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south african Jewish Report

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PEOPLE OF THE BOOK



THE PEOPLE'S RABBI

Benny Lau (Jerusalem)

Benny Lau, who served as senior rabbi of the Ramban Synagogue in Jerusalem for many years, is one of the most charismatic figures in Israeli society today. He is an outspoken advocate for modernising the Israeli rabbinate and has been a pioneer in encouraging progress in many areas of Jewish life including women's participation, marriage and conversion.

He founded and headed the Beit Midrash for Women and the Social Beit Midrash in Beit Morasha and was a member of the Israel Democracy Institute. He also founded and lead 929 Bible Together, an Israeli social initiative aimed at creating discourse amongst all sectors of society based on the relevance of the 929 chapters of Tanach. **Sessions include:** *The Encounter Between Halacha and Reality* *Creating Jewish Ritual for Life's New Moments*



SHMITA INSPIRED ECONOMIC IDEAS

Aharon Ariel Lavi (Negev)

Rabbi, serial social entrepreneur, professional community builder and a thinker who believes Judaism can inspire all walks of life, Aharon is the founder of Hakhel: The Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator at Hazon.

He is also an economist and historian of ideas, and his recent book, *Seven*, explores shmita-inspired economic, social and environmental ideas. Aharon also mountain bikes, builds mountain biking routes and plays the flute.

Sessions include: *A Bond They May Not Break - From Noah's Flood to Climate Change*

AGE OF PROPHECY

Mike Feuer (Jerusalem)

Mike is a rabbi who approaches Torah with an excitement for rigorous analysis and a passionate love for its poetry. He is an educator, content creator and personal counsellor whose projects include the Jewish Story podcast, the Age of Prophecy fantasy series and a thriving narrative practice. Mike always aims to generate stories that can teach, heal and make change.

Sessions include: *Rav Kook: the Nation and the World*



FOOD, MUSIC AND RELIGION

Miriam Camerini (Italy)

Theatre director, writer, singer and actress, Miriam bridges theatre and Jewish text study. Miriam is a rabbinical student at Beit-Midrash Har'El, one of the first Orthodox yeshivas to ordain women. She published a book about food and religions, *Ricette e Precetti/Rezepte und Gebote*.

Sessions include: *Orient Express: A Musical Train Journey from Sarajevo to Meron*



Rachael Pass (New York)-

queer, feminist, Brooklyn-based rabbi, Rachael received her ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2021. She has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University and has written extensively on Jewish views of abortion, creative Jewish rituals such as reclaiming mikveh, the ritual bath, and feminist Jewish thought and theology.

Sessions include: *Jewish Abortion: A Personal Story and Jewish Texts*



OPENING GATES TO WOMEN

FEMINIST JEWISH THEOLOGY

Noa Lau (Jerusalem)

Rabbanit and a Yoetzet Halacha, Noa Lau is Associate Dean of Nishmat, where she is also the Moshe and Charlotte Green Chair of Jewish Law and coordinates Nishmat's Keren Ariel Yoatzot Halacha Training Programme.

Noa has a Master's degree in Tanach from Bar Ilan University and taught for many years at the Pelech School in Jerusalem, where she lives with her husband, Benny Lau.

Sessions include: *Yalta: the Place of a Woman in the World of Sages* *Returning the Torah to the People*

MIDDLE EAST TODAY



RALLYING FOR PLURALISM

Anat Hoffman (Haifa)

Anat has served as the Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) since 2002.

Her position places her at the forefront of the effort to advance religious pluralism in the State of Israel.

She has fought for (and won) state recognition of Reform and Conservative conversions and led the struggle against gender segregation in the public domain including on public buses, airplanes and a national radio station.

As leader of Women of the Wall for over three decades, Anat was selected as Person of the Year by Haaretz and chosen as one of the 50 most influential Jews by the Jerusalem Post.

Sessions include: *Doctor's Orders: How Israeli Health Workers are Healing Israel's Prejudice*



WITHER THE ISRAELI LEFT?

Gilad Halpern (Tel Aviv)

Journalist, broadcaster and media historian, Gilad hosts the Tel Aviv Review podcast and is founding co-editor of the Tel Aviv Review of Books magazine.

Formerly a managing editor at Ynetnews and senior editor at Haaretz English Edition, he is currently completing a PhD dissertation on the Jewish Press in Mandatory Palestine.

Sessions include: *Live Recording of the Tel Aviv Review Podcast*



COUNTER ANTI-ISRAEL BIAS

Ran Bar-Yoshafat (Jerusalem)

Ran is the Deputy Director of Kohelet Policy Forum, a think-tank striving to secure Israel's future as the nation-state of the Jewish people, strengthen representative democracy and broaden individual liberty and free-market principles in Israel.

Ran is currently working on his PhD in History. He speaks on TV channels including TRT, I-24 and is a regular panellist on Channel 14.

Sessions include: *2022 Vision: Israel's Image in the World*

TROLLING THE ANTI-SEMITES

Yair Rosenberg (New York)

Contributing writer at The Atlantic, where he writes the Deep Shtetl newsletter on the intersection of politics, culture and religion, Yair has also written for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Tablet.

He has covered everything from national elections in America and Israel to observant Jews in baseball and the translation of Harry Potter into Yiddish. In his spare time, he composes original Jewish music. His first album was released in June. He also creates bots that troll anti-Semites on Twitter.

Sessions include: *Why So Many People Don't Understand Anti-Semitism And What To Do About It*



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ENABLING CONNECTIONS

3 We aim to create opportunities for communities and individuals to connect.

PARTICIPATION

4 Volunteering one's time is a key feature of almost everything we do. No matter how small the contribution, we encourage participants to take an active part in all aspects of our conferences.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

5 Shabbat and kashrut are observed in all public areas. We recognise that in private areas, people will behave as they wish. Should participants wish to hold a prayer group, they may do so providing they supply all resources and are responsible for the session or prayer group in its entirety.

Some key principles

DISCOUNTS: Limmud SA is an inter-generational learning experience. If you would like to attend the Limmud conference for the week-end as a young adult (19-29), or with your family, you could qualify for discounts.

To apply, please contact Kim at registrationjh@limmud.org.za

KOSHER FOOD: There's delicious food and snacks, constantly available, thanks to the fully kosher catering of Riva Flax Caterers in Johannesburg, Goldies in Cape Town and the DJC in Durban.

VOLUNTEERS: Limmud is organised almost entirely by teams of volunteers. We believe there is space for everyone to contribute in their own unique way. We would be delighted if you would volunteer to help.

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Chicago shooting hits home for SA Jewish expats

TALI FEINBERG

"Shay and I [are] hiding in an empty store. Can someone tell me when this over. I don't know what to do. Please post only if you know something definite," wrote Candice Crane on Facebook, minutes after a gunman opened fire on a Fourth of July parade in her home town of Highland Park in Chicago, Illinois. She had moved there as a child with her family from Johannesburg, where they found a place filled with warmth and community that reminded them of South Africa.

But that sense of peace and security was shattered when the unimaginable unfolded. Crane, her husband Aaron, and the youngest two of their three daughters, aged six and one respectively, had been hanging out in a giant pink Hummer that their friend had hired for the day, when Crane's daughter Shay wanted to go to the bathroom. They headed to a nearby shop, and when they emerged, "I heard gunshots, and the entire parade was running towards me. It's something I'll never forget," she says.

Meanwhile, Gavin Sollinger, formerly of Cape Town, was watching his son in the parade. "We were right next to where the shooting happened," he later wrote on Facebook. "[My son] had just walked past us [when we] heard massive amounts of gunshots and people started screaming and running. We helped a guy with gunshot wounds to the head and shoulder. Scariest thing I've ever witnessed. Absolutely shocking."

He later told the CNN news network in a very South African accent "we're obviously very shook up. We've gone to this parade every year for over a decade,

and for the past few years, my son has played in the marching band. We were standing with friends and my parents, and all of a sudden, we started to hear this 'pop-pop-pop' noise. My wife asked, 'Is that firecrackers?' and I said, 'No, those are gunshots.' There were so many of them in a row. Then it stopped for a short while and then carried on. People started screaming.

"We had my parents with us, so we were trying to get them away. We moved away from the gunfire and found a building we could duck behind. It's one of those times where you're running away, feeling that this could be your last step, kind of hoping nothing hits you. You're completely helpless, there's nothing you can do." He says it was "brutal" being separated from his two children, but they were safe.

Says Crane, "I grabbed Shay's arm, and we ran through the wine shop and back into the alley. There were tons of people running next to us. I live nearby, but I had no idea where to run to. Somehow, I checked a door and it was open. It was a vacant shop. We went in and hid under the counter with three strangers."

Separated from her husband and baby, she didn't know if they were safe. (Their eldest daughter was at summer camp.) Later, he phoned to say that he had seen people injured and bleeding. "That's when I knew it was real," says Crane. "He called again a minute later, and said a nice woman had told them to come up to her apartment. They stayed for about an hour.

"Shay and I stayed under the counter listening to sirens and helicopters, praying the shooter or shooters wouldn't come our



South African expat Candice Crane and her daughter Shay enjoying the parade shortly before the shooting began

way. I kept telling Shay how much I loved her and how brave we were. She knew exactly what was happening and fully experienced the trauma. She wanted to speak to her daddy. I posted on Facebook because I literally didn't know what to do. When would it be safe?"

Crane's parents, Mike and Stephanie Levy, usually attend the parade, but didn't do so this year because they were hosting lunch at their home. Yet when their daughter called them, they followed deep parental instinct and drove into town to find their family.

"When Candi phoned and said there was a shooting, I just said, 'Stay where you are!' I went into automatic mode. I just ran. The cops stopped me, but I insisted on going to find them," says her mother. "Just last week, we decided to check all the *mezuzot* in our home and Candi's home. They finished them just before Shabbos, and I truly feel that's what protected us all.

"We walk through that area of town almost every day," says Crane. "In fact, the day before, we had lunch at a restaurant directly across from where the shooter

attacked. After the parade, the glass there was shattered.

"My good friend's aunt was shot in the arm, and broke her ankle," she says. "A mom I know was shot in the hip. A little boy was grazed by a bullet. Everyone here is one degree away from each other. We'll never be the same." She says there are quite a lot of South African Jewish expats who live in the area.

The population of Highland Park is some 30 000; about half of the residents are Jewish. The victims included one Jewish educator, Jacki Sundheim (63), and a Jewish couple, Irena McCarthy (35) and Kevin McCarthy (37), who leave behind a toddler son. At least two other victims could be Jewish, but this hasn't been confirmed. One haunting video shows the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band playing joyful Jewish music in the parade as people run past, fleeing for their lives.

The family spent hours at Crane's home before eventually deciding to head to her parents. As they drove out of her street, "we saw five FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agents talking to a woman. We thanked them for being there," says her father. "We later found out they had been talking to the family of the alleged shooter. He was essentially her neighbour. He was also the neighbour of the Chabad rabbi of Highland Park, Yosef Schanowitz."

The rabbi told the orthodox news site *Anash* that he recognised the alleged shooter, who he said had been turned away from Chabad by its armed security guard during a Passover seder this year. The building's security guard also confirmed to the *Forward* newspaper that the suspect had visited the congregation during Passover, **Continued on page 6 >>**

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How to touch 'every thread in the weave' of SA's Giant Flag

TALI FEINBERG

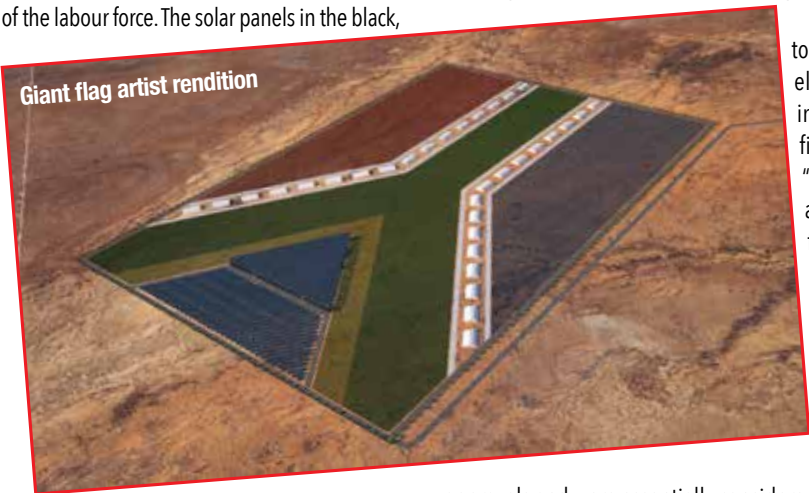
As South Africa is plunged into darkness thanks to Eskom's extensive loadshedding, one project in the middle of the desert may light the way.

Guy Lieberman's Giant Flag has been named by CNN as "one of 10 ideas to change the world". He and his team have been working towards building a flag -- viewable from space -- made up of tens of thousands of desert plants, greenhouses, a tourism precinct and a 20-megawatt solar field in the Camdeboo region of the Karoo on the outskirts of Graaff-Reinet.

Through the creation and maintenance of the Giant Flag, the project envisions creating hundreds of "green-collar" jobs, with women constituting a majority of the labour force. The solar panels in the black, blue and red part of the flag are the heart of the project, and will have the ability to provide power to the equivalent of 20 000 homes.

Lieberman made aliya from Johannesburg, some years ago but remains closely connected to South Africa, especially through this project. "South Africa has the ideal landscape and climate for renewable energy projects like the Giant Flag," he says. "These could provide a local source of power to smaller towns and even cities. Not to oversimplify things, but it takes a blend of political will, technical repair and economic impetus to get us to that point. The country has all the natural resources required as well as all the need in the world to motivate for this to happen."

When he started the project in 2014, "the vision didn't even include solar power", recalls Lieberman. "At that initial stage it was only plants



in the colours of the flag. But within the first year, it dawned on me that converting the black triangle to solar power would give the project the necessary economic grounding it needs.

"However, the Independent Power Producers [IPP] industry and national regulation at the time weren't ready for small projects like ours to enter the grid easily. Now the regulation is there, but technical problems in being able to access the grid is the primary hold up."

At this point, the solar panels aren't generating electricity because the project has been delayed by various obstructions. "Most of these have been external, and most of them we've overcome. Initially, it was the high barrier to entry for IPPs to enter the market. That eventually opened up. The issue we're facing now is the fact that the Eskom grid cannot receive power from IPPs due to technical problems on the line."

They are planning to generate 20MW of electricity, "a substantial increase on our initial figure", Lieberman says. "Once the generation allowance for IPPs leapt from 1MW to 100MW, it suddenly made the Giant Flag a viable project in the eyes of solar developers," says Lieberman. "Because we had already secured so many of the necessary authorisations and

approvals and were essentially considered "shovel ready", we were approached by several renewable energy operators to collaborate with them.

"We ultimately partnered with a solar developer who proposed a generous and socially sensitive economic model. The Giant Flag Trust is a nonprofit organisation, with a deep focus on addressing the socioeconomic realities of the communities in and surrounding Graaff-Reinet. The income from solar would provide an economic baseline

Continued on page 4>>

Moses elicits the leader within

Torah Thought



Rav Ilan Herrmann
– Soul Workout shul

Moses, G-d's trusted servant, whose devotion and obedience is supreme, has a seemingly single career moment of insanity in this week's portion. An infraction for which for an average person would be considered negligible is defining for Moses. In one instant, his fate is altered and sealed.

The people complained that they were thirsty. G-d commanded Moses to "speak to the rock" to produce water. Instead of speaking to the rock, he hit it, violating the commandment. The consequence of this, our sages say, would have an impact on all of Jewish history.

The result is that Moses is decreed not to enter the promised land. Of particular significance is that Moses is absent from the entry into Israel, the unique phenomenon that Moses' reign wrought would now be lacking.

To explain: throughout Moses' leadership, the children of Israel had a supernatural existence. The exodus; splitting of the sea; Sinai revelation; manna sustenance – all eclipsed the laws of nature. Moses inspired divine transcendence in a revealed, open manner. Had Moses entered Israel, the process of overwhelming all obstacles before the nation would have continued through to its conclusion, including, our sages say, the ushering in of the Messianic era at that time.

But with Moses being prevented entry and Joshua taking the helm, that miraculous accompaniment diminished. From then on and throughout all subsequent generations, the process of confronting the world has been primarily to engage it through natural means and slow incremental gains to overcome the forces that obstruct G-dliness. All this is the product of the fatal choice Moses made that day to hit the rock.

The obvious question is why did Moses do it? The possibility of unwitting error or loss of control is hardly an option for an individual described as "a man of G-d",

a complete tzaddik, who has mastered his human temperament.

Our sages offer a fascinating answer.

If Moses was the sole catalyst for the achievement and success of the Jewish people, an essential and necessary ingredient in the Jewish historical mission would be missing.

Three and half thousand years on, we're able to look back and see the pattern of a people challenged and tested and yet, in spite of seemingly insurmountable odds, repeatedly displaying the ability to rise and succeed – tenaciously holding onto and keeping up their faith and religion.

In Moses' seeming error, a new chapter

began. It was the dawn of a process that would bring to realisation the irrepressible spirit of the Jewish people collectively and individually – that they are forged in the miraculous that nature cannot extinguish or suppress.

The implication of this explanation is startling. Moses hits the rock with full volition, knowing he's signing his own fate. His motivation is that of every true *nasi* leader: wanting the ultimate good for *am Yisrael*. For the people to realise that the miracle isn't outside of them but in them, that as they're challenged and their greatness shines, they realise the leader within.

ERRATUM

Gremlins got into the editing process of last week's "Torah Thought" that changed the meaning of the first sentence of the piece by Rabbi Rodney Richard. We apologise for this error. – Editor

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Jewish law prohibits doing any form of *melacha* (work or actions) on Shabbat (unless an urgent human or medical need is life-threatening). *Melacha* refers to the activities necessary for construction of the traveling sanctuary which the Jews took with them in the desert. There are 39 categories of *melacha* prohibited on Shabbat i.e. grinding, trapping or tearing

*one hour ahead of SA time

South African Jewish Report

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'Swimming was his sanctuary,' say family of Plett shark victim

NICOLA MILTZ

Bruce Wolov was more fearful of the 'sharks' in business than he was of sharks in the ocean, friends say. That was until this prominent Johannesburg stockbroker, 63, died following a shark attack off the coast of Plettenberg Bay last week.

The highly respected portfolio manager and much-loved family man was doing exactly what he loved before he was killed – swimming in the wide-open sea off Sanctuary Beach, his treasured place.

He knew it was potentially dangerous, and in spite of hundreds of cautionary discussions over the years, he remained fearless. He loved sharks so much that he even wore a speedo with a picture of a shark on the back. He swam among sharks for decades in perfect harmony in different waters, where he felt at one with nature.

Swimming was part of his DNA, and Wolov adored the sea. Everyone who knew him, knew this. Being in the water was his happy place, from competing in water polo, deep-sea diving around the world, to long-distance swimming.

Just after 14:00 on Tuesday, 28 June, Plettenberg Bay National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) volunteers were alerted to the incident on Sanctuary Beach following reports by beachgoers.

NSRI rescue swimmers responded to the scene, and rescue craft were launched. Sadly, Wolov had succumbed to his wounds.

The NSRI and Bitou Municipality immediately appealed to all sea users, including paddlers and boaters along the Southern Cape coastline, to exercise caution.

According to the The International Shark Attack File, shark bites are extremely rare around the world, but they do occur.

Wolov knew this, but it didn't deter him. The last fatal shark attack in Plett was over a decade ago.

Tributes have continued to pour in for the humble husband, father and friend. He was this week described as "a true mensch with a heart of gold", someone who "lived life to the fullest" and revelled in everyone's personal achievements and successes. He exuded warmth and sincerity, and personified contentment, according to those who knew him well.

"The large crowd here and on Zoom is testament to his kindness, sincerity and loyalty", said Rabbi Shmuel Moffson at Wolov's jam-packed funeral, attended by people from all walks of life.

"When you spoke to Bruce, you felt he was really listening. When you left his company, you felt heard, nourished and good about

yourself," he said.

Bruce was born and raised in Johannesburg into a tennis-loving, sports-mad family of three boys. He took centre stage with his vast sporting knowledge and unwavering obsession for all sports.

He matriculated from King David Linksfield, where he was "one of the brightest" in his class, and would often be the recipient of the *victor ludorum* for swimming. He obtained a BCom with an honours in finance from the University of the Witwatersrand, and soon his love for the markets and business rivalled his love for swimming.

"He was a fish," said his younger brother, Dan, earlier this week. "Bruce loved swimming. It was his thing, from the earliest of days, and he was good at it. He was always my staunchest tennis supporter, he watched all my games, knew every result, and always thought I was better than I actually was," he said.

The family lived in a house in Melrose, which Bruce continued to inhabit with his beloved wife, Jenny, of 36 years, and their three daughters, Erin, 28; Galya, 26; and Sophia, 22.



Bruce Wolov

The couple moved to Plettenberg Bay during the COVID-19 pandemic, where Bruce could work remotely and continue his passion for swimming every day in the sea or at the local



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pool. A master diver, he made sure that his daughters developed a love for the ocean, and all obtained their scuba diving licenses.

"Some of our best memories are diving together in places like Aliwal Shoal, Protea banks, Maldives, Mauritius, and Plett," says his daughter, Galya.

"He was my best friend," says her older sister, Erin, who spoke to their father up to three times a day from her home in Miami.

"Bruce spoke to everyone every day. How he found the time is a mystery," says Dan.

Wolov's business partner and close friend for more than 30 years, Jon-Brandan "JB" Bloch, recalls Bruce leaving work regularly in the middle of the day to go for a swim.

"In the early days, he'd go to Ellis Park to swim and later, he'd go home, where he had a 20m long pool and do laps. He'd come back to work refreshed, with a smile on his face," he says.

Bloch says he would speak to Wolov at least seven times a day.

"We'd talk about everything from the markets, sport, family, to business. Bruce had my back, and I had his. His passing has left an enormous void."

Bruce was known in stockbroking circles for treating every client the same, whether they invested R20 000 or R60 million. "He loved meeting the chief executives and chief financial officers of listed companies and interacting with them.

He loved his work," says Bloch.

Lifelong friend Dr Rodney Feinberg recalls swimming with his friend beyond the breakers at Robberg. "Seaweed must have brushed up against me one time and thinking it was a shark, I was petrified," Feinberg says. "Bruce casually allayed my fears. He was so confident in the water, at one with the ocean, and totally fearless."

Feinberg remembers going to Durban one holiday as young boys, and Bruce swimming on his own beyond the breakers right to the shark nets. "He was 14 years old. We spoke every day, I cannot get my head around the fact that I'll never speak to him again," he says.

Lifelong family friend, Michael Nahon, says Bruce made everyone feel special. "If you ended ahead of him in a swimming race, he'd tell you how good you were. He never compared his performance against your performance.

"If you ended behind him, he'd say you had a bad race and next time, you'd beat him because you were the better swimmer. He pumped you up, making you feel better than you were. He was happy for you to do well."

Nahon describes Wolov as resolute in all his decisions. "Although he was a small guy with an amiable personality, you misread him immediately if that's how you saw him, because he was enormously resolute in any decisions he took."

His daughters say they felt blessed, and aspired to have a marriage like their parents had. "He was so passionate about all our dreams, and embarrassingly, kept everyone up-to-date about our lives. We heard how he was like the Pied Piper of people. He used to collect souls, and touched so many people's lives," they say.

Ronnie Van 't Hof says, "Bruce was my best friend, and there are a number of us who can say the same thing." After Wolov spoke at Van 't Hof's 60th birthday, a woman came up to his wife and said, "I wish I had a friend like that."

Wolov is survived by countless friends, his wife, Jenny; their three daughters; his brothers, Lance and Dan, and their families.



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ANC criticises WC premier for hosting Jewish event

TALI FEINBERG

The African National Congress has challenged Western Cape Premier Alan Winde for allowing a Jewish charity event to be streamed from his official residence, in spite of the fact that Winde hosts many other community events there without any question.

“It’s antisemitic [to question this event]. They often have events there that don’t get questioned,” says Member of Parliament Michael Bagraim.

“In essence, the premier’s residence in Cape Town is often used for charity events. I have attended literally dozens of events over many years. The first two events I went to – under the auspices of an ANC premier – were many and varied. Thereafter, I attended about 10 events under the premiership of the first Democratic Alliance (DA) premier. Never was there a complaint about any of these events. I have attended many events under the premiership of Alan Winde. Again, no complaints. In this specific event, the premier expended no costs at all but it has become an issue. The only reason is because it was for a Jewish charity.”

On Friday, 10 June, ANC legislature Chief Whip Patronella Zingisa ‘Pat’ Lekker asked Winde about hosting the Friends of the United Jewish Campaign (UJC) at his historic Leeuwenhof home in December 2020.

“The third branch of the work of the United Jewish Campaign is support for the ‘apartheid state’ of Israel,” she said in her official query. But local politicians, community leaders and political commentators have all pointed out that events are

often hosted at the premier’s residence and say singling out a Jewish event is questionable at best, antisemitic at worst.

“I fail to see what ‘red line’ the premier has crossed. These complaints suggest that Jews aren’t fully accepted as a part of a diverse multicultural society,” says Milton Shain, antisemitism expert and emeritus professor of history at the University of Cape Town.

“Jews are entitled to take an opportunity to have the premier support a cause. Would these voices speak out about a similar event hosted by the Chinese community or Russian emigres?” he asks rhetorically.

The annual Friends of the UJC event aims to raise funds for the David Susman Community Foundation (DSCF), and celebrate Jewish life in the Mother City with donors visiting from overseas. The DSCF was established in 2007 as a financial safeguard against any unforeseen adverse events the Cape Town Jewish community may face. The COVID-19 pandemic was one such an event, and 2020 marked the first time that it was called upon to aid the community in a significant manner on many levels.

The chairperson of the DSCF, Marco van Embden, told the *SA Jewish Report* how the event came to be hosted at the premier’s residence. “Each year, we seek out a venue that is unique to out-of-town visitors. We approached the premier’s office, and it agreed, as this would be very good for Cape Town. No guests were in attendance in-person. It was all online due to COVID-19. Only the presenters and support staff were there, and the video was pre-



Alan Winde, Western Cape Premier and Marco van Embden, Chairperson, Friends of the UJC Cape Town in 2021

recorded.”

The programme of events included a welcome from the premier, a video of Cape Town, and entertainment. The event was entirely funded by the DSCF and its annual sponsors. “There were no costs for the premier,” says van Embden. This was echoed in Winde’s official response to Lekker’s question. “No funds were raised at the event. A follow-up email was sent to all online attendees [about 150 people],” says van Embden.

Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) Chairperson Tzvi Brivik says, “The Cape SAJBD is alarmed by the negative response directed at Premier Alan Winde for an event hosted by the Friends of the UJC at the premier’s residence.

“As stated by Mr Bagraim, the premier’s residence is often used by political parties and civil society for charity events. The Jewish community is a minority within Western Cape

society that should be celebrated and protected alongside all other faith-based communities,” he says.

“It’s civil society that plays a central role alongside government to shape and nurture our society. We encourage the premier’s efforts to provide a platform for organisations, who, like the DSCF, work towards a better future for all and champion upliftment projects to overcome pressing social issues,” says Brivik. “We believe the only way to make a meaningful difference is to bring together different faiths and communities and foster engagement in safe spaces. This is what the premier has done, and, we hope, he’ll continue to do.”

Meanwhile, others point to the ANC’s declining support nationwide as a reason for questioning the premier on this event. “In 2004, the ANC held 45% of the vote in the Western Cape. In the most recent election, that had slid down to a mere 28% – a third of

supporters dropped. This gives some reason to explain why the ANC has taken such a vitriolic stance against the DA and Israel,” says advocate Mark Oppenheimer. “It’s in its death spiral in the Western Cape, and that pattern seems to be happening on a national level as well.

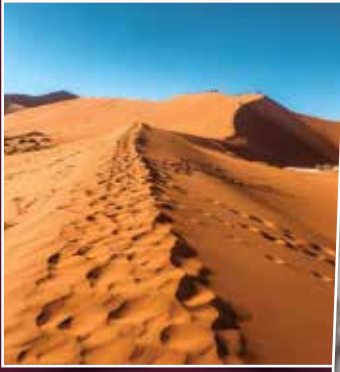
“As the party dies, it has to find ways of discrediting its opposition,” he says. “The tried and true method is to try and associate parties like the DA with apartheid. So this is why the ‘grand lie’ is sold that Israel is an apartheid state and that the DA’s friendly relationship with Israel and with supporters of Israel makes it an ‘apartheid party’. That would explain why such a hateful question was put to the premier about this fundraising event. It’s because the ANC is in a death spiral and is desperate.”

“The ANC is on a fishing expedition once again to cause division within South African communities and to create a stereotype,” says MP Darren Bergman. “The ballots are showing that voters are increasingly seeing that these gimmicks are used to exploit the emotions of people with a vested interest in the Middle East, and to try and abuse their political vote.

“I think it’s admirable for a premier to open up his residence to minority groups and let them into the world they pay rates and taxes to,” he says. “How may Muslim and Christian events have been hosted on these same lawns? Knowing the DA and its sincerity, I can tell you that the answer would please our voters.”

The *SA Jewish Report* reached out to Winde, but he chose not to comment. It also reached out to Lekker and ANC spokesperson Pule Mabe for comment, but didn’t receive a response by the time of going to print.

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How to touch ‘every thread in the weave’ of SA’s Giant Flag

>>>Continued from page 2

upon which to build out the rest of the project – the greenhouses, tourism precinct and plantations.”

Asked what the electricity will be used for, Lieberman says, “There are two strategies here. One, to provide power to the Dr Beyers Naudé local municipality. Or, wheeling it through the national grid to qualified ‘oftakers’ -- large energy users anywhere in South Africa who want to use renewable energy to power their facilities without the bother or expense of adding their own solar installations on their buildings. These could be banks, supermarkets, office blocks, hotels, malls, factories, universities or similar institutions.

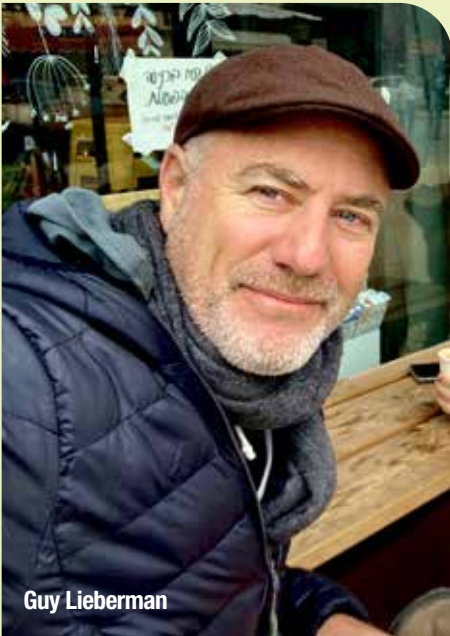
“The local municipality would have been ideal, but like many smaller municipalities across South Africa, the economic realities, including pre-existing and substantial indebtedness to Eskom, complicated things. This is unfortunate because if it was possible to proceed with the municipality, we would have had a great story of a local solar field empowering a small Karoo town.”

Lieberman says that as a whole, the Giant Flag project has experienced a mix of progress and setbacks over the past year. “The pause in operations and the holding pattern while we wait for approval to access the grid is tough to maintain. So much rests on the success of the solar project. I last visited in March this year, but I’m in daily contact with my colleagues on the ground there.

“One of the most beautiful aspects of the project has been the local people that I get to work with,” he says. “Our board meetings are literally the vision of a unified South Africa. We have the former ANC mayor of the municipality; the current municipal chief financial officer; the Democratic Alliance shadow minister for public works; and, until he died tragically from COVID-19, Moyikwa Sisulu [Walter Sisulu’s grandson]. Our staff includes a black woman Economic Freedom Fighters activist and an Afrikaans administrator. And then there’s me, the only Jew at the table. We’re all very close! Almost every time we gather, the meetings end in eruptions

of laughter.”

When asked how the Jewish community can support the project, Lieberman says, “We’ve established that our current obstacle is grid access. What might be helpful is to prepare for when this obstacle is removed and the gates to the grid are open. At that stage, perhaps the opportunity would be for those who deal with the kind of hardware we would need to consider how they might assist, in-kind. Solar panel providers, manufacturers of transformers, high-grade fencing,



Guy Lieberman

building materials, security and communications technology – these are the kinds of things the project will ultimately need. If we can lower the hard costs of the build, we can ultimately increase the benefits for the local community.”

At such dark times in South Africa – literally – he says, “My sense is that now is the time to double down and ‘give hard’. Do whatever you can to shift the small details consistently, to attend to the problems that are in front of you and that you can address. We’re particularly good at that. It trickles upward. Invest your energy in the rare beauty of the place, engage it, and appreciate it. This cannot be overstated. Travel locally, spend money there. Rediscover why you’re in South Africa. Enjoy the

South Africans around you. This can happen regardless of how Eskom is behaving.”

To the South African Jewish community, he says, “For well over 100 years, the Jewish community has participated in the creation of the South African fabric. We’ve touched every thread in the weave. There’s significance in acknowledging this because the reality is that this hasn’t changed. It will be this way for as long as a Jewish community exists in South Africa.”

The story behind the car that did a runner back to Glenhazel

NICOLA MILTZ

Law-abiding Johannesburg accountant Dani Smith is grateful and relieved not to have been arrested and charged for stealing a car last weekend.

The honest father of four would never in his wildest dreams consider “stealing” anything, let alone someone’s car.

However, this is exactly what he did, albeit inadvertently.

In a bizarre comedy of errors last Sunday, Smith, who lives in Glenhazel, found himself driving home from a running race in Benoni in what he thought was a friend’s car. Fellow runner Oren Kinkel had given him his car keys during the race when Smith battled to run with a niggling calf injury.

Kinkel suggested to him that instead of hanging around for hours waiting for them to complete the race, he should go home. He said not to worry, he would catch a ride afterwards with their other running friend, Yossi Unterslak, with whom Smith had originally driven.

Grateful for the gesture, Smith accepted the offer and took the keys. It turns out that Smith got into the wrong car of exactly the same description parked in the very same location. However, unbeknown to Smith, the vehicle belonged to another runner, Steven Isaacson, who, bizarrely, also happens to live in Glenhazel, a stone’s throw away from him, although the two had never met.

Smith drove himself home, had a hot bath, and nursed his calf injury. It was only hours later that he found out that he had the wrong man’s car parked in his driveway.

It all started when Smith entered the Comrades Marathon-qualifying Benoni Northerns Marathon last weekend with a bothersome calf. At the crack of dawn, he drove to the Benoni Northerns Sports Club with Unterslak.

About 16km in, Smith felt his calf worsen with each step. Soon afterwards, the pair bumped into Kinkel along the route, who suggested that Smith call it a day and take his car home.

“He gave me his key and said look out for the white Landrover with the black roof parked behind the swimming pool,” says Smith.

“That sounded easy enough.” He got a ride along the way from a random stranger, who also happened to be in a white Landrover, who dropped him at what he thought was Kinkel’s car.

“I pressed the key button to open the car thinking it strange that no lights flicked on, but the door opened easily enough,” he says.

He says he noticed two race envelopes in the car addressed to two different people: Steven Isaacson and Jared Bloch.



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

Dani Smith and Steven Isaacson

He automatically assumed that Kinkel had collected their race numbers on their behalf, as runners do.

“I pressed the start button as instructed, the car started, and I drove home,” said Smith.

Isaacson, the owner of the car, had left his keys inside his car so that whichever of his group finished first could have a place to rest while waiting for the others to finish.

“In hindsight, it wasn’t a wise move, I know,” says Isaacson, who got the shock of his life when he didn’t see his car after the race. To compound matters, the car actually belongs to his wife, Tracy. He decided to take it without telling her at the last minute at 05:30, just in case there was a shortage of parking and he had to ramp a pavement to park.

“I was convinced my car had been stolen,” said Isaacson. “It wasn’t where I knew for sure I had parked it.” With the absent car was his cellphone and wallet, as well as Bloch’s phone (who had travelled with him), and all the belongings inside, including his wife’s paraphernalia in the boot.

They set about trying to work out what happened, even speaking to a man who had parked in his exact space who told them it was the only space left available when he arrived at around 08:30.

Isaacson immediately set about reporting the “theft” to his insurance company to get the tracking process underway, which included locating his cellphone. The app alerted his son that the phone was around the corner from their house in Glenhazel.

“My son chided me, thinking I had used his sister’s name when downloading the phone tracking app because she was at a meeting at the time somewhere in Glenhazel,” said Isaacson.

Meanwhile, Kinkel and Unterslak were totally perplexed when they saw that Smith hadn’t taken Kinkel’s car so many hours later.

They immediately contacted Smith.

“Yossi asked me where I was and obviously, I said I was at home,” said Smith.

It was the start of a frantic mission to track down the rightful owner of the car, the only clue being the race envelopes inside the

crew was on its way.

“What are the chances,” says Isaacson, “I mean, how crazy?”

Smith, who drily relayed the hilarious events on Howard Feldman’s *Morning Mayhem* show on ChaiFM on Monday, said

A Torah to connect the world

TALI FEINBERG

When South African *oleh* Eli Kay (25) was killed by a Hamas terrorist in Jerusalem in November 2021, it sent ripples of heartbreak around the world. Now, the Eli Kay Unity Sefer Torah will play a role in shoring up those cracks, and bring people together to celebrate Israel and the Jewish people – the direct opposite of the killer’s intention.

The idea came about in the early, harrowing days after Kay’s passing. “When something so terrible happens, you want to bring light into the world. Torah is light – it’s a simple equation,” says Eli’s older brother, Kasriel, who is driving the project.

“However, this Torah will be different. So many people around the world have wanted to connect with Eli and his story, and this will allow people to do that. Anyone around the globe can contribute for as little as \$1 [R14, 00 or 3.50 shekels] for a letter. A Torah has more than 300 000 letters and I would rather have 300 000 R14 donations than have someone pay for the whole thing,” he says. “By taking part, you’re joining thousands of other Jews around the world.” Since launching the project in early July 2022, there have already been more than 500 participants.

But the unity brought by the Torah will go beyond this. When it’s time to start writing it, the *sofer* [scribe] will outline the letters, and then these pieces of parchment will be sent around the world to be filled in by a local scribe. “So, just say a piece is sent to South Africa, we will go round to schools, shuls, welfare organisations and so on, allowing people to be part of it. Filling in a letter is a source of great *brocha*, and it will allow Eli’s legacy to literally ‘tour’ around the world.”

Finally, when the Torah is complete, it will play a vital role in bringing people together, especially in Israel. “There’s no lack of Torahs, so we decided to make this something different: a

travelling Sefer Torah,” says Kay. “I’ve done extensive research on creating a custom-made backpack which will allow tour groups to take the Torah with them.”

The Torah will be half size, allowing it to “travel the land which Eli so loved. It’s about continuity. Yes, kids come to Israel to enjoy pizza and shwarma and have a jol, but there’s this whole other side, a side that Eli stood for.” The family plans to meet tour groups using the Torah, explain what it is, and add depth and meaning to their time in the holy land.

What would Eli have said about it all? “He would probably have asked, ‘Why are you making all this fuss?’” says his brother. “But he also would have been very proud, that it would bring people together and celebrate our unity and diversity.”

Kay says he stays motivated through Eli. “When he died, everyone kept calling him a *gibor Yisrael* [a hero of Israel]. What made Eli a hero? He was just a regular kid from South

Africa with a drive to do good, who shook the world to its core. And that’s the whole point. He showed that we can all be heroes.”

Kay admits that it’s been tough, “but I’m focused on ensuring my brother’s legacy lives on. My family and I are incredibly driven. This is now our life’s work.”

They hope to complete the Unity Torah in time for Eli’s first yartzheit in November, which is why they want people to take part as soon as possible.

“Thanks to everyone for your participation. This is Eli’s community, who made him into the person he was,” says Kay. “We haven’t forgotten our roots. The connection to the South African Jewish community remains strong, and it always will be.”

To participate in the Eli Kay Unity Sefer Torah, visit www.torahclick.com/en/projects/11/the-eli-kay-unity-sefer-torah



Devorah Kay and her son Eli

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SA Jews ‘should condemn u-turn on Zimbabwean immigration’

NICOLA MILTZ

Zimbabwean housekeeper Thandi Moyo (not her real name) has been living and working in South Africa for 10 years with her partner and their two children. They came with next to nothing, and have slowly made a life for themselves.

Each month, they send some money and goods to their families across the border in addition to keeping food on the table and educating their children, one of whom was born here.

Moyo is a domestic worker for a Jewish family in Sandton and a qualified part-time frail-care practitioner. Her husband is a minister, a driver and a butler, who also works for a Jewish family in Johannesburg. Both have a firm grasp of kashrut, Jewish traditions and customs.

The couple left their embattled, economically-stricken country in search of a better life. Last year, they were eventually able to get married after Moyo’s husband finally finished paying *lobola*, made possible only by employment in this country. This all hangs in the balance now.

They hold Zimbabwean Exemption Permits (ZEPs), which the South African government decided to scrap last December. This means they face deportation and being forced to uproot their lives and return home to start again from scratch.

“The other choice, which is too scary to consider, is to continue living in Johannesburg as undocumented aliens,” says Moyo’s husband, a deeply religious man.

They are among about 178 000 Zimbabweans who will be affected by the government’s decision not to renew the ZEP, which was allowed to expired. These permit holders were given until the end of December 2022 to legalise their status in the country, a seemingly impossible task, they say.

Naledi Dube (not her real name) is a char for a Jewish family in Sydenham, Johannesburg. Three of her four children were born in South Africa, but none have a South African birth certificate, only an unabridged certificate which claims they were born here but aren’t South African citizens.

She has chosen to live under the radar, waiting to see “which way the wind blows”. She lives about 400m from the Yeoville Market, parts of which were recently gutted after an alleged xenophobic attack against foreign-owned stall owners.

“I won’t go back unless I’m deported. I’ve been here for so many years, this is where my life is, even though I’ll be undocumented, which is scary,” Dube says.

“My children don’t know where they

belong. They were born and raised here, but don’t have a South African ID. Nor do they belong in Zimbabwe. They don’t know who they are meant to be. The system doesn’t allow them to know,” says Dube.

Many are praying for a waiver, which allows the home affairs department to disregard certain requirements for permission to stay, such as if an employer can prove they have advertised for a job but no South Africans qualified for it. They can also apply for a waiver if they can prove that they have critical skills, which many of them don’t.

To obtain a waiver would be a miracle, they say. Without legal status after the December deadline, their bank accounts will be closed.

Queueing to get across the Zimbabwean border from South Africa in December 2020



The Helen Suzman Foundation (HSF) has taken Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi to court, seeking to set aside what it describes as a “hasty, untransparent, and ill-considered” decision not to renew the ZEP beyond December 2022.

This has attracted the ire of the minister, who recently lambasted the HSF and nongovernmental organisations that support it for interfering in the process, causing further tension.

HSF Executive Director Nicole Fritz said in her affidavit before court that not renewing the ZEP would expose Zimbabwean immigrants to the dangers of xenophobic attacks, extortion, detention and deportation.

“They will lose their jobs, businesses and homes. They will lose access to banking services. Their children could be denied access to schooling, medical care and social services, and they will be forced to return to Zimbabwe.

“They will be given a desperate choice: to

remain in South Africa as undocumented migrants with all the vulnerability that attaches to such status, or return to a Zimbabwe that, to all intents and purposes, is unchanged from the country they fled,” says Fritz.

“There are thousands of children who have been born in South Africa to ZEP holders during this time who have never even visited their parents’ country of origin,” Fritz says.

The HSF wants a judge to rule that the minister’s decision to terminate the ZEP, announced in January this year, is unlawful, unconstitutional and invalid, and that it be reviewed and remitted back to the minister for reconsideration “using a fair process”

involving meaningful engagement with those affected and civil society.

The situation appears hopeless, and it should resonate with every Jewish person in the country, says Gavin Morris, the director of the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town.

The community faced similar restrictions in the past, he says, when the government tried to diminish the number of Jews in the country with various immigration-restrictions: the Quota Act of 1930 and then the Aliens Act of 1937, which was aimed at severely curtailing Jewish immigration to South Africa.

“We have been kicked out of every country we have settled in throughout the ages. This is the reason why we have been called ‘wandering Jews’, because we couldn’t stay anywhere. So it’s close to home,” says Morris.

“If this had happened 100 years ago, it would have been us facing this uncertainty.

Take a minute to think about what our community has contributed to this country. Can you imagine if we hadn’t been allowed to flourish, can you also imagine being allowed here and then forced to leave?” he asks.

Romy Peterson of Afrika Awake, a nongovernmental organisation which focuses on assisting refugees and asylum seekers, says she feels helpless and despondent.

“It’s all so sad. There appears to be no will for this to change. The situation is beyond cruel. I know hundreds of people who have been here for many years who have built businesses, have jobs and are now at a loss. It’s unbelievable, blatant xenophobia.”

She says Afrika Awake had communicated with dozens of people who had decided, albeit reluctantly, to leave rather than continue to face the unknown.

“I have no answer and no solution. I’m just hoping that the matter will be resolved by some miracle in the courts,” she says.

Alana Baranov, the political and social justice liaison of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said this week that the Board was “deeply concerned” about the humanitarian crisis that could result from the termination of the ZEP.

“This decision will mean that more than 178 000 Zimbabweans who have been living, working and going to school legally in our country for nearly a decade will not only be faced with huge upheaval in their lives and the prospect of having to start over, but also the threat of deportation.

“We’re also saddened by the lack of options available to Zimbabweans who have made South Africa their home for many years and contributed not just to our economy but all aspects of our society.

The massive backlogs at home affairs mean that other permit options theoretically available to Zimbabweans, including applying for asylum due to the continuing economic problems and human-rights abuses in their home country, are very difficult to obtain,” Baranov says.

“As a community that had first-hand experienced of seeking refuge from violence and repression, with generations of Jews around the world being forcibly uprooted and having to rebuild their lives all over again in foreign lands, we should use our voice to call on the department of home affairs to address the real and distressing implications for permit holders come the 31 December deadline,” she says.

“Jews, with our values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedek* (justice), need to ensure that South Africa treats those most vulnerable in our society, including the orphan, widow and stranger, with humanity, dignity and respect.”

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The light at the end of the loadshedding tunnel

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Even the most positive people are having a hard time staying optimistic in the face of weeks of loadshedding. From frustration to anxiety to acceptance and everything in between, the one thing the darkness cannot dim is the gamut of emotions it brings in its wake.

Between calculating when we can run the dishwasher, when to prepare dinner, and how to get the children bathed before lights out, planning our days now necessitates military precision. It's no wonder we're all in heightened states of alert and in many cases, anxiety.

"Uncertainty and a lack of control create a sense of instability and can also lead to an increase in anxiety and depression," says counselling psychologist Lisa Hirschowitz. "There's definitely a sense of frustration, hopelessness and helplessness, which can exacerbate pre-existing mental-health issues. While these feelings are common, if they're having an impact your ability to function on a day-to-day basis, you should seek help to see what deeper feelings are being triggered by loadshedding."

Even if you're coping relatively well, you'd be forgiven for feeling out of sorts. "The human mind thrives on and needs predictable situations," says clinical psychologist Amanda Fortes. Though we may know when to expect loadshedding – if we're able to make sense of the ever-changing schedules and stages – we don't know when it will eventually end and when it will inevitably begin again.

It's how we react to this lack of control that will determine how well we cope with an undeniably trying situation. "Focusing on the aspects which remain in our control, for example how we're going to prepare for the loadshedding hours and what resources can we tap into during this time, can help us keep things in perspective," Fortes says.

Hirschowitz elaborates. "Although it's challenging to remain optimistic at such times, it's important that we realise that we're resilient and adaptive human beings. We're constantly finding new methods of coping during loadshedding, which should be acknowledged and commended. It can also be comforting to know that we're all experiencing this frustration together, fostering a sense of community. As South Africans, we use humour as a way to make light of unpleasant situations which is another coping mechanism."

And though the suggestion may annoy the more cynical among us, using loadshedding to create special moments can be beneficial. "For many, loadshedding can be used as an opportunity to spend uninterrupted quality time with family and friends," says Hirschowitz. "This shouldn't be undermined or overlooked."

Fulfillment coach Eve Marks, echoes this, and stresses the need to use the time to focus on self-care. "Do little things to lift your mood – dance, sing, be creative, read a book," she suggests. "Make time to treat yourself even if it's with an inexpensive cleansing mask



or a cup of tea at sunset. Keep a gratitude journal, and write in it before you go to sleep." There's no consistent fix and feeling down is understandable, but such practices can be uplifting.

Yet, for business owners, the situation may also create increased pressure and financial strain, which is naturally stressful. This is the case for Nadine Hocter, the owner of corporate massage company

not just about the inconvenience of not being able to watch TV for two hours, it's the fact that my Google adverts couldn't run for four days because my website wasn't operational because loadshedding

Sheer Bliss. "The impact of COVID-19 on my business was massive, and the lack of support from the government was huge," she says. "When we just start catching our breath again, loadshedding hits. I have had to spend money on an inverter because I need to keep my business going. It's

caused the servers to crash. Who knows what that cost me?" Like many, Hocter is *gatvol* and plans to emigrate. "As a South African, for the most part, I try not to let things get to me because I think that we can't control it so we might as well not get upset by it," she says. "But I think it's important to let it out. Everybody is trying to keep up this really positive front and that's fine, but it's okay to be angry. I love South Africa, but the country really has failed us." Though we all need to choose the path that's best for us, Michele Hirsch, who made aliya five years ago, says life is difficult everywhere. "I miss South Africa each and every day – the people, the climate, the thunderstorms in summer, the food, the best Jewish community in the world, the homes we inhabit, the feeling of familiarity, and the warm and friendly people. Even the light in Africa is magical. Look around. There's still so much good in South Africa."

SA's problems shine way for innovators

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Unwilling to stay in the dark, innovators are creating a sustainable energy future for South Africa. From supplying green energy to facilitating investment in large-scale renewable energy projects, to remotely monitoring cold chains and generators, they're inspired by the possibilities our electricity challenges present.

Just 27 years old, Erin Berman-Levy, the chief executive of a renewable energy consulting company, has a refreshing take on South Africa's problems. "I love South Africa, it's a big part of my energy and passion," he says. "I've always wanted to be able to work to help not only the environment, but the country as a whole."

Being well travelled, his view is, "A developing country with so much growth potential but so many problems creates opportunity, and the opportunity here is far greater than what I've seen overseas."

After investigating the field and its commercial possibilities, Berman-Levy formed Blue Echo, which consults on cost-effective solar and hydrogen energy solutions. "In the solar space, we primarily play in the commercial and industrial field, working with a variety of partners who do large-scale installations, and financiers who fund these projects," he says. "We put solar panels on the roof for free for commercial customers and supply them with electricity for less than what they're currently paying Eskom."

With loadshedding, Blue Echo and its partners have also become increasingly involved in the residential space. "Customers can invest in their solar systems outright, but we also facilitate various funding options in which they'll pay a similar monthly amount to what they're currently paying Eskom."

Increasingly topical, considering this week's petrol-price increase, Blue Echo is also mitigating the costs and emissions associated with heavy diesel vehicles such as long-distance trucks and mining vehicles through hydrogen solutions.

To avoid the dangers of storing hydrogen, Blue Echo

stores distilled water – H2O – which it then splits into hydrogen and oxygen using a using a small amount of electricity. "Tiny amounts of hydrogen go into the air intake of the diesel vehicle. The diesel therefore combusts more efficiently, meaning less is needed to produce the same amount of power."

"As we produce more power privately and solar infrastructure grows, we'll become less reliant on centralised power stations," Berman-Levy says.

Marc Immerman, the lead principal of private equity practice Metier Sustainable Capital, which invests in renewable energy, energy efficiency, water and waste on a Pan-African basis, also believes renewable energy will help to resolve South Africa's power crisis.

"South Africa has to contract with independently owned power stations. The more renewables you can

get onto the grid the better, because they're cheaper and better. You also need to bring in gas sensibly because it can be switched on and off, whereas coal and nuclear can't. You do need some thermal or fossil power, but our coal plants aren't functioning; and they won't improve. Eskom doesn't have the money or bandwidth to build new ones, and that's shown by Medupi and Kusile, which are some of the worst-case studies in the world in how to build a coal plant."

Political interference and labour unions are hampering progress, says Immerman. "Ramaphosa needs to man up, and put someone else in Gwede Mantashe's position, someone who understands how a market economy of energy with independent power producers, the

grid and the government works. They've made strides, but can facilitate the opening of the sector far more."

After working in investment banking and equity analysis, Immerman had an epiphany, deciding to pursue his passion for making a difference through renewable energy. "During my 12 years at Metier, we've invested in large-scale renewable energy projects in South Africa," he says. "These include the installation of solar PV – that converts sunlight into electric energy – to panels, big wind farms, and concentrated solar thermal, a more complicated form of solar energy in which heat is used to create steam from water which then drives the turbine."

Some plants use a product called molten salts, he says, a natural phase-change material that becomes a storage mechanism for heat, which can be sent to the grid when needed. Immerman is a founder of one such independent

power project in the Northern Cape, called Bokpoort CSP, a concentrated solar power thermal energy plant, which he recently exited in keeping with the invest and return nature of Metier's investment vehicle.

There are also those who are innovating to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of power issues, especially when it comes to protecting medical supplies. Such is the case of electrical engineer Saul Glass, chief technology officer (CTO) and one of the many Jewish partners at Beyond, an "internet of things" company which provides remote monitoring and control solutions for vital organisations. Locally, these include the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) and Dis-Chem, and internationally, UNICEF (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and The World Health Organisation.



Beyond runs remote temperature monitoring systems for these organisations on a cloud-based system which provides a constant view of temperature-sensitive assets and equipment throughout the cold chain. This is potentially life-saving as vaccines, blood, insulin and other temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals need to be stored at specific temperatures.

"Through this system, we're also checking power status, so if the mains go off, we alert the client through our online monitoring system," says Glass. "We also monitor their generator's functionality and fuel levels to ensure that all of their systems are working 24/7."

Beyond has also recently partnered with UK-based company Dulas, experts in solar power and refrigeration for remote locations. "Dulas places our systems directly in their off-grid smart-refrigerators during the manufacturing process," says Glass. "Not only do our devices monitor the fridge temperature, but also whether its solar is on or off."

Beyond has also been in talks to supply these fridges to South African provincial health ministries and the SANBS. "We live in a unique country with different problems that allow us the opportunity to be creative and make a real difference," says Glass.

Singing with Bocelli ‘nerve-wracking but fun’ says former Linksfield chazzan

SAUL KAMIONSKY

South African-born baritone and former Linksfield Shul chazzan Colin Schachat never dreamed that he would sing two pieces with world-famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli in front of more than 20 000 fans in Tel Aviv's Bloomfield Stadium.

But on 8 June, Schachat, now based in Ra'anana, performed for the third time with the 63-year-old Italian operatic tenor.

"This type of event I had never done before," says Schachat. "There were almost 24 000 people there. It was a hell of an experience. It was like a national event. It was a bit nerve-wracking and quite daunting, but also a thrill to perform with Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, which I had done before but not in these circumstances. As it was a home crowd for me, I knew a lot of people. It was fun."

Eleven years after his last appearance in Israel, Bocelli also performed dynamic duets with his 10-year-old daughter, Virginia, his 24-year-old son, Matteo, and Israeli pop star Shiri Maimon.

Accompanied by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Gary Bertini Israeli Choir, Bocelli entertained the audience with a musical mix that ranged from a rendition of Bizet's *Farandole* and Verdi's *Di quella pira*, to 18th century hymn *Amazing Grace* and Francesco Sartori's *Con te partirò*.

The first half of the performance comprised a selection of challenging classical pieces from Bocelli's broad repertoire, and the second his most popular hits in past decades such as *You'll never walk alone* by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Schachat's performance with Bocelli stems back many years, when he performed with José Carreras, one of the original Three Tenors, in Israel. "I started working with his management company and they got me some gigs around Europe and other places," says Schachat. "I noticed on their site that they were also working with Bocelli, and I asked [Carreras] to try and get me to perform with Bocelli. In 2019, I performed with [Bocelli] for the first time in Italy. I had coffee with Bocelli at his house. He said, 'I've been to Israel a few times, and if I get to come to Israel again to do a big concert, I will invite you to perform with me.' He remembered this, and that's what he did. About three months before the concert last month, I got an email from his management company. He wanted me to sing two items with him in Israel. They sent me the two items to learn, and that was that."

As Bocelli arrived in Israel only on the day of the concert, his sole rehearsal with Schachat was in the dressing room for a few



minutes before the concert.

"He is a great guy, very easy-going," says Schachat. "He makes you feel comfortable. I don't know if it will happen again. These are very stressful events, but it's on the world stage. It's a huge privilege."

Schachat grew up in Senderwood, Johannesburg, and spent his entire school career at King David Linksfield. As someone who always enjoyed singing, he was co-opted by Linksfield Shul to sing in the choir,

becoming the regular soloist before serving as the chazzan for six years.

Schachat's unique, rich baritone combined with rare artistic versatility has enabled him to build an international career beyond Israel, which has been his home since making aliya with his family in 1992.

"As Zionists, my wife and I wanted to make our future in Israel," says Schachat. "We had one little son and felt that the longer we stayed in South Africa and built our roots there, the less likely it would be that we would make aliya."

If you move out of South Africa, Schachat says, you either get lost amongst the competition or you are lucky enough to find new opportunities. "I was lucky,"

he says. "Obviously, you have to work very hard, singing always and keeping up your training. You either move forward or backwards. There's no staying the same. You need to put in a lot of effort, otherwise you just deteriorate."

Schachat publishes recordings every couple of years, and he has done so in many different forms of music. "I have pretty much sung with all the great *chazzanim* in my lifetime – in Israel, America and Europe. I've done projects in the Jewish music world with basically all the most famous cantors of all time. Another highlight was my recital at Buckingham Palace in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I've sung at big events with heads of state. I have a picture of me and Henry Kissinger after I performed for President [Shimon] Peres's Peace Congress in Israel."

When no concerts were held in Israel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Schachat made the

most of his spare time. "I did a lot of online events, made some recordings, built relationships, and put together a whole recital series to give profile and some income to singers who had lost their source of income. I gave a lot of services to shuls around the world on Friday afternoons. With an orchestra, I did a whole recital, heard all over the world."

Schachat loves South Africa, and regularly visits the country, sometimes to sing. Bocelli, on the other hand, has visited Israel many times. "I have wonderful memories of Israel, and I'm waiting for more," he told *Israel Hayom* on 6 June.

The day after the concert, Bocelli went to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, saw findings from the Second Temple period that had been uncovered in the Western Wall tunnels, and visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other sites in Jerusalem.

Ray Hill, the man who dominated the right for the left

SAUL KAMIONSKY

British-born Ray Hill was an anti-racism campaigner whose was involved in far-right-wing politics in South Africa for 10 years, only he was a spy for the left.

Hill, who died on 14 May 2022 after being diagnosed with cancer a few weeks earlier, became the first and possibly only non-Jewish honorary life president of England's Union of Jewish Students (UJS).

He was one of the first people to speak out against growing Islamist antisemitism, according to www.jewishnews.co.uk. He staged rallies outside the luxurious home of Holocaust denier David Irving, and campaigned around England to hinder any chances of far-right electoral success.

Hill was also called as a witness before the European Parliament's Commission on Racism and Xenophobia, to which he detailed a neo-Nazi underground system to hide far-right fugitives.

Born in Tameside, Greater Manchester, England, in 1939, Hill joined the army at 17, following in the footsteps of his father, according to review.gale.com.

After leaving the army in the early 1960s, Hill was living in Leicester when he came across an anti-immigration advert from the Racial Preservation Society (RPS). Although he had never shown an interest in politics before, he quickly became involved in the anti-immigration movement.

"It was right at the sort of beginning of the influx of immigrants [in England], particularly into Leicester," Hill later recalled in his classically gruff Lancashire accent.

Attracted by the strong anti-immigration stance of the RPS, Hill joined the outfit and found himself drawn into the world of the far-right, becoming a member of Colin Jordan's British



Movement.

Hill's wife, Glennis, who he married in June 1966, largely tolerated his political involvement. However, in late 1969, his arrest for actual bodily harm led to his disengagement and the couple's decision to emigrate to South Africa, Hill mentioned in his book titled *The Other Face of Terror*, which he co-wrote with Andrew Bell, and published in 1988.

"Nobody with much humanity about them can stay in South Africa for 10 years and not come to dislike apartheid," he said. "It's just so horrible. I mean people being arrested for falling in love. That sort of thing. Bloody awful."

This and the fact that he became friendly with members of South Africa's Jewish community resulted in him recanting his far-right views.

He wrote in *The Times* that it wasn't a "Damascene conversion", but "a gradual change in my attitudes caused by the people I was mixing with".

So, when the National Front of South Africa formed in

1977, Hill joined the neo-fascist organisation, but as a mole. A Jewish friend of his asked him to report back on what he saw and heard.

Jewishnews.co.uk writes that he was so successful in his undercover work, he rose to chair the organisation.

In 1980, he returned to Leicester and was put in touch with Gerry Gable, the founder of *Searchlight*, who suggested that Hill should infiltrate the far-right in the United Kingdom on behalf of the anti-fascist magazine.

Hill went on to infiltrate the British Movement (BM), rising to leading roles within it. After clashing with leader Michael McLaughlin in 1982, Hill succeeded in splitting the party, according to *The Other Face of Terror*.

A former boxer in the army with a reputation as a street fighter, he had the support of the BM's large skinhead following, and took them with him when he helped create the far-right, fascist British National Party (BNP) in 1982.

"I was at the foundation meeting of the BNP, sitting right next to [the founder] John Tyndall," recounted Hill. "Every word of it was being recorded outside by Gerry Gable. We knew everything they [members of the BNP] did. Of course, it didn't take long to work out that they had a mole at quite a high place, so they decided they were going to do something about this. They formed a security organisation under the leadership of a national officer of the party and its sole job was to root out any mole. Guess who the national officer was who they put in charge of this? Me."

Hill publicly exposed himself as an infiltrator when he left the BNP five years later, according to review.gale.com. He faced repercussions – his caravan was once set on fire while his children slept inside it.

Hill devoted the rest of his life to anti-fascist work, giving talks that highlighted the dangers of the far-right.

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UFS’s Israel tour promotes flow of water expertise

SAUL KAMIONSKY

A four-member group from the University of the Free State (UFS) has recently returned to South Africa from a five-day study tour on transboundary water and wastewater management in Israel.

The tour, which started two weeks ago, was the outcome of an agreement between UFS and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, an academic studies and research institute located at Kibbutz Ketura on the Israeli side of the Arava Valley.

“The agreement was to promote institutional ties between the two organisations on academics, research, and all manner of areas of common interest,” says Clive Lipchin, the South African-born Israel-based director of the Arava Institute’s Centre for Transboundary Water Management. “As a result, the study tour was planned to introduce some faculties from UFS to some of the issues that we’re working with here in Israel, expose them to what Israel is doing in water, agriculture and all kinds of things, and to use that as a basis for pursuing more long-term projects of mutual engagement.”

Lipchin got in touch with UFS after he was introduced to Hussein Solomon, a senior professor in the department of political science at UFS, on one of his trips to South Africa. “For many years, he has been very supportive of Israel, and has maintained a lot of Israeli connections,” says Lipchin. “We began talking about the ways we can work together. He mentioned the best way would be to set up some kind of agreement between the two organisations and use that as a basis for co-operation.”

After they signed the agreement, Lipchin travelled to Bloemfontein, where he met Dr Ralph Clark, the director of the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) at UFS’s QwaQwa Campus.

“He was interested in what I had to say about our work in Israel and the cross-border work that we do with Palestinians,” recalls Lipchin. “He said, ‘I’m putting on an international conference in February [2022]. It’s about mountains, and it’s going to be in the Drakensberg. I would like you to be present to get a sense of what we do.’”

At the end of the conference, Lipchin and the colleague who was with him proposed that the next logical step was for a faculty from the UFS to come to Israel to further the two organisations’ ties.

This came to fruition just two weeks ago, when Clark embarked on the tour with three other people from UFS – namely Dr Patricks Otomo, a senior lecturer in the department of zoology and entomology; Professor Olusola Ololade of the Centre for Environmental Management; and a masters student based on the QwaQwa campus. A director of a Free State water company accompanied them on the tour.

The focus of the tour was on water because that’s Lipchin’s field of expertise. “We designed

it around looking at different water issues in Israel,” he says. “We also looked at things like agriculture and using innovative technology to promote better irrigation and more efficient agriculture, with a lot of focus on water quality, water quality treatments and wastewater treatment. We visited a number of institutions and desalination facilities. We arranged talks and study visits with colleagues from around the region. We spent a day looking at the Dead Sea issues while also getting some free time to explore Jerusalem. We went to the West Bank as well.”

While on tour, Clark observed similarities between Israel and South Africa. “We have similar challenges to Israel, in which you have only a certain amount of water resources produced by our mountains, but the demand is almost at capacity,” he says. “Some of the climate-change forecasts are that we will become more arid, more water-stressed. In that case, we could do co-learning with Israel because it’s a problem Israel hasn’t solved with its neighbours.

“We have parts of South Africa where water infrastructure is well managed, and we have other parts where it’s a bit of a catastrophe, particularly regarding wastewater. The Vaal River system, for example, is in a very poor state because of failing sewage systems and treatment plants. That’s why the tour was really about looking at options to help our local municipality in terms of upscaling, alternative technology, or remedial options to alleviate that pollution pressure from wastewater. We also saw how Israel uses its wastewater for agriculture. That’s another option we would like to consider locally.

“We didn’t sugar-coat things. Where Israel doesn’t look good, we don’t pretend,” Lipchin says. “We are a serious institute which presents Israel like any other country, warts and all. None of the participants on the tour came with an agenda. They were very open. They were just so happy to visit Israel.

“It was interesting going to a country that’s referred to by the media very strongly,” says Clark. “Yet, you just felt more stable and more first world than South Africa. I mean, we landed back to stage-four loadshedding. Jerusalem was probably more functional than Johannesburg.”

Lipchin hopes the tour will lead to a long-term relationship between the Arava Institute and UFS.

“In August, I’ll be coming back to the Free State and, for the first time, QwaQwa,” he says. “I’m going to give some lectures and pursue further opportunities for collaboration on research and faculty exchanges, bringing Israeli students to the Free State and vice versa.”

Clark aims “to start having at least one postgraduate co-supervised by Arava and ourselves from next year, possibly some typical upskilling courses for the local municipality here with Arava, and possibly something around invasive-species management. In Jerusalem, there’s a particularly nasty tree from China. We have research on that tree in South Africa because it’s a problem here too, so we can share knowledge directly with Arava. The other thing is that we have made ourselves available for Arava to bring some of its courses to us and to invite some of its neighbouring partners.”



Shirley Siew, the doctor who flew to great heights

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Dr Shirley Siew was trailblazer in everything she did, especially in medicine and aviation. She was known for her academic excellence and enquiring mind, and won more than 70 medical awards in her lifetime.

She was 97 when she passed away on 16 June after a short illness, having retired only in November 2021.

She believed that she had to work twice as hard as men to get anywhere, according to her niece, Elana Siew. Even so, she received two gold medals from the American Medical Association and became the second registered female pilot in South Africa. Yet, she never spoke of her achievements, according to her niece. Her family didn’t even know how many awards she had won because she never told them.

“If she was talking to me or emailing me, she would ask me about my life,” says Elana. “I would ask, ‘How’s your work going?’ She would say, ‘nose to the grindstone’. That was her expression.”

Siew lived much of her life in America, but never took up citizenship and remained South African all her life.

“Many of the older generation of doctors would know her,” says Elana. “No doctor passed through medical school during the time that she lectured at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) from 1948 to 1965 without being taught by her.”

Siew would speak out against antisemitism, having been faced with the ugliest forms of it from her early childhood.

Born in St Petersburg, Russia, on 12 March 1925, Siew was the youngest of three children. At the time, the country was riddled with blatant antisemitism.

“Jews weren’t allowed to have certain professions,” says Siew’s niece. “Her father wasn’t allowed to be an artist. They had to live in a flat with five other families. Her father was actually arrested for being Jewish. He was in a cell with other Jews for 30 days. Then he got beaten up for a couple of days.”

After that, his brother, who was in South Africa, organised for Siew and her family to escape to the country in 1934.

During her school days, Siew skipped two grades because she was so bright, and then went on to follow in her sister’s footsteps by joining the handful of female students studying medicine at Wits.

She wanted to be a doctor and understand medicine because she knew the frustration of not knowing what was wrong with her own mother, who suffered from an illness that doctors were unable to diagnose correctly.

“She had a professor who failed her four times,” says Elana. “She went up to him and said, ‘What do I have to do to pass?’ He replied, ‘There’s nothing you can do to pass because this isn’t a place for a woman.’”

In spite of this, she attained a Doctorate of Medicine and Doctorate of Philosophy at Wits,

and went on to lecture there for 17 years.

She then took up a fellowship in New York as an International Fellow of the American Women’s Association for one year. The New York Medical College asked her to stay on for a further year. She spent two years in Manhattan focusing on electron microscopy at the New York Medical College. She told people that although she left New York with regret, on a personal level, it was the most difficult and lonely time of her life. Unbeknown to her, in the years to come, her image would be displayed electronically on Times Square Tower on two occasions to honour her contribution to the medical field.

Although she returned South Africa in 1967, work opportunities drew her back to the US in 1970. She moved to Indianapolis and then Pittsburgh two years later. In 1977, she moved to Michigan, where she stayed for the rest of her life, becoming a professor of pathology at Michigan State University.

She had a strong reputation for knowing each student by name and ensuring active participation in her lectures. In 2002, her students honoured her with a plaque and her portrait outside the histology lab for “her commitment and dedication in teaching the Michigan State University student body in the fields of cardiology and pathology for over 20 years”.

Twelve years later, several of her students created the Dr Shirley Siew Student Award supporting hopeful students who met the criteria to study for clinical or doctoral degrees from Michigan State University.

Supplementing her career in Michigan, Siew practised as a senior pathologist at the Ingham Medical Center, a consultant in cardiovascular pathology at St Lawrence Hospital, a faculty director in electron microscopy, and then an emeritus pathologist at both the Ingham Regional Medical Center and Sparrow Hospital, in Michigan.

In 2011, Siew was named a fellow of the American Heart Association before being appointed to membership of the Clinical Department of Biomedical Sciences.

Siew was also an avid pilot and one of the founding members of the Women’s Aviation Association. Having participated in the South African National Flying Championship in 1965, she continued to fly recreationally well into her 90s.

“She liked the freedom, the height,” says Elana. “She lived quite an intense life. She would work from early morning until 23:00 at night. Flying was the way for her to recharge and regenerate.”

In her spare time, Siew enjoyed photography and reading.

Siew also published 103 articles, participated in 40 scientific exhibitions, and spoke at more than 150 scientific presentations and conferences. Over time, she was presented with eight study grants.

Siew “hung up the saddle”, as she called it, in November 2021, four months short of her 97th birthday, bringing the curtain down on her 76-year career.

She remained close to her family, leaving 10 nieces and nephews, 12 great nieces and nephews, and many close colleagues, relatives and friends.

‘There’s nothing you can do to pass because this isn’t a place for a woman.’



The participants on the tour flanked by Dr Ralph Clark and Clive Lipchin

Ethiopian family risk all to retrieve ancient Bible

CNAAN LIPSHIZ – JTA

When they flew out of this country for Israel three decades ago, Askabo Meshiha's family left something valuable behind.

Unlike many other Ethiopian Jews who were airlifted to Israel in 1991, they didn't say goodbye to any relatives. But they left behind a centuries-old book of psalms written in Ge'ez, a Semitic language used by Jewish clergy in Ethiopia.

They had to secretly and on short notice leave their rural homes for the capital, Addis Ababa, with as little baggage as possible. So the family entrusted non-Jewish neighbours to keep the book safe until they could retrieve it. From Israel, they tracked the book's whereabouts for more than 30 years, never losing hope of retrieving it even after their native country fell into civil war and the book wound up in the hands of a Christian priest who demanded a steep ransom to release it.

Their perseverance paid off.

In March, an unusual set of circumstances finally allowed the family to be reunited with the document, a rare but tangible relic from the rich traditions of one of the world's oldest Jewish communities. The family now hopes to restore the book and use it to strengthen their community's fading identity.

"When I posted the picture of the book in the family WhatsApp group, people went nuts. It's like a long-lost relative had returned," says Ayanawo Ferada Senebato, Meshiha's 43-year-old grandson and a journalist and activist promoting causes linked to Ethiopian Israelis.

Senebato and two of his cousins made their way to northern Ethiopia earlier this year amid the civil war raging there, acting on a tip from Ethiopia-based friends of their grandmother: the Christian priest who had possessed the book for years had been arrested and needed money to get out of jail.

In previous negotiations, the priest had demanded more than \$10 000 (R163 235) to release the book. But now, pressed for cash, he agreed to part with it for \$1 200.

Senebato boarded a plane to Ethiopia with his older cousins: Getnat Eshato Selam, a father of six who lives in Lod and works at Ben Gurion Airport, where he and his family landed in 1991; and David Malsa Makuria, who lives in Ashkelon and works at a water sanitation company. Together, they negotiated the deal and wrapped the fragile book in an Israeli flag they had brought.

Dozens of square parchment pages measuring 11-by-11 inches (30cm by 30cm) had fallen out of the binding, and others were barely attached. But the book's significance remained easy to identify: among the multiple types and colours of ink, some segments are written in red – a way of signifying that a *kes*, the Amharic-language word for a rabbi, had made additions to the original.

Even speakers of Amharic typically cannot read or communicate in Ge'ez, which is decipherable only to a dwindling group of spiritual leaders of Ethiopian Jewry, who mostly now live in Israel.

Last week, the book was used in prayer, probably for the first time in at least 34 years, at the home of Mentasnut Memo, a *kes* who lives in Kiryat Gat in southern Israel. He found scribbled on one page of the book the name of Senebato's great-great-grandfather, Erqshen Sequin.

"I was overcome with pride and excitement when the book was read and when the name of my ancestor was found," Senebato says.

Senebato says he was unconcerned about breaking Ethiopia's laws against taking historically significant artifacts out of the country, though he declined to name the priest who released the book to avoid implicating him.

"This book was in my family long before any of Ethiopia's laws were written," he says.

The older cousins remember the book from their time in Ethiopia, where they lived in the village of Vinerb near Lake Tana, about 250 miles (402km) northeast of Addis Ababa.

"I was too young to remember it," said Senebato. "But we all felt like it was a piece of our family, [that it has been] returned to it [the family], when we took it in our hands."

The book is significant to far more than just Askabo Meshiha's extended family. It's one of just a handful of texts in Israel of the *Orit*, an Ethiopian variant of the Hebrew Bible that predates the advent of that standardised text. It's a remarkable reminder of how ancient Ethiopian Jewry is – some believe it to be more than 2 600 years old.

Ethiopian Jews brought a few precious *Orit* books with them when they immigrated to Israel beginning in the 1980s, but each document offers a distinct and partial representation of its congregation's history, devoutness, and rabbinical traditions. The largely oral transmission of

the *Orit* has varied greatly between regions and even communities in Ethiopia.

Recognising the paucity of data about the *Orit* and the danger that knowledge about it could disappear after the immigration of nearly all of Ethiopia's Jews to Israel, Tel Aviv University opened the world's first academic programme focused on the holy scriptures of Ethiopian Jews in 2020.

The Meshiha family's copy attests to the unwritten liturgy that has evolved around the *Orit* over the centuries. It included songs, rabbinical interpretations, and stories in Amharic and Tigrinya.

Scholars at Israel's National Library who examined the Meshiha family's book at the family's request believe it to be about 200 years old. But family members believe it's older still. According to family tradition, the book was handed down to an ancestor who lived 300 years ago.

Senebato has no intention of donating the book for academic purposes.

"We didn't bring it here to sit in some museum. The book needs to be restored and used. Carefully, consciously, sparingly – but used," he said.

Senebato said the book showed that Ethiopian Israelis need not look to movements based in the United States or elsewhere to find meaning. "This is tangible evidence of more than 2000 years of Jewish Ethiopian culture," he said. "It needs to

be used to remind our community's youth that they are Jews from Ethiopia, living in the Jewish homeland. That's the real story in this book."



Senebat family holding an ancient Orit book that they retrieved from Ethiopia in February 2022

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4:00 PM

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57 OAKLANDS ROAD

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WRITING OF FINAL LETTERS

GRAND PROCESSION

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HAKOFOS

FOLLOWED BY BUFFET DINNER

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

BENYOMIN CHAIM BEN CHAIM TZVI GUDELSKY ע"ה

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Lost and found: Old friends reunite in Israel

TALI FEINBERG

They were best friends who enjoyed a “Huckleberry Finn kind of childhood”, running free on the streets of Bulawayo. But as they grew up, they lost touch and didn’t know if they would ever see each other again. Yet, when the pandemic hit, Walter Frankel in Australia decided to try reconnect with people from his past. He reached out to Ophry Pines in Israel, and they picked up their friendship where they had left off decades before.

Finally, when travel restrictions lifted, they reunited in Israel. “Last night, after a period of 60 years of absence from each other, I finally reconnected with my childhood best friend from Bulawayo – Ophry Pines in Jerusalem. May this friendship last forever. It felt as though we had never been apart for this long,” wrote Frankel on Facebook in May 2022. He shared a childhood photo from 1964, and another from the present day.

“Growing up as a child I had few friends,” says Frankel. “I experienced learning difficulties and was teased and bullied by the other kids.” Yet Pines was always there for him. “Ophry was my best friend and ‘blood brother’. We roamed the streets of the neighbourhood, and visited each other’s homes, which were three houses apart. We both went to Banes Primary School. We later went to Carmel Jewish Day School. I lived in 8 Helm Road, Northend, and my parents owned Regent Butchery in Grey Street.

“Life was a bit of a challenge, but my mother taught us that as long as you have your limbs and a brain, you need to get up and start over after adversity,” says Frankel. “Both my parents were Holocaust survivors. My father was from Germany. He had been in Dachau concentration camp, escaping in 1939 and leaving immediately for southern Africa. He started his life again in what is now Zambia. My mother worked in hiding throughout the war in Holland. She left after the war to go to South Africa with her best friend Olga, who wasn’t Jewish, and [she] assisted her to come start a new life. Both my parents lost their parents’ siblings and close relatives.”



Walter Frankel and Ophry Pines

“Both my mother and father come from famous Zionist families,” says Pines. “My grandfather’s uncle, Yichiel Michel Pines was a Zionist leader and helped purchase the lands of Rishon LeZion and founded Gdera. He also created new words in modern Hebrew (for example, tomato - *agvania*). My great grandfather, Fishel Pines, the elder brother of Yichiel Michel, was a leader of the Pines family in Ruzhinoy (Belarus) and his son, Leon Leib Pines, was a delegate to the Zionist Congress.

“My father, Yichiel Michel Pines, named after his grand uncle, grew up in Vilna and in 1937, his sister, Goldie, saved the family (parents and two brothers) by bringing them to what was then southern Rhodesia. My father joined the British army and fought against Rommel in the Sahara Desert.

“My mother’s grandfather, Aharon Mordechai Freiman Dror, was one of the founders of Rishon LeZion. My mother grew up in Rishon LeZion and during World War II joined the British Royal Air Force. My parents met and got married in Cairo, and since my dad was a British soldier, they returned after the war to Rhodesia.” Pines’s parents had a fruit and vegetable wholesale business in Grey Street, opposite Frankel’s parents’ butcher shop. “Ophry’s dad used to make his trucks available to Betar and Habonim for outings,” remembers Frankel.

“It took my mother more than 15 years to get the family to Israel,” says Pines. “I was born in Bulawayo and immigrated to Israel at the age of 10 years, nine months. I’m the youngest of four brothers. I grew up in Ramat Gan. After a post-doctoral training at State University New York, Stony Brook, I returned to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I’m a full professor of microbiology and molecular genetics at Hebrew University. We moved to Jerusalem in 1987. What’s amazing is that Judy [Frankel’s sister] and her husband, Jeff, lived just a few kilometres away on Kibbutz Ramat Rachel.

“Walter was my best friend in Bulawayo. I remember our and Walter’s

houses, and how to get from one to the other. Of course, I remember Judy, Walter’s sister, who would often join us. It was exciting to meet Walter and Judy after so many years.”

Frankel recalls detailed anecdotes from their childhood. “Ophry burnt his feet walking over a fire, and he was injured when his nanny, Agnes, was run over on her bike while taking him to Carmel School. He got sick after my birthday party from over-eating doughnuts. Our favourites were pint-sized bottles of milk for morning tea and a Chelsea bun. Ophry would always take off his shoes. Agnes would have to go and look for them, and for his mother’s cutlery, which we used to dig in the garden. Ophry’s mother used to serve borscht or pumpkin soup to us at lunch – I found out only now that he and his brothers hated the soup.

“My family stayed in Rhodesia until 1969 when I was 16 years old,” says Frankel. “Then we went to Cape Town. I met my wife in 1972, and we got married. We were chosen by Pick n Pay to be a member of the team to establish its venture in Australia in 1984, with the Lieberman family. I’m eternally grateful for the assistance they gave me and my family.”

Frankel’s family arrived in Brisbane “and immediately integrated into the Jewish community, which extended a warm welcome to us and our two boys. Our third boy was born there in 1986. In 1987, we moved to Sydney. We had two girls, born in 1992 and 1996. Eventually, my parents moved to Israel, Australia, and back to Israel. My dad died in Australia in 1992, and my mom died in Israel in 2017 at the age of 97.”

All this time, Pines was also in Israel, but the friends didn’t reconnect. “I tried to track him down when I first came to Israel in 1980 without success,” says Frankel. “During the pandemic, I finally made a breakthrough and we connected, but had to wait two years before we got to see each other.

“I never forgot Ophry, and was always hoping to reconnect somehow and restore what was a great friendship. When we reconnected, it was as if we had never been separated and only had to catch up with each other’s journey in life,” says Frankel. “He and his wife, Gilia, showed me and my sister, Judy, tremendous hospitality and friendship. Reminiscing about the things we did and the people we knew was a great exercise. It was an unreal experience meeting up after all these years and to find how close we were to each other, with similar connections. It was like we never lived apart. We only hope that the relationship will continue.”

‘We’re going to the slaughter’ – Holocaust victim’s final letter to SA

TALI FEINBERG

“We have been fasting for two days now, and we are going to the slaughter. Our *yortzzeit* will be on 29 August, so please observe it.” These were some of the words written by Zipora Maronis (nee Buck), in a letter that she hoped would get to her husband and his brother in South Africa. She wrote it just before she and her children were killed in the small town of Malat (Molėtai) in Lithuania in 1941, during the Holocaust.

“It was probably thrown out of the building,” wrote Sol Buck, sharing the letter on 14 June 2022 on the Facebook group called Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy. According to historical records, the approximately 2 000 Jews of the town were locked into their synagogue for a number of days before being shot and buried in mass graves.

“A Lithuanian woman found the letter and kept it until she was able to give it to a relative of the family who visited the Soviet Union about 20 years later, in the 1960s. Meanwhile, Zipora’s husband, Moshe, and my father, Benny, had died without getting to see the letter, which was never delivered to South Africa. The original letter is now in Yad Vashem,” says Buck.

Zipora’s bravery and fear are revealed in her heartfelt words, which she hoped would be carried across the seas. “May you all remain in good health and we will be good pleaders [with G-d, in the next world] for you. We are standing dressed up, all of us, with my dear little children, and are waiting. We are all in the Beit HaMidrash now, and have had enough of this life so that many a time one wished death to come,” she wrote. It’s assumed that she somehow threw the letter out of the synagogue while being locked in.

“Already on the eve of Rosh Chodesh Av, they lined us up to be shot, but a miracle happened. Today our miracle would be if G-d has mercy on us. Only if we are shot will he [the messenger paid to send the letter] send you the letter. Moshe, they are after your little kids. That is what they want. So goodbye and keep strong. We Jews are sacrificing ourselves for your redemption,” she wrote.

The letter was to be sent to Mr B. Buck, P.O. Alberton, Transvaal, South Africa.

“My parents immigrated to South Africa from Malat [Moletai] in 1928,” says Buck. “They got married in Morgenzon, [in the then Eastern Transvaal], in 1933. They then moved to Alberton, where they started a general dealer business. I was born in 1944, their youngest child. Both my sisters, Marcia and Doreen, were born and raised in Alberton, each of us moving to Johannesburg when we got married. In 1976, I immigrated with my wife, Maureen, and our three children to Toronto, Canada.”

Delving into the past, Buck says, “In Malat, my father’s sister, Zipora Buck, married Moshe Maronis. They had two daughters. Leaving Zipora and his two daughters in Malat, Moshe came to South Africa to find work and apply for citizenship to enable him to bring them to South Africa. Having no profession or trade, he found a job as a Hebrew teacher. Meanwhile, in Malat, the Jews were being rounded up for execution. This is when Zipora wrote her letter. There’s mention of this about 21 minutes into the film *The Last Sunday of August*, which can be found on YouTube.”

Buck found out about the letter only in the late 1970s while he was living in Canada. “Back in South

Africa, a non-Jewish lady gave my sister, Doreen Braude, a book called *Final Letters from the Yad Vashem Archive*. This book has a collection of final letters, including the one written by my aunt.

“I was shocked by the words written by Zipora, and still remain uncertain how my father and uncle Moshe,

have been posting it on social media for all to see. Yad Vashem also sent me an official copy of the letter.”

Buck has mixed emotions about his father and uncle not seeing the letter. “My uncle lived a lonely life. He lived with our family and worked in my father’s business until he died in 1963. Both my uncle and parents never spoke about Zipora and her two children. As a result, we know very little about my father’s family and even the names of the two children.”

Buck hasn’t been to Malat, and wouldn’t want to go there. “Whenever reciting the Yizkor prayers in shul, I mention Zipora. As South Africa’s Jewish community has a large percentage of Jews from Lithuania, I feel it’s

extremely important that the younger generation born in South Africa should know about the atrocities carried out in Lithuania.”

Buck recently found the Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy page while sharing the letter on social media. “The response in this community has been overwhelming. I also connected with a few descendants of parents from Malat.”

Ninety people from around the

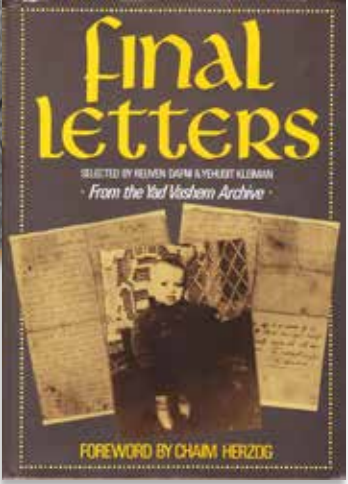
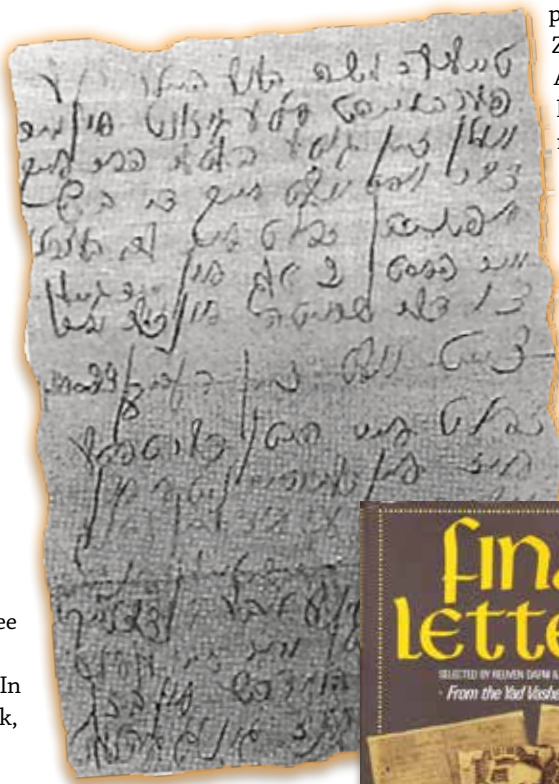
world commented on the post on Facebook. “Brave and dignified. It seems like she was somewhat at peace and saw herself as a *de facto* guardian angel as she very much must be for the generations that survived. What a remarkable person, and how proud you all must be that through the senseless horror and depravity, she composed such a testament. A true *eshet chayil* [woman of valour],” wrote Haraldo Harris.

“Thank you for sharing this. I have read this letter many times, and actually have a copy of it too, but this is the first time I’ve heard about it from the family it was written for,” wrote Kerryn Lehman. “No matter how many times I read it, it still gives me chills. My bobba was from Malat, and her family [parents and siblings] were killed there as well. She survived, and went to South Africa [after being liberated from Bergen Belsen]. She was the chairlady of the Molėtai Society.”

“Tragic, devastating, and heartbreaking. Yet here we all are, descendants of Malat who survived these horrors to bear witness for our children and grandchildren,” wrote Lauraine Glazer.

In 2016, Lithuania’s president joined hundreds of people marking the 75th anniversary of the massacre of the Jews of Molėtai.

Buck still feels connected to the South African Jewish community. “My sister lives at Golden Acres in Johannesburg, and my wife has a sister living in Johannesburg. The South African Jewish community is an important diaspora community, and it makes important contributions to every Jewish community to which it moves.”



would have reacted had they read this letter. I found out that the letter was delivered to my mother by a relative who returned to South Africa from a visit to the Soviet Union. At the time my mother received the letter, my father was still alive but had a weak heart and she was afraid to show him the letter due to his health. Years after his death, on a visit to Israel, she gave the letter to Yad Vashem. It’s not on display, but is kept in the archive, which is why I

Maccabi rugby promises unbridled competition

MYRON MICHEL

The South African squad will show their flair and skill at the M21 Maccabiah Games this month, but will they bring home the coveted gold and make it six out of 10?

SA will perform against America, the current cup holders, Israel, Australia, and Great Britain.

Preparations began five years ago with Jewish South African rugby on an upward trajectory. Then, the pandemic hit and Maccabi 2021 was suspended until 2022. It was touch and go whether the multi-talented 25-member squad would participate in the games. Without the financial investment of Brett Levy of Blue Label and Jonathan Ackerman from Pick n Pay, this massive undertaking wouldn't have become a reality.

The new head coach of Maccabi SA is former Stormers coach Robbie Fleck, assisted by Gary Gold, former Springbok assistant coach. Fleck, the fearless Springbok centre from 1999 to 2002, competed for Western Province (WP), the Stormers, and Bath in England. He won gold with SA in 1989, and a silver at the 1997 Maccabiah.

Gold is currently head coach of the American national team, the Eagles, and has also coached in England and Japan. He will be travelling 18 hours to be at the Maccabiah!

Anton Chait, former WP flyhalf and head coach, is team manager. Besides winning the Currie Cup in 1989, Chait won a gold at the Maccabiah in the same year, and captained the victorious SA team in 1993. He favours a player-driven approach in which players, with management, decide the way the team plays and take ownership of discipline on and off the field.

This may be the difference between winning and losing in the final. Chait would have preferred more time together with his squad, but with the players travelling from different cities, they will practice only once in Johannesburg before leaving for the games.

The physiotherapist and conditioning/strength coach is Johan van Wyk, who is involved with the SA Under 20s

and Sevens rugby squad (Blitzbokke). The convenor is Brad Berger, a former South African rugby league player (2004 -2007), who with Cliff Garrun, the chairperson, have worked tirelessly.

Every year, Maccabi rugby sends a team to the Cape Town 10s tournament. Jewish rugby has been on a quest to improve, with King David High School Linksfield's (KDHL) two rugby squads, its first XV and Under 14s having won the annual Pirates School Challenge recently.

Four of the Maccabi SA players performed for TAH. They are flyhalf Jordan Chait of the Sharks, Maties (Stellenbosch) Varsity Cup winner, and SA vice-captain; prop Jared Sichel, who has played 30 tests for Israel and

who performed brilliantly in the United Rugby Championship Grand Final in a fairy-tale 18-13 win over the Vodacom Bulls.

He makes his debut at the games with the following players: Kian Davis from UCT Varsity Cup at centre; Shauli Asayag, Dean Gordon, Jay Reiback, Jake Rosen (all UCT); Richard Bryant, Judd Silverman, Brad Van Niekerk of TAH (all Pirates); Dylan Hirshowitz of Naka Bulls (Pretoria); Joshua Pimstein (Wits); Jason Hirschovitz of Crusaders; Brent Shone (Hamiltons); Aston Silver of Wanderers; Tom Walker from Stellenbosch, who is the captain of the Sevens squad, and fellow Matie Stephan Annandale, who played for SA Schools.



Hamiltons in Cape Town; front rower David Geffen of False Bay Rugby Club; and at flank is Thomas Berman, from Wits Varsity Cup. The other five players who have experience of Maccabiah conditions include Dylan Coll and Nicholas Zille (Pirates); Kym Hirshowitz of Crusaders (Durban); Kiernan Rabie of Manly Marlins (Sydney); and Brandon Sweet (Marr and currently Boroughmuir Bears) in Scotland. Sweet also represented Hamiltons, WP Under 21, and CRAV (Clube de Rugby de Arcos de Valdevez) in Portugal. They won gold in the sevens and silver in the 15s for SA at the last games.

According to Berger, Maccabi has secured a "couple of big names" playing professional rugby in Hacjivah Dayimani, the DHL Stormers flank and new SA captain,

With the opening ceremony at Jerusalem's Teddy Kollek Stadium, the rugby final at Wingate Institute in Netanya will be televised live by an American sports channel. The sevens event will be held over two days before the opening ceremony.

The 15s SA were originally drawn to play Great Britain, however the organisers amended the fixtures, with SA now meeting Israel in its first game, a day after the opener. This should prove to be a challenging encounter.

Kevin Musikanth, former Maccabi SA head coach, is the head coach of TAH and Israel, with Nimrod Kaplan assistant coach.

Kaplan won a historic gold in 2013 as a player for Israel in the Maccabiah. Like his father, Milton, and

brother, Yonatan, Nimrod has captained Israel. As a player, Musikanth won gold for SA in 2001. Former South African Julian Shapiro, the longstanding Israeli manager, has participated in all nine Maccabi rugby events.

The core of the Israeli squad represented TAH in the European Super Cup in Russia, Georgia, Portugal, and Israel, making it to the semi-finals. No fewer than 19 Israelis competed in SA, culminating in an invitational Loftus squad (Pretoria's top club teams) at Loftus Versfeld narrowly defeating the Heat 33-29.

Former Maccabi SA and Heat flyhalf Daniel Stein will play for Israel in his second Maccabiah. Most of the Israeli players are Sabras. Israel took part in two Sevens tournaments in Europe to qualify for the World Cup, where it achieved sixth and eighth place respectively.

Says Musikanth: "It looks like Jewish rugby is growing. It will be an extremely cut-throat Maccabiah, and I look forward to seeing all our friends from around the world in Israel in July." With Musikanth, Kaplan and Shapiro the "Blue and Whites", like SA, have a formidable technical team.

The manager of the Americans is former Capetonian Barry Seidel, who is no stranger to the Maccabiah, having managed in 2013 and 2017. He is one of the main investors in TAH with Michael Aron, originally from Johannesburg. Seidel's wife, Suzanne, will make it a hat trick as US rugby physiotherapist.

Israel has been playing competitive test and professional rugby. Could it be the managerial skills of a Fleck/Gold/Chait treble, or the US under new head coach Taylor Howden, with an American national player in the squad?

The Aussies are surely in with a chance as former Waratah's centre, David Horowitz, played for the Australian Under 20s and for Connacht in Ireland. He and his two brothers will be playing for Maccabi Australia, and will surely provide momentum for the "Jewish Wallabies".

Shawn Lipman, a former South African and American Maccabi rugby stalwart, believes "there's no favourite, with all five teams in with a chance".

Redhill

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Tatum Cabral
(Grade 8 - Swimming)



Ashley Henegan
(Grade 12 - Swimming)



Taylor Henegan
(Grade 9 - Swimming)



Estella Mann
(Grade 9 - Swimming)



Jamie Meyersfeld
(Grade 10 - Cricket)



Morgan Noach
(Grade 10 - Netball)



Hannah Nomis Mckerr
(Grade 10 - Netball)



Mia Nomis Mckerr
(Grade 9 - Netball)



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Dedication wins Levy place at African table tennis championship

SAUL KAMIONSKY

It has taken dedication, discipline and determination for Dean Levy to become the number one under-19 table tennis player in South Africa and the winner of multiple ping-pong tournaments. This matric student at King David Linksfield High School will be representing South Africa at the African Youth Championships (AYC) in Tunisia this month. But it hasn't always been plain sailing for him, healthwise. Only a decade ago, Levy had his first seizure. "Then I had a brain tumour for about two years before we decided to get it removed in Cape Town in 2014," he says. "After that, I couldn't really play contact sports for a while." However, his cousins played table tennis, so he decided to "give it a go". Since then, he has triumphed seven times at the South Africa national table tennis championships – once in the under-13 singles,

twice in the under-15 doubles, twice in the team event, and twice in the mixed doubles. He has also won the Arnold Classic Africa multiple times and the Gauteng, Cape Town, and Free State opens. Asked about the key to his success, Levy says, "I'm just very determined and if I set my mind to

something, I'll try to work hard, be focused and driven to get better." Next month, he'll be playing in the table tennis singles, doubles, team event and mixed doubles at the third edition of the AYC, a biennial continental athletics competition organised by the Confederation of African



Dean Levy

Athletics for African athletes aged between 15 and 17 in the year of competition. Levy's performance in the trials in February won him a place at the championships, of which South Africa topped the medal table in 2015 and 2019. It won't be his first time at this event. He played in its previous edition, in Ivory Coast, in 2019. Levy plays four or five times a week at the JusTT Centre in Sandringham, Johannesburg, an establishment known as the Johannesburg home of table tennis. He also plays at school when he can, "but because of matric and everything, I've been quite busy", he says. Simon Lipschitz, co-director of the centre and a table tennis enthusiast who has played in national tournaments and in Gauteng's premier league, says, "Dean has shown unbelievable commitment to the sport. He was in the junior programme of Maccabi many years ago, but instead of joining the junior programme like most kids do at JusTT,

he jumped straight into our elite programme. We provide him with top-level players to train with as well as top-level drills and everything he requires to improve and play at that very high level." Levy, who also plays golf, albeit more as a hobby, says he loves table tennis because, "I've met a lot of different people through table tennis. It's a very diverse sport. I go to tournaments in the Cape Flats and all these different places. Anyone can play it – you just need a bat and a ball. I know there are 90-year-olds who are still playing, and three-year-olds who are playing. You can always get better." Levy himself has "a huge willingness to learn", says Lipschitz. "When he's at our centre, he's constantly trying to improve and learn from all the coaches we have, to try and really push himself up to the next level." Levy aims to play at the 2023 World Table Tennis Championships in Durban. "That will be the biggest table tennis tournament I've been in," he says.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Forging relationships at international forums

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) continues to cement ties with international Jewry, at professional and lay-leader levels. Through these engagements, we forge solid working relationships that enable us to access the skills and resources of our counterparts overseas and play an active role in global Jewish affairs, particularly around issues of common concern such as security, combating antisemitism and assisting Jewish communities in distress. Over the past two weeks, Board representatives have participated in a number of important international forums. One was the Claims Conference, as the Conference for Material Claims Against Germany is generally known. As the name indicates, this body was established to facilitate and oversee the process of restitution and compensation for victims of the Holocaust. The issues it deals with are complex and sensitive, and its meetings are thus very much detail-related and practically focused. Our community is represented on this important body by National Vice-President Mary Kluk (who in 2020 was elected to the leadership council) and Gauteng Council Chairperson Harold Jacobs, both of whom attended the meeting.

As mentioned in my last column, SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn recently attended the World Jewish Congress Community Directors Forum in Budapest. She spoke on three panels, one of which concerned radical antisemitic trends and movements globally. Much of the discussion at the forum concerned the impact of the Ukraine crisis. Our counterparts in Eastern Europe, performing prodigious feats on behalf of those displaced or left destitute, were, in effect, having to transform themselves into refugee agencies. A third important forum was an event in Geneva organised by the Lutheran World Federation, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and Islamic Relief. Titled "Welcoming the stranger, shaping the future",

ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



the meeting explored the vital role faith and faith communities play in welcoming and integrating refugees. SAJBD political and diplomatic liaison, Alana Baranov, in her capacity of member of the World Jewish Congress Diplomatic Corps, represented the Board at the event. The unity we experience at these international events is predicated as much on respect for everyone's diverse backgrounds and beliefs as on what we have in common as Jews. As I wrote last week, such respect for diversity is just as necessary within our own community. It was therefore upsetting to read in last week's paper an article that was disrespectful and hurtful to the trans community. To anyone distressed by the content or tone of this article, please know that you aren't alone. There's space for everyone in our Jewish community, regardless of how you identify and who you love. There are many of us who have a vision of our community as an inclusive space where people can be their authentic selves without fear or hurt, and the content of this article decidedly doesn't reflect our views. In closing, I congratulate our esteemed past president, Marlene Bethlehem, on the launch on Sunday, 3 June, of her memoir, aptly titled *To Serve with Love: From Serving at Wimbledon to Serving the Community*. In addition to recounting the pivotal leadership role Marlene played during the years of South Africa's transition to democracy, it provides a compelling account of her years on the international tennis circuit. It's appropriate that the book should have come out during Wimbledon, on whose courts she performed with such distinction.

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

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

Give me loadshedding over bladder botox anyday

While South Africans are worrying about where their next inverter is coming from, well-heeled Americans are considering the benefits of bladder botox. I kid you not. It's a real thing.

In a recent article in the New York Post, close to 1 000 words were devoted to extolling the merits of this procedure, the primary one being that it limits the need for bathroom breaks on the drive from Manhattan to a holiday home in the Hamptons. Give me loadshedding over bladder botox any day, thank you very much. The aim of this procedure isn't to have a younger looking bladder but to re-engineer the piping so as to be a little bit less human. An aspiration first identified by a pharaoh of Egypt, who tried to be appear above this sort of thing. In the misery of last week's loadshedding disaster, a friend asked to meet for coffee. He was late because of the power-outage traffic and wasn't in a great space when he arrived. If I couldn't read that off him, his first question on sitting down was a giveaway. "Why are you still here?" It was a pleasant day, which is why we chose to sit outside in the warm Johannesburg winter sun. While that sounds ideal, it wasn't, as instead of a South American-inspired CD in the background serenading us, we were afflicted by the sound of a nearby generator. I wanted to answer, "Because I can't imagine living in a place that's so perfect, I would consider bladder botox." But I didn't. Even though I should have. Instead, what popped to mind was the

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



memory of standing on a platform in Zurich some years ago when there was an announcement that the train would be two minutes late. Although no one said anything too overt, more than a handful of people next to me shook their heads in a "what will be next?" gesture. And I imagined that this would provide them with a story to tell their spouses at dinner. "You won't believe what happened to me," they would say as they shared the horror of a train running late. In Zurich. Why am I here? Because each day is a new day to make a difference. Not because I'm so righteous, but because contributing makes me feel good and valued. Because the vacuum created by the reality of the country means that my day can be valued. And because in spite of the ridiculousness of the situation, we still live in a wonderful community that gives and gives and gives. And because perfection is so far away that people haven't lost sight of what's important. And because no one's bladder looks wrinkled when the power is out. Perfection is like sugar. It tastes so good when we eat it. But too much of it isn't good for us. Perfection is what leads people to shake their heads when trains are two minutes late, and to think that a bathroom break on the way to the Hamptons is a problem in need of a solution.

Letters

KINDNESS GETS YOUNGSTER TO CHINA ON TIME

I want to thank the Jewish community for the donations it made towards my daughter, Lynam Ndawana, back in September 2018 as she was on the brink of losing her only chance to study for her bachelor's degree in applied physics overseas. When Kathy Kaler posted the news on her Facebook page, the community stood up like an army ready to go to the battle, and its members made the difference towards Lynam managing to get to China on time. I must admit that it wasn't an easy road these four years as there were a lot of ups and downs, but she soldiered on and achieved her goal. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Kathy Kaler, Brenda

Stern and Sianne Green for their outstanding involvement in making sure that this was a success. I also want to thank Gail Slotsky from Travel League for providing the much-needed ticket to the Republic; Milton Weinberg, Jonathan Levitt, Zunaid Tayob and Rajen Ticka for paying for my daughter's second year of studies, including accommodation and other logistics, and not forgetting Quinton van der Burgh for paying off the third and fourth years, including accommodation and other expenses.



Lynam Ndawana

May Hashem bless you and your families in abundance for this kind gesture, a rare commodity in today's world. Lynam is looking for an internship or employment overseas. Should anyone wish to assist with reputable employment agents please contact me on 083 990 1569 or send me an email on ndawanac@yahoo.com – **Casper Ndawana, Johannesburg**

Pride Shabbat looks at wider issues

More than 150 people attended Temple Israel's Pride Shabbat in Wynberg on Friday, 24 June. Run since 2013, the event formerly took place on the Shabbat before the Cape Town Pride festival, but the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the move to align the calendar with internationally recognised Pride Month, and to look at the wider issues faced by the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/ questioning, asexual+) community, which continues to face hate crimes, prejudice and discrimination.

This year was of particular significance, as Shemah Koleinu, a queer and Jewish-led human-rights organisation was launched, advocating for those voices not heard in our midst and promoting equity, representation and dignity for LGBTQIA+ people.



Rosie Motene addressing the congregation

Guest speaker Rosie Motene, the co-chairperson of The Other Foundation, gave a moving testimony, and offered insight into how privilege, whether it be racial or cisgender, is still prevalent in our community, and the real and devastating impact it has on people's lives. The message was clear: #showupforus – if we're truly to bring about equality and freedom for all, we have to grapple with the issues personally, and consider real action that will make a difference. Not all of us need to be activists, but we can all take action, however small, like not assuming others' pronouns. It can make the biggest difference to the person in front of us to be seen as themselves.

For more information on Shemah Koleinu visit www.shemahkoleinu.org.za or follow us on Instagram @shemahkoleinu

WHAT'S ON

Sunday 10 July

• South Africa Unity Torah will celebrate the completion of the Unity Sefer Torah. Time: 14:45. Venue: 7 Oaklands Road, Orchards. Contact: info@unitytorah.co.za

Tuesday 12 July

• Union of Jewish Women, in Johannesburg, presents *Brain Boost – A Brain Stimulation Group*. Time: 10:00. Entry: R100. Contact: 011 648 1053 or admin@ujw.co.za

• Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre honours Holocaust survivor Henia Bryer at *The Lightness of Air* book launch. Time: 15:00. Contact: 021 462 5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za

Letters

PRIDE ARTICLE PROMOTES BIGOTRY – AND THAT’S SHAMEFUL

The article titled “There’s no Pride to be found in gender ideology” (*SA Jewish Report* 30 June 2022) is offensive and transphobic. The Jewish community has a funny way of crying victim to antisemitism without acknowledging the discrimination and hatred we put other people through. To publish such an article is inconsiderate to all those who may be experiencing gender dysphoria (no matter their age). This is a real issue, and it has an emotional and mental impact. To insinuate that someone is too young to experience things the way they do is wrong on more than one level, not to mention that commenting on the way parents raise their children isn’t polite. As Jews, we’re supposed to be a light unto the nations and as such, we’re giving the wrong message by inciting intolerance and bigotry.

Furthermore, publishing such an article in a Jewish newspaper is a *chilul Hashem* (desecrates the name of G-d). You’re spreading hatred and inciting bigotry under the banner of Judaism, I urge you to heed my call and that of countless others to renounce the article and apologise to all those that it may have hurt.

Think before publishing something like this in the future. Think of the people who have been thrown out of their homes for being who they are. Think of the people whose families have disowned them because they feel uncomfortable in their own skin, and think if the people who take their own life because this world refuses to accept their truth before you publish something that’s so obviously offensive on so many levels.

– Jacob Gordon (17), Johannesburg

TQIA+ REAL PEOPLE, REAL ISSUES

As a Jew and a member of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual) community, I’m horrified that an article as full of hate, propaganda, and inaccurate assertions as Adam Sachs’s on gender ideology was published in the *SA Jewish Report* (“There’s no Pride to be found in gender ideology”, 30 June 2022).

The article essentially denies the existence of some of our siblings, and is blatantly transphobic. TQIA+ people aren’t simply letters added to an acronym. These letters represent real people, people who have always been among us but have been forced to hide who they are, often with devastating consequences. They are still marginalised, targeted for violent mistreatment and hate crimes, and often unable to access medical care.

The publication of an article like this isn’t just unacceptable, it’s incredibly dangerous. Though I understand that this was an opinion piece, and I’m all for people sharing opinions different to my own, there’s a vast difference between an opinion and hate, and denial of the rights of certain groups to exist. That’s hate speech, not an opinion. The tone and language of this article was wholly inappropriate. An article that contains this level of hate and cause this degree of hurt and harm should never have been published.

The *SA Jewish Report* should retract the article immediately, and issue an apology as well as engage in further education on these important topics. To all our TQIA+ and LGB siblings, I see you, I hear you, and I stand with you in the fight for equality.

– Dr Simonne Horwitz, Johannesburg

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KDL pupils raise heat with Run for Warmth Runathon

King David Linkfield High School hosted its first Run for Warmth Charity Runathon on 3 June, the proceeds of which went to buy warm winter jackets for communities in Alexandra and the Johannesburg inner city. Sponsors doubled the amount raised by the school.



Kira Furman, Benjamin Ginsburg and Arianne Kinkel

The runathon consisted of two phases. First, the 2km run, which took place on 3 June in the last hour of the school day just before school closed before exams. The entire school participated in the run which took place on the school's rugby field. At staggered intervals, everyone – from sports teams to committee members and even teachers – ran, walked, jogged or even sprinted the route. Students contributed generously towards raising funds.

In the second phase, aka 'the

warmth', KDL students distributed more than 500 jackets to children and adults from the proceeds of the runathon. In distributing the jackets, the school partnered with organisations such as Pro Labore Dei South Africa as well as Afrika Tikkun and the Great Park Synagogue, which all do incredible work to assist those struggling in Alexandra and central Johannesburg.

The Run for Warmth Runathon was held in honour of special student and friend, Gavi Waksman, whose unmatched love for helping others is an inspiration to all King Davidians.

Investec donates soup packs in memory of KDVP parent Julie Treger

King David High School Victory Park collaborated with CAN Ikageng, Investec's Cradle Project, and the Angel Network on Wednesday, 29 June, to pack 3 000 soup packs donated by Investec in memory of Julie Treger, a parent at KDVP and an



KDVP High School students

Investec employee for more than 25 years, who passed away suddenly, earlier this year.

Reading ABC for Torah Academy Grade 1s



Grade One learners Yisroel Hazdan, Gavi Lewin and Adam Smookler

Torah Academy Grade 1 celebrated the completion of its ABC Letterland programme on Thursday, 30 June. The programme which forms the foundation for literacy, writing and reading for meaning. Parents were hosted for a Letterland poem, which the children presented in full Letterland dress up, followed by an interactive parent-and-child activity.

Froom zooming to chess in Zambia



Gabriel Froom is representing Yeshiva College and the South African Under-12 chess team in Zambia at the All Africa Youth Chess championships from 2 to 10 July.

Gabriel Froom

Special people, special books for Yeshiva Nursery School

In partnership with Yeshiva College Nursery School's parents and its book theme, "special people" of Grade R were given the opportunity to come into the school to read a book to children for an entire week, starting from 27 June.



Lia and Claire Ben Haim

Pine Street Shul defends title as reigning brain



The Pine Street Shul victorious quiz team

The Pine Street Shul quiz team won the Sydenham Hebrew Preschool quiz last Thursday evening, beating 11 other teams. They defended their title as the reigning champions, winning by two points after a tough battle of the brains. The quiz master was Larry Benjamin.

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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW



MOSES & SUPERMAN Jordan B. Gorfinkel (Ohio)

Comic book creator, newspaper cartoonist, animation and multi-media entertainment producer, Gorf is a veteran Batman creator and co-creator of the #1 bestselling Passover Haggadah Graphic Novel.

Gorf draws the weekly JewishCartoon.com comic strip that appears in newspapers and online and is on permanent exhibition at the Munich Jewish Museum. His Jewish Cartoon Workshop on drawing comics on Torah portions and other Jewish themes is designed for all ages.

Gorf is also member of the seminal professional Jewish a cappella group, Kol Zimra.

Sessions include: Jewish Cartoon Workshop



POST-DISASTER RESILIENCE Hannah Gaventa (London)

Hannah is a development practitioner working in post-disaster resilience and climate adaptation. She is the Portfolio Manager for the UK Government's Skills for Prosperity Programme and sits on the Allocation Board of the World Jewish Relief Programme. Hannah is also the founder of Time of the Month, a women's advocacy group in London.

Sessions include: Are Good Intentions Enough?



ANNE FRANK ON ROBBER ISLAND Roni Mikel-Arieli (Jerusalem)

Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Roni is the author of Remembering the Holocaust in a Racial State: Holocaust Memory in South Africa from Apartheid to Democracy, which examines South African Jewry as a minority within the privileged white minority through the prism of the Holocaust.

A prolific writer researcher, Roni is the recipient of several academic awards and fellowships and is currently a Rosa Luxemburg Research Fellow at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

Sessions include: The Holocaust on Trial in Pretoria– South African Reactions to the Eichmann Trial



MASTER EDUCATOR Robin Moss (London)

Robin has worked for over a decade in Jewish and Israeli education within the British Jewish community, working with tens of thousands of young people and adults across the UK.

He has appeared at Limmud events across the world. Robin is currently Chief Executive of Unitas, an innovative youth centre in north London. He is also a tour guide and a First World War fanatic.

Sessions include: Three Israeli Wars (Without Any Actual Fighting)



EUROPE WILL BE STUNNED Tamas Buhler (Brussels)

Tomi is currently the project coordinator of Networks Overcoming Antisemitism at the non-governmental organisation, CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe.

Originally from Hungary, Tamas served previously as the director of the Israeli Cultural Institute in Budapest. Before that, he worked for the Jewish Agency's Global Leadership Institute as the director of Minyanim, a network of young community activists from Europe.

Sessions Include: The Roma and Jews - a Love Story?



THE SEPHARDIC SILK ROAD Ruben Shimonov (Detroit)

Ruben is an educator and community builder who is passionate about Jewish diversity. He will take you to the crossroads of the Sephardic, Mizrahi and Russian-Speaking worlds with a tour of the history and culture of Bukharian Jews. He is the National Director of Sephardi House & Young Leadership at the American Sephardi Federation and the founding Executive Director of the Sephardic Mizrahi Q Network. As a visual artist, he uses Arabic-Hebrew-Persian calligraphy to build Muslim-Jewish interfaith bridges.

Sessions include: An Exploration of Hebrew and Arabic Calligraphy

WHERE, WHAT, WHEN AND WHO TO CONTACT

JOHANNESBURG

INDABA HOTEL, FOURWAYS
Friday 12 to Sunday 14 August 2022

- **Full weekend:** Including two nights at the Indaba Hotel, all meals and child-care.
- **Special rates:** For young adults, students and children.
- **Sunday only:** 8.00am to 5.45pm including meals and child-care.

Call 083 577 2377

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