure most smokers of the habit. Or taking it more gently, there is medication to help give it up. It is also worth exploring other reasons we might want to smoke.

Martin Zagnoev
Sunningdale Ridge
Johannesburg

SEE THE ‘SIX TREES’ AS REPRESENTING THE SIX MILLION DEAD

I would like to express my anger and dismay at what occurred at Weinberg Park, Savoy Estate, on the morning of Thursday September 1.

A few days before, an e-mail was sent out by Councillor Steven Kruger stating that six trees were to be planted by the BDS and South African Jews for a Free Palestine at the park as a “memorial” to the inhabitants of the Arab village of Luby. The inhabitants of Luby were allegedly expelled in May 1948 after heavy attacks on Israeli soldiers. A commemorative plaque was to be erected.

Local residents were urgently requested to sign a petition against this move. On August 31, another e-mail was sent out saying that the tree planting ceremony had been cancelled.

It so happened that I was driving past the park on that morning and saw a gathering of about 25 people, watched by a few police officers in several police cars. I decided to see what was happening. The trees were planted and then the speeches began.

Ronnie Kasrils was the main speaker. Other speakers were two people who were born in Luby and related their experiences, equating them to expulsions by the “apartheid government”.

Another was a representative from the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and someone from SA Jews for a Free Palestine.

All used similar inflammatory language. Kasrils lambasted the JNF who for years “conned” the Jews of South Africa into putting their shillings and coppers into the Blue Box so that the South African forest planted in that area would “hide” the destroyed Arab villages.

There was talk of the “Zionist oppressor”, the “Palestinian struggle for freedom”, the “occupation”, the “apartheid regime”.

Kasrils was almost hoping that the “Zionists” would uproot the newly

RABBI ISAACSON IS COMPLETELY WRONG ON HIS ASSERTION OF LIMMUD

I’m referring to comments made about Limmud by Rabbi Ben Isaacson in last week’s Jewish Report. Rabbi Isaacson concludes with several comments that are both misleading and inaccurate. His assertion that Limmud... has ties... with Reform Judaism has no basis in fact whatsoever.

Limmud, encouraging a journey of Jewish learning, presents multiple views on various topics of Jewish interest. Each year there is a Reform rabbi presenting, but there is always a leading Orthodox rabbi as well.

This year Rabbi Joe Wolfson, a well-known, dynamic young Orthodox rabbi presented at both Limmud and at the Orthodox learning centre, The Academy. In addition, there are presentations by scholars who give close textual analyses of biblical and Talmudic texts.

This year Gila Fine gave several sessions on Talmudic texts; in the past one of the

Orthodox presenters was Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, a brilliant, much lauded biblical scholar.

As to Rabbbi David Wolpe: He is not a Reform rabbi but a Conservative one, having studied and been ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the rabbinical school associated with Abraham Joshua Heschel.

No-one identified him as the “most influential rabbi in the world” - a misquote. The correct quote was “Named the most influential rabbi in America by Newsweek magazine”.

I am a retired academic and a member of the Durban United Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox).

I have attended Limmud since it began in Durban, and regard it as a high point in my calendar of Jewish activities.

Miriam Maltz
Glenwood, Durban

QUESTIONS EDELSTEIN ET AL SHOULD PUT TO THEIR ESTEEMED PALESTINIAN GUESTS

Kudos to Merlynn Edelstein from South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP) who in her letter in a Cape Town morning newspaper tells us she will be hosting representatives of Palestinian society over the next two weeks. This seems to be a reciprocal visit that Edelstein and her fellow SAJFPs made last year to a forest in the Galilee.

No doubt Edelstein and her guests will be discussing how difficult it is for those living in the occupied territories, probably not as difficult as those Palestinians living not too far off in Damascus or Aleppo!

But let’s not dwell on something that SAJFP really has no interest or compassion for. Let’s focus on those in the occupied territories and on just how difficult life is for those Palestinians - especially the children. Now here’s the thing that Edelstein and her organisation ought to address:

When children become the cheapest exchange currency to garner world sympathy by displaying their dead and injured bodies in front of the world’s media - to purposely placing children in the line of fire during times of conflict - is this not an issue that SAJFP should be tackling and addressing with their visiting Palestinian guests?

Shouldn’t they also be addressing the spate of violent acts of murder and attempted murder by little Palestinian children hell-bent on killing innocent Israelis in the streets of cities and town across the country?

Are these some of the topics that Edelstein and her group will be addressing with their esteemed guests in the coming weeks? Methinks not.

Allan Wolman
Rosebank, Johannesburg

planted trees as this would provide further ammunition for his anti-Israel rhetoric. I would appeal that the trees not be removed. Perhaps the six trees should be in memory of the six million that perished in the Holocaust?

I asked whether permission had been obtained and someone showed me a fax dated September 1 that permission was given that morning, but permission to erect the plaque had been withheld.

Kasrils announced that the plaque was to be put up near the Constitutional Court that afternoon. I cannot say whether he was authorised to do this or if it was done.

A metro policeman arrived on the scene and inspected the fax and there was some discussion as to who had signed it. Kasrils was on the warpath, saying the City Council was preventing them from planting the trees, but no such thing happened.

My anger and heartbreak stem from two causes: The local residents were never consulted.

I am convinced that we do not want to turn our park into a space for hate-filled people who want to publicise their cause.

Secondly, SA Jews for a Free Palestine is peopled by Jews who expend time and energy in co-operating with the BDS to sow the seeds of lies, dissension, conflict and hostility.

Jews should be involved not in aiding such movements but should expend time and energy in spreading love, kindness, harmony and light to the world and fighting for the rights and survival of their own people.

Carol Haymann
Savoy Estate, Johannesburg

CHOICE OF DENIS GOLDBERG AS GUEST SPEAKER NOT SUCH A GOOD ONE

I thank Rabbi Ben Isaacson for informing us about Denis Goldberg. In the July 22 edition of the Jewish Report, Moira Schneider reported on the Anne Frank exhibition, a joint venture of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC) and the Robben Island Museum, held at the V&A Waterfront. Fourteen grade 10 learners were volunteer guides - which was an excellent idea. However, who had the not-so-bright idea to invite Denis Goldberg to be the keynote speaker?

This man wasted no time in seizing the opportunity to stick it to the Jewish community big time. If Moira Schneider’s report is accurate, he was downright insulting, disrespectful and resentful toward the Jewish people for commemorating their six million murdered.

“One in every 100 Germans were murdered by the Nazis - let’s not forget that.”

Really! Who voted for that (Hitler) monster in a democratic election in the first place? A madman who caused a war in which over 50 million people lost their lives, never mind 20 million.

Could the CTHC not have found someone less toxic than this individual to speak at an event such as this?

Pamela Koonin, Sea Point, Cape Town

Social media: message is clear - don't rush in!

Yeshiva College was privileged to host Emma Sadlier, a social media lawyer, speaking to grade 4 – 6 learners and their parents. Sadlier's areas of expertise include all aspects of print and electronic media law, with a particular focus on defamation, privacy and social media law. Her talk made her captivated audience sit up and think before engaging in any form of social media activity.



Emma Sadlier with some of her young Yeshiva College audience.

Spring has sprung at Sydenham Pre-Primary

JENNY MILLER

Spring has arrived and it's time to have some fun! The Sydenham Pre-primary staff and children were very busy creating spring scarecrows and everyone donned silly hats of all descriptions to mark the beginning of the new season. Proudly showing off one of the scarecrows are Liat Starkowitz and Erin Katzman.



Photo: Moira Berkowitz

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Shofar gets blown at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School



Photo: Isaac L.

CARON LEVY

It is Elul at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School. Each morning, bright and early, Rabbi David Nossel arrives to blow the shofar for all the children at school. Each visit is highly anticipated and the children and teachers enjoy these small moments of reflection while the shofar blasts ring through the spring air. We all understand that Elul is our time to draw closer to Hashem and His mitzvot before Rosh Hashanah. Pictured are Rosabelle Klein kids with Rabbi David Nossel.

King David Pre-Primary 'Dream Team' get together again

ANDY HAEFNER
PRINCIPAL, YIDDISH FOLK PRE-PRIMARY

The King David Pre-Primary staff from all campuses met at Yiddish Folk on Monday. Yid-dish Folk hosted a get-together and interaction afternoon with lunch and dynamic guest speaker, Howard Sackstein. He gave an interesting talk on his past experiences in South Africa and everyone was riveted. The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Many of the staff present had been together on a special trip to Israel, sponsored by the South African Board of Jewish Education last December and came to be known as the "Dream Team". Since that amazing trip, the staff gather at a different school campus every term and is a great way to get to know the staff from all the King David Schools. This is the last time that the King David con-tingent will be meeting at Yiddish Folk, as the school is amalgamating with King David Links-field next year.



A get-together of staff members of King David Schools who went to Israel last December took place at Yiddish Folk Pre-Primary on Monday.

Spring is in the air at Sandton Sinai

SHIRA FINKEL

Sandton Sinai Pre-Primary enjoyed sharing Spring Day with its special grand-parents. Everyone made beautiful flower arrangements and shared the morning together. “Excitement is in the air as we are about to launch our additional nursery and playschool classrooms that were built this year,” the school said. Pictured are Anat Shevel; Elchanan Shevel; and Evelyn Garber.



Welcome spring... hello solar eclipse

Learners at King David Victory Park Primary were quite captivated last week Thursday as they were able to catch a glimpse of a solar eclipse - and that on the first day of spring! Daniel Traub and Benjamin Tchetchik are the boys fascinated by this phenomenon.



World-famous artist Hanoch Piven inspires KD kids

GABY COHEN

Hanoch Piven is an internationally renowned Israeli illustrator, known for his colourful and witty artistic creations. Merle Maselle, art teacher at King David Junior Primary Linksfield (KDJPL), approached the SA Board of Jewish Education with the idea to bring Piven to South Africa to teach, inspire and share his creativity and ideas with the learners and teachers at King David. This was the inspiration behind the KDJPL grades 1 to 3 annual art exhibition, currently on at Norwood Mall. Those who attended the launch of the exhibition on Monday were privileged to meet and interact with the very approachable Piven.



Art teacher Merle Maselle, and grade 3 learner Adam Gratch with some of the amazing artworks inspired by Hanoch Piven.

As a build-up to the exhibition, learners sold raffle tickets to win an original Hanoch Piven Nelson Mandela artwork. Lucky winner Karon Joss was thrilled with winning her one-of-a-kind, valuable piece. The King David artworks will be on display in Norwood Mall until the end of this week. During the course of the week, the King David learners and teachers will have workshops with Piven where he will share some of his creative ideas with them. Maselle encouraged the children to create their own masterpieces for the exhibition at school. She commented: “I am extremely proud of all our King David learners who with creativity, imagination and hard work, have used everyday household objects to create their own original pictures.”



Grade 3 learners Jade Rubin, Hannah Cohen and Madison Williams at the launch of the KDJPL annual art exhibition.

Doff a hat to Herzlia’s brilliant budding scientists

GEOFF COHEN

United Herzlia Schools achieved tremendous results at the Eskom Science Expo for Young Scientists on August 31. The Middle School received a record-breaking eight gold medals, one silver and 11 bronze, with Joseph Sweidj winning the top expo project in the Western Province for the junior section. His project was on “What is Climate’s Effects on Health - a Correlation Between Climate Change and a Rise in Diarrhoea”. This project is going to Nationals in Johannesburg in October, together with Darryn Berelowitz whose project on “Do Drivers Need to Retake Driver’s Tests?” also won gold. These results are even more impressive if one takes into account that this was the highest number of entries received to date. Over 500 projects were entered into the Young Scientists Expo. The High School won three gold, one silver and seven bronze. Herzlia Middle School received an additional five special awards from companies who

sponsor individual category prizes. Darryn Mandelstam: “Cell Phones - Evolutionary or Revolutionary?”; Ruby Wilder and Michelle Georgieva: “Is our World Hot and Exhausted?”; Adam Vere: “Biefeld-Brown Effect”; Joseph Sweidj: “What is Climate’s Effects on Health?”; and Jade Palmer: “Number Memorisation”.



Herzlia Middle School pupils scooped a record number of Golds at the regional Eskom Science Expo.

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

The theme of this year’s well-attended SAJBD Cape Council conference was “Thrive or Survive”, with keynote speaker Rabbi David Rosen focusing on global forces shaping the Jewish future, while community members Lisa Klein, Alana Baranov and Yaron Wiesenbacher provided a local perspective on the future for Jewish life in South Africa.

One of the distinguishing features of the Cape Council is the importance it has traditionally placed on fostering dialogue within the Jewish community, and providing platforms for its constituents to express their views and concerns.

It was through this kind of process that it was possible to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution to the question of women singing solo at Yom Hashoah ceremonies earlier this year. I congratulate Chairman Eric Marx and his team on all they have accomplished thus far and wish them continued success in the year ahead.

SAJBD in Parliament

Following on its written proposals submitted earlier this year, the Board gave an oral presentation on the Films and Publications Amendment Bill to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications last week.

Our National Director Wendy Kahn,

World News in Brief

Netanyahu considering meeting with Abbas under Putin’s auspices

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he is considering meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas under the auspices of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Netanyahu in a meeting Monday morning with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, Putin’s special envoy for the Middle East, discussed the Putin proposal to host a face-to-face meeting between Netanyahu and Abbas in Moscow, according to a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office.

Netanyahu is reviewing the proposal and considering the timing of a possible meeting, according to the statement. He told Bogdanov that he is always ready to meet with Abbas directly and without preconditions.

In late August, Abbas’ office said the Palestinians were ready to participate in a peace initiative.

The Palestinians favour the French peace initiative launched in June at a one-day summit in Paris of foreign ministers from two dozen countries aimed at rebooting 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 without setting a date.

Israel has baulked at the initiative, saying it enables the Palestinians to continue to avoid the direct talks Israel wants and compromise.

Abbas and Netanyahu last met officially in 2010, but it is believed that since then they have held secret meetings. (JTA)

assisted by Diplomatic Liaison Chaya Singer, made the presentation, which was well received by those present and also featured prominently in the subsequent media reports on the hearings.

Primarily, our submission dealt with the pressing need for our media law to come to grips with the realities created by the electronic communications revolution, one of which is that anyone with a cell phone is effectively able to become his or her own publisher.

Just as traditional media providers are regulated, so should there be some order on how the Internet is used by members of the public. One of the most pressing problems we have come up against is dealing with threats and hate speech made against our community by people using false names or assuming other people’s identities.

As Wendy stressed in her presentation, in order to prevent these abuses, law enforcement agencies need to be much more involved in efforts to confront cyberhate, and better equipped to work with the relevant Internet service providers in obtaining the information necessary to pursue such offenders .

University exams alert

With the Yamim Tovim coming up, I

again urge all our university students to please check that there are no clashes with their upcoming exams and if there are, to immediately let the Board know (011 645-2521/ sajbd@sajbd.org). While we will go to every effort to ensure that our students are accommodated, even in cases where only a single person is involved, we need to be informed about any problems as far in advance as possible.

• *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

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Kurgan’s ‘A Crowd of One’ is a cathartic exercise

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

At the age of four, Leonia Kallir (later Kurgan), together with 10 family members, fled her homeland of Poland the day Nazi troops invaded the country. “A Crowd of One” documents the group’s fraught 18-month journey until they landed in Cape Town, as well as the family’s struggle to re-establish itself in a strange world.

Dr Kurgan, a psychoanalyst, has been living in Los Angeles since 1979. At the launch of her book held under the joint auspices of the Jacob Gitlin Library, the South African Jewish Museum and the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, she recalled an event that had made an indelible impression on her as a young child and had come back to haunt her many years later.

While the book relies for its content partly on her vivid childhood memories and partly on her scientist father’s diaries that were translated into English after his death in 1973, she says it became hard to distinguish between the two. Except for the memory of her father’s white face as the border guard refused them entry into Romania - their passports had identified them as being Jews.

Eventually they were allowed in, remaining for 13 months before obtaining fake certificates of baptism at great cost, allowing them to secure visas for Brazil.

Fate was to intervene, however, in the form of an uncle contracting smallpox en route, with the result that they had to disembark in Kenya. After some time, circumstances forced them to head to Cape Town where the party docked in April, 1941 and were put up at the Jewish orphanage.

“The Jewish Board of Deputies and the community helped tremendously,” Kurgan recalls, “and eventually we received permission to stay on humanitarian grounds despite the Aliens Act”, a 1937 law aimed at curtailing Jewish immigration to this country.

In 1979, after 38 years in South Africa, Kurgan, together with

her husband and children, immigrated to the United States.

In 1995, she decided to visit Poland, connecting with a psychiatrist there with the idea of contributing in her field of expertise. But the experiences of the past served as a psychological block to any such notions.

It was here that a hotel receptionist curtly asked for her passport, bringing memories of the earlier trauma at the border flooding back.

“I once again saw myself as the distasteful other,” she remembers. “I wanted to forgive them, but so much in my soul stood in the way.

“Another 20 years elapsed before I could begin to think another way. Writing the book led me to deeper compassion,” she says, concluding that “hatred poisons the soul, forgiveness frees the soul”.

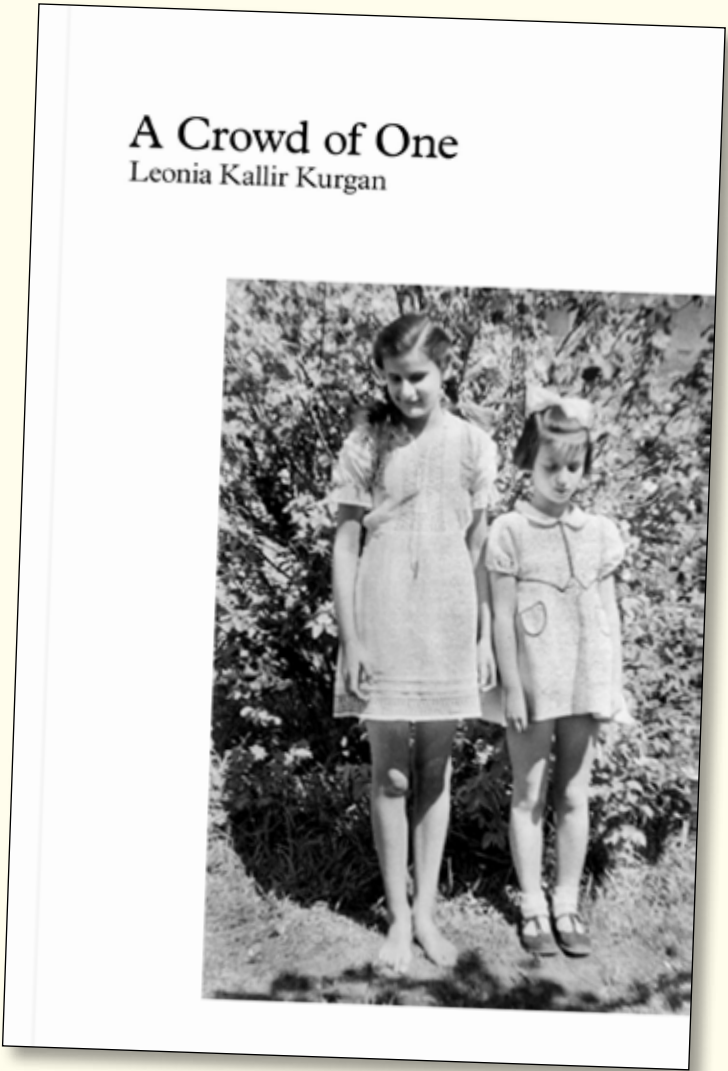
She again visited the country in 2014, and acknowledges feeling “a startling affinity to the country in which I was born”.

She says: “Anti-Semitism in Poland will always be there, but there seems to be a bond (between the Jews and the Poles) that goes back many years - we are inextricably bound up with each other.”

Many Jews who live there were brought up as Roman Catholics, but admit to being Jewish on their deathbeds, Kurgan notes.

Indeed, on her first visit to the country, she was perplexed as to why a cousin had seemed very reluctant to meet with her. It transpired that this woman’s husband, to whom she had been married for 38 years, had no idea that she was Jewish and she swore Kurgan to secrecy, worried that this revelation might destroy her marriage.

• “A Crowd of One” is available on Amazon.com in Cape Town at Clarke’s Bookshop and the South African Jewish Museum shop and in Johannesburg, e-mail tkurgan@iafrica.com.



The cover of Leonia Kallir Kurgan's book in which she documents her family's escape from Poland in 1939. The author is on the right.

Daniel Browde seems to capture the essence of grandfather Jules’ life

MARGOT COHEN

It took 12 years for Daniel Browde to complete the biography of his famous grandfather Jules - but the wait was worth it.

In conversation with journalist Terry Shakinovsky, Browde reveals his reverence and love for his grandfather who died earlier this year aged 97. A book launch of The Relatively Public Life of Jules Browde took place at the RCHCC last week.

Many of the stories told to Daniel by Jules, a celebrated advocate, are rich in humour such as that of “Mevrou Schultz”. The stories span almost a century and reveal the early history of South Africa, such as the Miners’ Strike, battlefields of the Second World War and the courtrooms of apartheid South Africa. Much of the telling took place in the kitchen of granddad Jules and his wife Selma’s house in Orchards in Johannesburg.

Said Daniel: “Jules was a wonderful storyteller and he engaged with people with differing interests throughout his life. I wanted to ensure that the stories represented all that Jules was. Grandfather had the ability for self-reflection.”

Daniel said the project started with a few interviews using a dictaphone. “I found a new energy on hearing the stories, more than once.

“I started to take the project seriously and realised as we went along, how we use stories to make sense of our lives and just how powerful they can be.”

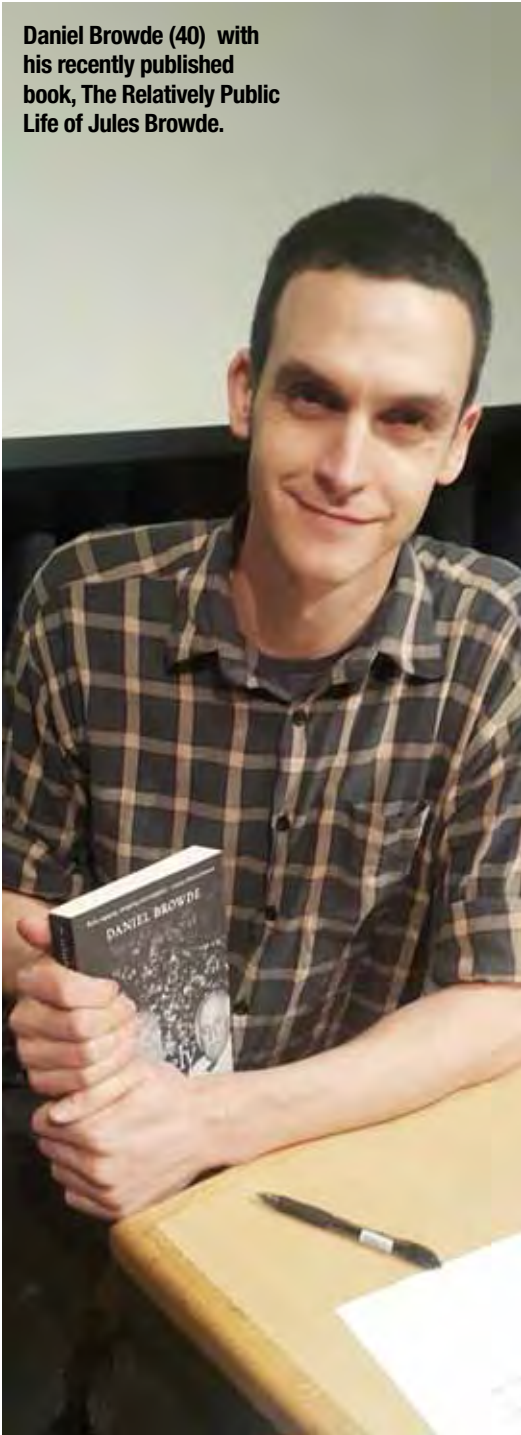
With disarming candour, Daniel explained to his audience that when Jules read the first seven chapters he said: “The book is all about you, Daniel.”

Jules Browde attended King Edward School in Johannesburg and joined the Transvaal Scottish Infantry in May 1940, during the Second World War. Many of the stories are about details of that war. He became a law lecturer and met and became a friend of Nelson Mandela’s.

Among his many interests were stamp collecting, his involvement with Habonim, his love of cricket and, of course, law.

Jules’ range of interests seem to be contradictory at times, said Daniel. Art, gardening, reading Dickens and Pat Barker, learning French... Jules’ talent for enjoyment and his optimism was infectious. He saw good, the positive side of people. This characterised his life.”

At the age of 97 he had an office at City Hall as Integrity Commissioner and in fact pioneered this position.



Daniel Browde (40) with his recently published book, The Relatively Public Life of Jules Browde.

Community

HOD International remembers those who have passed on



The senate of The Hebrew Order of David International held a memorial evening last month in the Johannesburg Sephardi Hebrew Congregation Shul on the HOD Campus to honour and remember its members who have passed on. The HOD International had its beginnings in 1903.

An article was read about the meaning of saying Kaddish, various tehillim were read, and Rabbi Shmuli Kagan gave an address.

Candles were lit by widows of members and others to remember those who had passed on, together with those who had perished during the world wars from South Africa and in Israel.

Among those present was Eunice Faiga, widow of Seymour Faiga, a grandson of one of the founders of The Hebrew Order of David, Louis Faiga.

Pictured are Avron Krasner, president of the South African governing lodge; Rabbi Shmuli Kagan; Eunice Faiga; Sandra Slater; Mark Meltzer, principal of the senate; and convener Colin Zaiden.

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• The Relatively Public Life of Jules Browde is published by Jonathan Ball and available from bookstores at R246.

Discovering ‘a whole new language of symbols’

TALI FEINBERG

Dr Susan Woolf’s (pictured) fascinating exhibition, Taxi Hand Signs, just finished showing at the South African Jewish Museum (SAJM) in Cape Town. Woolf explained to SA Jewish Report recently explains how she has discovered a whole new language that can benefit all, including the blind.



After seeing commuters using taxi hand signs around Johannesburg, Woolf began to paint some of the signs in 2004, realising she had discovered a whole new language of symbols that are used by thousands.

Woolf not only researched and recorded the signs, but transformed them into art as well as publishing booklets explaining them. She also understood that the signs are used by blind commuters and could become another way for blind people to communicate. She went on to publish the book, Taxi Hand Signs for the Blind in 2009, which presented a new tactile shape language she had invented for blind commuters.

Indeed, Woolf’s artworks go beyond paintings on a wall. While they are stunning to view as paintings, they have also become an educational tool and a functional language. Her work has been included on South African stamps and introduced into the South African school syllabus for grade 11 English. Consequently, busloads of schoolchildren are now visiting the exhibition to experience the hand signs and tactile language first hand.

The exhibition includes over 50 paintings of the original taxi hand signs that Woolf recorded, as well as tactile artworks that both sighted and blind people can explore. There is also a darkroom, where blind people guide sighted people in reading the taxi gestures; and films featuring taxi ranks, including the one in Bree Street in Johannesburg’s CBD.

While it is difficult to imagine taxi hand signs without seeing the work itself; one example is the sign used by commuters who want to get to the township of Kliptown, next to which has emerged a vast rubbish dump.

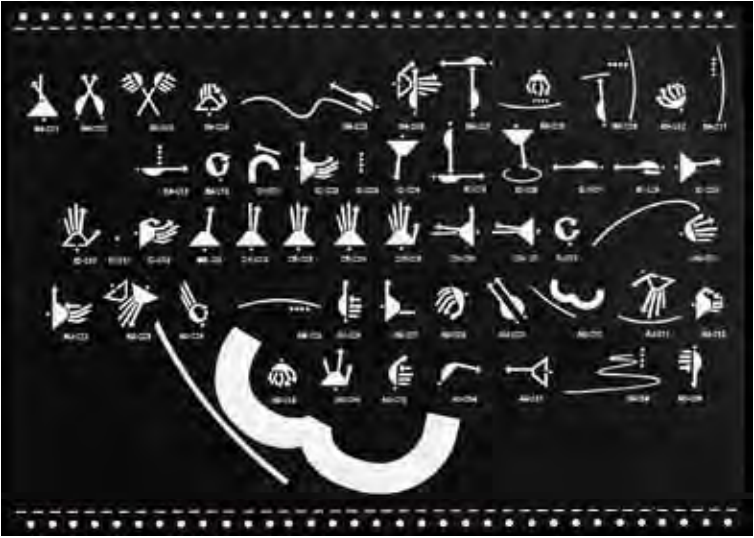
They perform a body sign by waving one hand left to right in front of their face to show that it smells bad and the other hand waves up and down to ask the taxi to stop. The sign is a social commentary about the situation people in the township endure - the dump site, situated so close to where they live, has not been moved.

Woolf’s work with the blind has been especially impactful. “I worked with Blind SA to ensure that the tactile language best suited people who are blind,” she explains. “Subsequently, in Gauteng, people who are blind were given copies of the Taxi Hand Signs Book for the Blind when it was launched at Museum Africa in 2009.”

Just last week, blind people from the Helen Keller Hostel, visited the exhibition and created their own gestures after experiencing the shape language through touch, explanations and drama. “This correlates richly with my own research, to bring the taxi hand sign language to schools for blind children,” Woolf said.

SAJM Director Gavin Morris, said: “Dr Woolf has done something remarkable. She has created a multi-sensory exhibition both for people who are blind and for the sighted. People who are blind can interact with many of the exhibits, while people who have vision are asked to ‘see’ her work, using only their sense of touch. In doing so, she adds richness to both worlds.”

• “Taxi Hand Signs” was on display until September 4 at the SAJM and will go to the US next.



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Conversely, the franchise industry is weathering the storms well. A 2015 survey published by the Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA), shows that the franchise industry now contributes 12,5% to South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP). In the same study, 72% of franchisees reported an optimistic outlook about the future in the face of economic pressure. Franchising is a proven, superior business model that offers a viable, reputable formula for entrepreneurs looking to start a new business and wishing to avoid some of the pitfalls a new enterprise may face.

That doesn’t, however, make a franchise immune to many of the trials facing small businesses. In fact, one fifth of franchisees experience challenges in managing costs for their businesses. This is especially true for startups.

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Garden rocket – or arugula – a sure winner in any salad

AMY STOPNICKI
NEW YORK

In South Africa and other English-speaking countries, arugula is known as “garden rocket” or more simply just “rocket”. This is a perfect salad to eat for lunch on a weekday or as a first course for a brunch or even during a holiday like Rosh Hashanah. It’s especially tasty when served individually and topped with the sweet potatoes and cashews.

Note: If you don't have sweet potatoes you can replace them with sautéed red peppers.

ARUGULA SWEET POTATO SALAD

Ingredients

For the salad:

- 2 cups cubed and roasted sweet potatoes
- 2 Belgian endives, cleaned and sliced thinly
- 6 cups baby arugula/rocket, cleaned
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked quinoa
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped roasted cashews

For the dressing:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- In a large mixing bowl, combine all the salad ingredients except cashews.
- In a small jar or bowl, combine all the dressing ingredients.
- Pour dressing over salad and toss well.
- Add cashews and serve. (The Noshers via JTA)

This recipe is excerpted with permission from the cookbook "Kosher Taste."

• Amy Stopnicki is a successful event planner and is author of "Kosher Taste".



Photograph courtesy of Feldheim Publishers

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Community

These 'Angels' provide succour to new olim

ROZANNE KOTTON LAUFERT

Three years ago I packed up my life and boarded the El Al flight to Israel. It was more than a lifelong dream I had; it was an unexplained magnetic pull.

I arrived in Israel filled with confidence and sure that soon I would find a job and start my new journey there. After all I had worked at The Israel Centre as public relations and communications manager as well as being the South African representative for the Naale programme. I had taken kids to Israel. I was in the system.

I immediately approached all the relevant Jewish Agency offices to find out how I could submit my resumé and continue doing what I loved: bringing our fellow Jews home to Israel. One door after another was closed on me. I was told that there is no budget. I was told that my age is against me. I was told that I could volunteer but not be employed. The worst thing I was told many times is that I was overqualified.

This was a very stressful and difficult time and certainly not the “welcome to Israel” I had expected! I felt totally let down by the entire absorption system; I felt abandoned and alone. I felt that I truly loved Israel but Israel was not loving me back.

My child is a Naale graduate and a Lone Soldier. My family has committed to the aliyah dream, so why is there no help and support? Why should this entire absorption process be so difficult?

I had two choices, namely to stay and be part of change, or to look for another country to start over. I chose to stay.

In 2014 I founded the Aliyah Angels social organisation for new immigrants to Israel. The aim is to focus on the care and welfare of Lone Soldiers - after all they are our children. Our

present. Our future.

I wanted to provide a home where a “motherly touch”, a hot shower and a home-cooked meal is always available. I wanted to provide an open home where new immigrants can share a Shabbat meal, or the celebrations of chagim; a home that frequently runs business and social networking events; workshops and employment guidance. I wanted to create a place that provides short-term accommodation for parents visiting their children who are living in Israel, but where they are unable to afford the expense of typical accommodation.

Along with this I started offering services to new immigrants who were battling with the labyrinth of Israeli bureaucracy. We assist with medical appointments, translations of accounts, resumé's, and property solutions.

We have a vision to open an English-speaking call centre, something that is so desperately needed. A business opportunity that will provide job opportunities to fellow olim.

For myself and my colleague, we do not view Aliyah Angels as purely a “service”; we view it as an extension of our family. Our main aim is to help new immigrants adjust to their new lives in Israel in an emotionally supported manner so that they remain in Israel and become active members of Israeli society.

Of course this is only possible with community funding and support.

So here I am in South Africa together with Maayan Zweig, a social activist, my friend and simply an amazing woman who has been sharing her incredible story about living on the border of Gaza. While here, we held an event to reach out to our community to encourage them to become involved.

For more information contact Rozanne on
zanlaufert@gmail.com.

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Friday (September 9)

• UZLC hosts Charisse Zeifert on “Fresh from Israel”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (September 11)

• JH&GC in partnership with the SAJBD hosts an evening in memory of Elie Wiesel. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Seating limited. Booking: shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100/2148. Time: 19:00. No charge for admission but donations welcome.

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to the Joburg Art Fair at Sandton Convention Centre on Sunday September 11. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za for details.

• RCHCC hosts Cat Simoni in two shows in “A Time For Us”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Times: 15:00 and 19:30. Donation: R120 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378; a/h (011) 728-8378; e-mail rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

• Second Innings hosts The Jewish Guild Orchestra, conducted by Prof Brian Buch. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (September 12)

• UJW adult education division hosts Hamilton Wende - journalist and TV presenter - on “Ancient Rome’s Incursions Down the Nile in the Time of Nero”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (September 13)

• UJW hosts journalist and author Mandy Wiener on “Wonder Woman” - her secret on how she juggles her high power career, young family, self-growth and active citizenry. Venue: Will be advised when booking. Time: 19:30 - 21:30. Cost:

What’s On

SA JEWISH REPORT 19

Sunday (September 18)

• Light music, with composers and lyricists who have become legends in their field, such as Ray Conniff, George Schearing Sigmund Romberg etc, you can listen to. Venue: Roosevelt Park Recreational Centre. Time: 14:00. First timers free. Information: David (011) 678-9725 or 076-574-1446.

• The Old Arcadian Association is honouring David Solly Sandler. David is a former Arcadian and a noted Jewish historian and author whose Jewish books are sold worldwide. Through the total proceeds from sales of his books, over R1,2 million has been donated to Arcadia. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, Sandringham. Time: 14:00. Contact: Jules Gordon 082-552-3148.

Tuesday (September 13) and
Wednesday (September 14)

• WIZO Women Inspired hosts Sharon Glass, celebrity chef and author, today and tomorrow on “Celebrating Spring” with 2 cooking demonstrations for Rosh Hashanah. 1st demo: today at 19:00. Tomorrow at 09:30. Venue: The home of Sharon Glass in Houghton. Cost: R400 pp per demo. Seating is limited, booking essential. Booking and venue detail: Maureen 082-445-1515; Leslie 083-456-3911; or Joceline 082-441-4375.

Wednesday (September 14)

• UJW’s Shalom Bayit Project hosts a seminar focusing on family abuse - “Breaking the Silence... Still Behind Closed Doors!” Two prominent guest speakers: a psychologist, an advocate, while a survivor will speak about her experiences. Venue: HOD, Orchards. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Donation: R80 (incl tea and refreshments). RSVP for bookings: Barbara (011) 645-2591 (08-30 - 14:30) or ujwexec@beyachad.co.za

• UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer Dept of English at Wits on the sixth lecture on “Enjoying Contemporary Poetry”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Thursday (September 15)

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to a “Pub Quiz Night at Metzuyan”. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za for details.

World News in Brief

French Jewry’s president appears to back burkini ban

PARIS - Ending a long and conspicuous silence on the burkini ban in France, the president of the umbrella group of French Jews (CRIF) appeared to support the ban, saying he favoured limiting “political-religious” symbols.

In an interview published on Monday on the Actualite Juive Jewish news website, Francis Kalifat of CRIF for the first time directly addressed the ban last month by 30 French municipalities on the full-body swimsuit favoured by Muslim women seeking modesty.

Kalifat said lawmakers should “consider differentiating religious symbols from political-religious symbols”.

Radical and sectarian Islam and its fanatics, he said, “are looking for ways today to destabilise the French republic with the aim of vanquishing the societal model we inhabit today”.

He added: “This polemic will, of course, also affect the Jewish community.”

Religious Orthodox women also adhere to clothing deemed modest, though few wear burkinis to the beach in France.

Kalifat has resisted calls to speak against the divisive ban, which a court on August 26 ruled was illegal, in solidarity with French Muslims.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has defended the ban, saying the wearing of burkinis on French beaches was “part of a political project... to perpetuate female servitude”. Critics of the ban have argued it infringes on the very liberties its supporters say it is designed to protect.

The burkini controversy reawakened the debate on the wearing of religious symbols in public in France, where a law banning face-covering clothing such as the burka was passed in 2010. Critics of such legislation say it opens the door to religious persecution, including of Jewish men who wear kippot and women who cover their hair.

In the interview, Kalifat reiterated his scathing criticism of Jean Luc Melenchon, a far-left politician who compared the ban to the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust. The comparison, which Kalifat called “indecent”, prompted him to make his first indirect reference about the burkini bans two weeks after they were put in place.

Whereas Kalifat expressed an opinion that can be interpreted as supportive of the ban, a prominent Paris

rabbi who early on told JTA that he supported the ban outright has walked back the statements, claiming they were taken out of context.

Asked by JTA on August 23 whether he personally supported the burkini bans, Rabbi Moshe Sebbag, who heads the Grand Synagogue of Paris, said: “Yes, because you see that going with it [a burkini] is not innocent, it’s sending a message.”

The mayors who banned it, he said, “understood this is not about women’s liberty to dress modestly but a statement as to who will rule here tomorrow.”

But in an interview published last week Thursday by the Forward, Sebbag said: “I think my words were taken out of context. I was trying to explain this situation from a political level and how politicians in France view our current situation.” (JTA)

Jewish power at US Open as Yshai leads the pack

JACK MILNER

Over the years, Jewish tennis players have always found themselves at home at the US Open. There is, of course, a massive Jewish population in New York and many of them go off to Flushing Meadow to support all the Jewish contestants, no matter from which country they may come.

After all, how many major other sporting events have a kosher kiosk! The New York Brat Factory (certified glatt kosher) serves up wraps (tuna, turkey and chicken Caesar) as well as two types of Italian sausages with peppers and onions, overstuffed pastrami sandwiches, knishes, hot pretzels and of course, hot dogs (and pastrami dogs). The stand is closed on Shabbat, and the lines are long.

This year a group called SoomSoom, a kosher store in various parts of New York City, has a kosher style booth at the Open, serving up humus, falafel and more. The sign notes “Kosher Style” and workers explain that some food comes from their kosher stores and others are made on site, and that the stand is open on Shabbat.

Where outside of Israel will you find a ball boy wearing a kippah? Those who watched Novak Djokovic in action in the early hours of Monday morning may have noticed one youngster chasing balls, wearing a yarmulke.

But this is New York and apparently the mother of an Orthodox Jewish day school learner reported that her son - also a ball boy at the tournament - wears the Polo Ralph Lauren-issued hat to cover his head.

As far as the Jewish players are concerned,



Israel's Yshai Oliel hits a backhand during his first round match against Juan Carlos Manuel Aguilar of Bolivia at the US Open.



The Glatt kosher food stand is among the most popular eateries on the grounds of the US Open on all but two days of the tournament - the two Saturdays on which it is closed.

there are a couple of Israelis - Dudi Sela, Amir Weintraub and Julia Glushko. Weintraub and Glushko had to battle through the qualifying tournament to make the main draw and each won a match before going out.

Sela lost a tough five-setter against No 18 seed Pablo Cuevas of Uruguay after leading by two sets to one.

The one exciting Israeli player still in the draw is Yshai Oliel, who is playing in the junior tournament. The 16-year-old has had two thrilling matches but on Tuesday caused a major upset by taking out the No 2 seed, Alex de Minaur of Australia.

He lost the opening set and faced a match point in the final set but then went on to run away with the ensuing tie-breaker, building up a 6-1 lead before closing out the breaker 7-2.

Serving at 4-5 in the third, the Aussie held a match point at 30-40 on the Israeli's serve but Oliel held his nerve and his serve. The final score was 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7-2) to the Israeli. It is great for him as that now puts him in the No 2 seed position in the draw.

In the opening round he also lost the first set, against Juan Carlos Manuel Aguilar of Bolivia. The first set took 41 minutes and went the way of the Bolivian 6-4, but the left-hander from Israel needed just 19 minutes to win the second 6-1 and then, after being 0-2 down in the decider, reeled off six successive games to win the third 6-2.

By the time Oliel clawed his way back to 2-2 in the third set, chants of “Yallah, Yshai”, “Kadima” and “let's go, Yshai” from the packed stands turned to “mazaltovs” and requests for autographs when Oliel closed out the third set in just 29 minutes.

“I am proud of all the Israeli people and Jews who came to see us and cheered us today,” Oliel said, showing his appreciation for the support.

“I feel very good and happy. I am excited,” Oliel told the Jerusalem Post after his match. He reflected on the match and on his very successful year which includes winning the junior doubles title at the French Open. “I fought during the long match today. I still need to improve, to play more aggressive.”

Oliel feels he needs to work on his volleys and to be more aggressive to achieve his goal of rising in the rankings.

Coach Jan Pochter, who has worked with Oliel since he was four years old, acknowledged that his charge got off to a slow start. “He started nervous and tight and wasn't his best. The other guy was aggressive and went for shots. Mentally, he was very tight. Then Yshai began to play much more aggressively and his opponent couldn't match his rhythm.”

Pochter feels Oliel has tremendous potential. “He is one of the best players in the tournament, though mentally he has ups and downs. If he plays smooth, he will win.”

Pochter is accompanying and coaching Israeli juniors Oliel and Shelly Krolitzky at the US Open.

Oliel is also playing doubles where he has teamed up with Zouzou Berg of Belgium.

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