

Take part in our upcoming  
**Winter Wunderkammer Auction**  
**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> July**  
Full Catalogues will be live online on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> July for pre-bidding.  
**Register online now.**

For more information 011 789 7422 • info@rkauctioneers.co.za • www.rkauctioneers.co.za  
Bram Fischer Centre, Lower Ground, 95 Bram Fischer Drive, Cnr George Street, Ferndale, 2194



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
REGISTER NOW

■ Volume 27 – Number 19 ■ 20 June 2024 ■ 14 Sivan 5784

# South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

www.sajr.co.za

## Chief calls for government led ‘by highest ideals’

NICOLA MILTZ

Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein wore a small yellow ribbon on his lapel to address the momentous inauguration on Wednesday, 19 June, of President Cyril Ramaphosa as he ushered in a government of national unity (GNU). In his prayer, the chief rabbi blessed the government of national unity, and



Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein saying a prayer at the inauguration

service and to lead by “the highest of ideals” in order to create a “peaceful and prosperous South Africa”.

Goldstein was one of the interfaith leaders invited to bless the president and the ceremonial event marking Ramaphosa’s second term of office.

It was the first time in many months that the chief rabbi was seen publicly addressing politicians and dignitaries. Jewish representatives weren’t invited to give a prayer at the final election rally of the former ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), as they had been at every event since the dawn of democracy.

There have been months of strained relations between members of the Jewish community and the ANC in the wake of the Hamas massacre of 7 October last year. This, following the ANC’s obsessive anti-Israel stance since the massacre, in which 1 200 were murdered and more than 250 hostages taken by Hamas terrorists into Gaza.

Tensions continued to boil when South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice accusing it of genocide. This was followed by keffiyeh-clad ANC leaders, including Ramaphosa, being seen welcoming and embracing several Hamas leaders

on different occasions. They were also seen chanting the genocidal “From the river to the sea” cry at public gatherings.

The inauguration was also the first time in months that members of the communal leadership were seen at the same gathering as International Affairs and Co-operation Director Naledi Pandor, who was programme director for the proceedings.

“I proudly wore a yellow ribbon to remind myself and all my fellow citizens, including the president and all who were there today, that no civilised nation can rest until evil is defeated and the hostages are freed,” Goldstein told the *SA Jewish Report*.

The ribbon contrasted sharply with the keffiyeh worn by the leader of the Muslim Judicial Council during his prayer delivered shortly before the chief rabbi.

Goldstein said he “felt conflicted” about how to respond to an invitation from the GNU to deliver a prayer at the inauguration.

“On the one hand, South Africa’s new government of national unity represents the best prospects for the success of our country: economic development, political stability, poverty alleviation, and the upliftment of more than 60 million South Africans.

“On the other, the GNU includes a president and a ruling party which

remain unrepentant antagonists of Israel.”

He questioned whether the community should support the government of national unity, saying, “Should we pray for it? Should we be part of helping it succeed?”

“In answering these questions, we can draw on the example of David Ben Gurion,” the chief rabbi said. “In 1939, the British government released an infamous white paper curtailing Jewish immigration to Israel and

effectively abandoning Europe’s Jews to extermination. As war broke out, Ben Gurion faced an impossible dilemma – whether to join the British army and support the government whose reprehensible white paper had left Jews to be slaughtered, or to refuse to join the British army and thereby strengthen Nazi Germany.

“Ben Gurion decided to embrace the contradiction, responding to the dilemma with the famous words, ‘We’ll

Continued on page 11>>



Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein at the inauguration

**ONE TRIBE**  
Helping Johannesburg Jews in need

# THANK YOU!

**97% OF DONATIONS FROM  
2,187 INTERNATIONAL DONORS**

**ChevrahKadisha**



# White House shows ‘Screams’, debunks Hamas’s rape denial

RON KAMPEAS – JTA

United States (US) VicePresident Kamala Harris screened *Screams Before Silence* at the White House on Monday, 17 June, in part to refute denialism of Hamas’s sexual violence as exposed in the documentary produced by Sheryl Sandberg.

“We cannot look away, and we will not be silent,” Harris said ahead of the screening to a room packed with representatives of women’s and human rights groups. “My heart breaks for all these survivors and their families, and for all the pain and suffering from the past eight months in Israel and in Gaza.”

Sandberg, the former chief operating officer of social media giant Meta, produced the film to counter denialism of sexual violence that took place on 7 October, when Hamas terrorists massacred more than

1 200 people in Israel, and the sexual assault endured by some of the hostages Hamas terrorists abducted that day.

“Some pretty mainstream people are either ignoring or worse denying this happened,” Sandberg told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency after the screening. “So this aspect gets to the heart of what people need to believe to understand what happened and what this kind of terror really is.”

Sandberg’s public condemnation of rape as an act of war in November and the subsequent documentary represents some of the most potent efforts in a broad campaign to call attention to the use of sexual violence on and after 7 October, which is a war crime. Jewish advocates pressed the United Nations for months to acknowledge and condemn Hamas’s use of sexual violence before the body did so in March. A number of international women’s organisations were also slow to recognise the sexual violence of 7 October, said Sheila Katz, the chief executive of the National Council of Jewish Women, who was present at the screening and counting the non-Jewish organisations in the room.

“Sheryl now has given us a platform to show interviews of what took place to make sure that more people can call this out and more people can engage with it,” Katz said in an interview.

Amit Soussana, a former hostage and one of the sexual assault survivors who is extensively interviewed in the film, appeared at the event.

“Being in captivity means having no control over your mind, body, or soul,” she said. “You have absolutely no control over what happens to you. All your basic human rights are taken from you. Even your feelings are completely controlled by someone else.”

Soussana revealed after her release that

one of her Hamas captors had assaulted her. “The sexual assault I experienced should never happen to any human being under any circumstances. No-one should ever be sexually violated, and there are no justifying circumstances for these crimes,” she said.

Soussana seemed to want to reassure

table for a ceasefire which would bring the hostages home and lead to a permanent end to hostilities,” said Harris, who said she feared that more accounts of sexual violence would emerge as more hostages were freed.

Biden has blamed Hamas for the current impasse in the US-proposed deal, which



the audience that she was in recovery. “I don’t see myself as a victim. I’m a strong, independent woman, and no-one can change that,” she said, pointing out, “It will always be a part of my story, but in time the trauma will subside.”

Harris and Sandberg both called for an end to the war and the release of the hostages, of whom as many as 80 are thought to remain alive. “President [Joe] Biden and I have made clear that Hamas needs to accept the deal that’s on the

would start with a temporary ceasefire and an exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners, and then would possibly end the war. The Netanyahu government hasn’t made clear whether it accepts the terms.

Harris framed the event as part of an initiative she’s spearheading to raise awareness about conflict-related sexual violence. A panel of experts on the issue of sexual violence spoke, including Nadia Murad, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who is a survivor of the Islamic State’s genocide of the Yazidi people.

Appliance Repairs on Site

Fridges, Dishwashers,  
Washing Machines, Stoves  
Tumble Dryers & more

Call Jason  
082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532  
FREE QUOTATIONS

ETERNAL MEMORIALS

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein  
083-458 9965  
RabbiRyanG@gmail.com

"I will help you through this difficult time in your life with all the necessary tombstone requirements"

Continuing Rabbi Sher's z"l Legacy

FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE

Have a love at first sound experience.

Phonak Audéo™ Paradise

There's nothing like the sound of Paradise

- Experience exceptional sound performance
- Connect seamlessly to Bluetooth® devices
- Rechargeable so you'll always stay connected
- Remote Support for the ultimate in convenience

AFFORDABLE RANGE FOR PENSIONERS

Hearing Aid Batteries Reduced to R40

Contact us today on our new number (011) 728 7016 082 953 4628

Fairmount 6 George Ave, Sandringham

Negativity interrupted

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein Muizenberg Hebrew Congregation

Some say this weeks' parsha, Beha'alotcha uniquely encompasses three books of the Torah.

The Gemara (Shabbos 116a) explains that the two *pasuk* portion in our *sedra* (10:35-36) of "*Vayehi binsoah ha'aron*" is considered a *sefer* of the Torah in its own right as they are bracketed by inverted letter "*nuns*". According to this view, we have not five, but seven books of the Torah as the book of Bamidbar is not one but three books – one before *pasuk* 10:35; one after *pasuk* 10:36; and *pasuk* 10:35-36 itself.

This is done as a separation between two outwardly negative events for which the Israelites suffered punishment as a result. The first was because of the fact that "they travelled from the mountain of Hashem – a three day journey" [Bamidbar 10:33]. The Talmud compares their departure from *har Sinai* to "a child running away from school". The Ramban adds that they were afraid that if they stayed at *har Sinai* any longer, the Almighty would pile additional *mitzvos* upon them.

The second punishment was because of the *misoninim* (complainers). Rashi explains that their complaint centred on the fact that they wanted to eat meat, and were fed up with the daily portion of manna that they had received miraculously.

In *halacha*, doing something three consecutive times becomes a pattern and establishes something as having a new status, a *chazakah* in Hebrew. The middle book, therefore, interrupts this pattern of negativity

before it can be established as a new defining status for the Jewish people.

This is an extraordinary lesson for us. Hashem was willing to break up the chronology of the Torah to teach us to be sensitive when dealing with negativity. Once something becomes a pattern, it's hard to break free from it. From this, we see the importance of breaking a bad streak and working on rehabilitation. The Torah recognises how hard it is to break out of a negative

cycle. We all know the difficulties involved in shaking ourselves loose from our own bad habits, and know that if only we had nipped them in the bud before they became strongly rooted in our personalities, we wouldn't be in the position in which we find ourselves. With all the good intentions in the world, it still takes tremendous willpower to change, once a *chazakah* of negative behaviour has set in.

Shabbat shalom.

Shabbat Times brought to you by

Spencer Schwartz from You Realty

Residential Property Sales and Rentals + Auctions

	Starts	Ends
Johannesburg	17:07	17:59
Cape Town	17:27	18:22
Durban	16:47	17:40
Bloemfontein	17:08	18:01
Gqeberha	16:58	17:53
Plettenberg Bay	17:07	18:02
East London	16:51	17:46
Jerusalem*	19:12	20:31
Tel Aviv*	19:28	20:34

Spencer Schwartz • 084 524 4616 • spencer@yourealty.co.za

You. Realty

Rabbi Nachum "Gamzu" used to say that everything Hashem does is for the good. Therefore, even if something that happened to him did not appear so good, or even seemed so bad that others would call it a misfortune, he would say "this, too, is for the good". גם זו לטובה

\*Israel is one hour ahead of South Africa

VEHICLES WANTED

ANY MAKE ANY MODEL ANY CONDITION

BEST PRICE GUARANTEED

Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826



# 'We're staying,' say olim as Israel's north heats up

TALI FEINBERG

Former South African *olah* Shelley Liss Barkan is risking her life living in the northern Israel town of Shlomi long after it was evacuated because of Hezbollah rocket attacks in October. She's one of just a few remaining residents who didn't leave despite being on the firing line of Hezbollah rockets and living under the shadow of war.

Liss Barkan is one of several South African *olim* who have chosen to stay in the north despite the possibility of war with Lebanon growing by the hour.

Deeply committed to her home, her family, her job as a teacher, even her animals that she didn't want to abandon, Liss Barkan is also risking her life by staying in the north for a crucial reason: to feed soldiers.

"When the war started, I decided to cook for the soldiers because I noticed that they weren't getting hot meals, only army rations," she says. "So, I started in my own little kitchen. My sister in Los Angeles raised donations from the Jewish community there. That's how I got the ball rolling."

The mayor of Shlomi gave her a larger kitchen to use for as long as war went on. Today, she and a team of brave volunteers provide 3 500 hot meals for soldiers in the north on a Friday. For most soldiers, it's the only hot meal they will eat in the week. During the week, they also make about 400 meals.

Liss Barkan has been just metres away from falling rockets. "It's scary, but not enough for me to move out," she says. "I will leave only if I have absolutely no choice." Her adult children live on Kibbutz Hanita, which is very far north, and Nahariya. "Hanita is very dangerous, so of course I worry. But there are families who have lost their children, not to mention the hostages, so I consider myself lucky," she says.

Michelle Aharon, another South African *olah*, has chosen to stay in her town of Katzrin, which is seen as the "capital" of the Golan Heights. "We hear the rockets, smoke comes into our house, jets are constantly over our heads, even at night," she says. Rockets have landed close to her home, friends' homes, her kids' school, the supermarket, and the soccer field. Fire and smoke often comes too close for comfort. A rocket landed in the front yard of a home just 1.5km from her home.

Aharon lived in Israel many years ago, then in South Africa, returning to Israel in 2022. She and her husband chose to settle in the north for its quieter lifestyle, close-knit community, and access to nature. They are extremely settled and would hate to uproot their 14-year-old son and seven-year-old daughter. In addition, no-one has chosen to leave the town or been evacuated. So, for now, they stay.

She says many children have become extremely anxious, including her own. Her daughter won't sleep in her own room, and won't go to the bathroom or shower alone. The family sees a



The kitchen that Shelley Liss Barkan runs in the Northern Israel town of Shlomi which feeds thousands of soldiers

therapist to work through these anxieties.

Parents are also anxious. "You don't let them go out as much anymore. You're constantly checking up on them, ensuring that they have a phone with them, that there's a bomb shelter near them, that their friend's home has a safe room," says Aharon. As a teacher, "We've had to do drills at school so that the kids are used to it and we know how to deal with it."

Paul Mirbach, who has lived on Kibbutz Tuval since the 1980s, says his kibbutz hasn't yet been targeted. Even if there was a war, he would never consider leaving. "I built Tuval. It's as much a part of me as an arm or a leg. I cannot contemplate living anywhere else," he says. "I want to be a part of whatever Tuval endures. Our children are grown up and don't live here, so that consideration isn't relevant."

Regarding a war with Hezbollah, "It terrifies me, because I cannot see us succeeding right now," Mirbach says. "Our soldiers are exhausted, and to fight another war while we're mired in Gaza, is folly. We need to end the war in Gaza and recuperate before we would have a chance of achieving anything in Lebanon. Every day that we delay bringing our hostages home exhausts us and makes a war with Hezbollah a disaster waiting to happen. It would be a death trap for our soldiers and a huge strategic blunder. But if there's a war, we'll deal with it."

Taryn Rubin lives on Moshav Nov in the southern Golan Heights. "In the first few days and weeks after 7 October, it was quite scary as my moshav is a few kilometres from the Syrian border, so it was a feeling of 'all hell's broken loose' and we could

be next. But pretty quickly, security was restored. There have been a few rockets from Syria.

"The reason we've stayed is that ultimately, we feel safe. The situation for Jews is better here than overseas. Even if there is a war, there's a whole country to look after you, so you're not as vulnerable as anywhere else.

"You can definitely feel things heating up, so the possibility of a war with Lebanon is highly likely," she says. Some families that have been evacuated from other northern towns have come to her moshav. "They need to return home, and the only way to do that is to secure the border."

Craig Sher, who lives with his family on Moshav Hazorim in the lower Galilee, says, "Up until now, we had limited exposure to rockets. The general atmosphere is that war with Hezbollah is a necessary evil because a repeat of what happened in the Gaza area isn't an option."

However, he and his family wouldn't leave if that came about. "We have 13 dogs, two horses, cats, ducks, geese, and chickens that rely on us, so we wouldn't leave. Besides, where would we go? There are many from the north and south that have come here seeking protection," Sher says.

Sid Kaplan is a founding member of Moshav Manof, and still lives there today. "We haven't been affected by the bombardment because we live in the southern Galil, about 45km from the border. Life on Manof is quiet and 'normal', but things can change at any moment.

"To consider leaving Israel is out of the question," he says. "Coming on aliya was the best decision I made. I'm a passionate Zionist and feel strongly that this is where we Jews belong.

"Tragically, there are so many people suffering from anxiety and a general feeling of helplessness," says Kaplan. "There's a constant fear of further attacks. The situation regarding those who have been evacuated is heartbreaking. They cannot return to their homes or jobs, and the economic and psychological effects are enormous.

"Israel cannot accept the existence of a terrorist army on any of its borders," he says. "In Gaza, hopefully this immediate threat has been removed. For us living on Manof, war in the north isn't a question of 'if' but 'how' and 'when'. Pretty frightening. But we continue."



Fire from Hezbollah rockets, about four streets from the home of Michelle Aharon in Katzrin

JAWITZ  
PROPERTIES

Leading  
REAL ESTATE  
COMPANIES  
OF THE WORLD

ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY 2 - 5 PM

SANDRINGHAM | R 1 299 000

2

2

Web Ref: JRL6820

Asking more. Modern simplex in an estate with views of Golf course. 2 Bedrooms, 2 modern bathrooms. Extended lounge and dining room with fitted cupboards. Private garden. Well-fitted granite top kitchen with gas hob. 2 parking spaces and 24 hour security. Complex swimming pool and playground for children.

Joel Harris: 082 926 0287  
Lauren Shalpid: 083 789 0229

ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY 3 - 5 PM

FAIRMOUNT | R 1 999 000

2

2

Web Ref: JRL16610

Asking more. Executive style cluster with exquisite finishes. 2 to 3 Bedroom cluster. 2 Bathrooms, guest toilet. An exciting "Ferrari" red Kitchen with separate scullery. Dining and lounge. Intimate garden. Built in study area. Single garage plus 2 parking spaces. 24-Hour security. Walking distance to shuls, schools and shops in the area.

Joel Harris: 082 926 0287  
Lauren Shalpid: 083 789 0229

FOR SALE

WAVERLEY | R 4 100 000

4

4

Web Ref: JRL18798

Charm & character abound in this soulful family home. A truly, stunning entertainment area and garden with tennis court. 3/4 receptions, 4beds, 4baths, staff, 3 garages + tons of extra parking, beautiful Oregon hardwood floors. A special home that promises any new owner a wonderful lifestyle.

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY 2 - 4 PM

MORNINGSIDE | R 1 599 000

2

2.5

Web Ref: JRL18478

North facing Duplex Apartment. Stunning views. Main Bedroom ensuite bath & shower with Juliette balcony. 2nd bedroom ensuite/shower with balcony. O/P living/dining leading to entertainers patio. O/P kitchen + scullery with space for 4 appliances. Guest Loo. 2 Covered parkings. Safe & secure. 24/7security. Genuine Seller.

Sandra Luntz: 083 679 1247



# Lessons from Colombia: SA’s path forward ‘aint easy’



OPINION

DAVID SHAPIRO

I’ve dined out countless times on my story of attending an investment conference in California nearly 13 years ago and meeting Colombia’s former president, Alvaro Uribe Vélez. The substance of Alvaro’s keynote address is as vital to me today as it was back then, particularly in light of the news on 14 June that South Africa would be administered by a government of national unity.



After decades of economic and political impotence, we’ve been given a fresh opportunity to reset our sights and become the nation we embraced so enthusiastically in 1994. Except, this time, we don’t have a Nelson Mandela to court the rest of the world, our economy is in tatters, and our state institutions are in a sad state of disrepair. A turnaround is certainly achievable, but will require a fresh mindset, hard work, and dutiful leadership.

In November 2011, I was invited to talk at an investment conference in Monarch Beach, California, hosted by a Canadian mining group. I was flown, business class, halfway around the world, accommodated in a suite at the St Regis Hotel fit for the Kardashians, all to deliver a short speech on local mining opportunities that most attendees, nursing tequila hangovers from the previous evening’s festivities, chose to skip.

Before the start of the conference, wandering lost and forlorn on the patio, a gentleman beckoned me to join his breakfast table. I extended my hand in appreciation and introduced myself, saying, “I’m David Shapiro, from Sasfin in Johannesburg.” “I’m Alvaro Uribe,” he smiled, shaking my hand. “So, what do you do, Alvaro?” I enquired.

Vélez was president of Colombia from 2002 until 2010. Colombia is the third largest Spanish speaking country in the world, after Mexico and Spain, with a population of 52 million. Its economic output in 2011 was on par with South Africa.

In the opening address, he confessed that, since the nation declared independence from Spain in 1810, its liberty had been undermined by murders, terrorist attacks, and civil strife. In Colombia’s 200-year history, only 47 had been lived in relative peace. Up until he took office, Vélez couldn’t recall a single year of his life that was free of violence and unrest, perpetrated either by pro-Marxist groups on the left or paramilitary troops linked to narcotic traders, on the right.

Unacceptably high levels of crime and corruption were destroying hope in Colombia, scaring investors, raising unemployment, and driving out skills. Colombia in 2002 seemed strikingly familiar to where South Africa was back in 2010, and remains to this day – a nation low on confidence, flooded by crime and corruption, and frustrated by a lack of

investment, jobs, and capable administrators. In Vélez’s eight-year term, he worked tirelessly and courageously with outstanding success, confronting the many issues that were dragging his country down. Three features in his presentation stood out for me, and remain germane as we seek to rebuild our belief in South Africa’s future.

In a talk to students when he first took office, he asked how many in the class wanted to leave the country. The entire audience put up their hands. He realised that without peace and security there would be no growth. No-one would invest in a country in which they didn’t want to live. Without skills and fiscal resources, the government couldn’t enhance the nation’s well-being.

The second element of his strategy, aimed at reclaiming people’s trust, was the belief that all citizens should participate in the administration’s decision-making process and, accordingly, he set up agencies in every region to promote dialogue, exchange ideas, and discuss policies. The hearings he introduced were open and publicly televised. His “communitary state” was a participative government with no division between left and right, no leanings towards liberalism, socialism, or bureaucracy. There would be no promises without solutions.

The third facet of his plan was to address bloated government offices. Vélez believed that the greater the number of bureaucrats, the poorer the country. He restructured more than 400 government departments, decreasing payroll and improving efficiency, along the way slashing the number of official motor vehicles by a third.

Unfortunately, space doesn’t allow me to cover his policies and the execution of these in greater detail. Crime diminished, support from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank increased, private participation in the economy grew, exports rose four-fold, and the cultivation of illicit crops was slashed. Vélez’s efforts didn’t escape the rest of the world. In 2009, he was awarded America’s Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country’s highest civilian decoration, for his work to improve the lives of his citizens.

All of this came at a price. Seventeen attempts were made on his life, cities were bombed, and senators, judges, and other officials were murdered.

At present, South Africa is filled with hope and expectation. Yet, after years of maladministration, there’s no easy path forward and investors know it. Even today, Colombia isn’t the haven Alvaro envisaged. If we want to prosper, it’s up to each one of us to demonstrate to the rest of the world that we’re on the road to recovery. And that starts with making South Africa a country in which we want to live, work, and bring up our children.

• *David Shapiro is a veteran stockbroker, market commentator, and chief global equity strategist for Sasfin Wealth.*

# The centre holds, democracy the winner



OPINION

MANDY WIENER

South Africa’s future is far more promising today than it was a week, a month, or even a year ago. What we’ve just witnessed over the past fortnight in our country is a remarkable display of democracy.

We’ve also seen a demonstration of the realignment of our politics which brings with it the potential of real practical change.

While the actual voting process wasn’t perfect and the IEC’s (Electoral Commission of South Africa’s) practices were flawed in some aspects, the polls weren’t rigged and the election was free and fair.

The two weeks leading up to the first sitting of the National Assembly on Friday, 14 June, were defined by uncertainty and flux. The African National Congress (ANC), the liberation movement that had been in power for 30 years since 1994, had for the first time not won an outright majority.

This meant it had to weigh up its options. We weren’t sure which way the country was going to go. Would the ANC choose the path of a populist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) or uMkhonto WeSizwe (MK) coalition, or would it go a more centrist route?

Ultimately it chose the safe, unifying option, and invited all parties to join a government of national unity (GNU).

For two weeks, behind closed doors, negotiations took place and South Africans held their anxiety.

Every day, I received phone calls and messages from members of our community desperate for any kind of insight or indication which way things would fall. We were undoubtedly at a crossroads.

By Friday morning, we still weren’t sure if a deal had been finalised. When members of Parliament (MPs) began the process of swearing in at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, we still weren’t sure.

We now know that it really did come down to the line because of a disagreement between the ANC and the Democratic Alliance (DA) over one specific clause and representation.

It was only two hours after the parliamentary sitting began that pen was finally put to paper and the deal between the ANC and the DA was formally signed.

What followed in the National Assembly was a beautiful demonstration of democracy. Parliament carried out its business with dignity and decorum as office bearers were elected. When problems arose, MPs followed the correct channels and they were resolved.

Chief Justice Raymond Zondo presided over the process with gravitas and respect. Once she was elected, Speaker Thoko Didiza was similarly firm and authoritative. In the provincial legislatures, the process followed suit and premiers were elected.

Ultimately the centre held, and Ramaphosa was re-elected as president, with the support of DA MPs.

The proceedings had a South African flavour about them. There was singing, verbal jousting, and hilarious quips from MPs. Only in South Africa can an opposition leader call the president corrupt, incompetent, and lazy and then go over and congratulate him on his re-election.

We may never know how close we truly came to the brink, but in the end, it was a peaceful transition of power from the sixth to the seventh administration. There has been none of the anarchy and lawlessness we witnessed in July 2021.

Law enforcement has been vigilant, and there has been deployment of additional forces to KwaZulu-Natal as former President Jacob Zuma’s MK party has upped its rhetoric.

It’s now running a comprehensive and deliberate misinformation campaign to undermine the credibility of the vote and the GNU. MK somehow also managed to fumble a successful campaign in KwaZulu-Natal, with 45% of the vote, and not transfer it into a coalition government. This means that it will be even more disgruntled.

There’s an ominous threat of violence, but law enforcement and intelligence officials would have learnt key lessons from what happened in 2021.

We now know that five parties have joined the GNU – the ANC; DA; Inkatha Freedom Party; Patriotic Alliance; and Good. The GNU has been lauded, and it does bring with it much hope and potential for recalibrating our government.

But it will also be a difficult new political landscape to navigate.

Ramaphosa’s first real challenge after being inaugurated will be the composition of his cabinet. He will need to keep the ANC’s tripartite alliance partners happy by including representatives from the unions and the South African Communist Party. He will then also have to find space in an already bloated cabinet for the GNU parties’ candidates. The real question will be whether the DA will be allocated key portfolios, and whether these could translate into tangible change in policy and delivery.

The ANC is also going to have to learn how to govern in this new reality. Its long held policy of cadre deployment will have to be reined in. This means networks of enrichment will be closed. The other GNU parties will also now have room to push back on the ANC’s policies. What happens when the first parliamentary committee sitting on the National Health Insurance (NHI) or the Basic Education Laws Amendment (Bela) bill comes into play?

Many have asked me about the government’s policy on the Middle East and the approach to the International Court of Justice. ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula has publicly stated that the GNU will have no impact on it, but in practice, it might be a bit different.

The DA will also have to redefine itself now that it’s part of government. Referring to the Phala Phala controversy, Helen Zille has already stated that the DA won’t vote to impeach a president it helped to elect. What then does this mean for the weakening of our opposition?

Julius Malema has already demonstrated his willingness to step up and assume the mantle of opposition leader in the absence of MK in Parliament.



Chief Justice Raymond Zondo with President Cyril Ramaphosa at his inauguration

This may not actually be such a bad thing – we’ll need him and his MPs to be vocal.

It also means that the media, the judiciary, civil society, and chapter nine institutions will also have to be hyper vigilant.

The next five years won’t be perfect. The future is fraught with potential failure. But at least we’re not going to experience another five years of what we had before. There’s the potential for real progress and change. Hopefully the government’s reformist policies and close working relationships with the private sector will continue, and we’ll experience economic growth, job creation, and improved service delivery. The future really can be better than now.

• *Mandy Wiener is a broadcaster and author.*



# Life after the apocalypse: couple returns to Be’eri

NICOLA MILTZ

Eight months ago, a 21-year-old South African and her Israeli boyfriend were just two young lovers cherishing their time together in serene Be’eri, a co-operative kibbutz 5km from the Gaza Strip.

Their world was shattered on 7 October in the Hamas Sabbath massacre. The presence of Hamas terrorists forced them into a small safe room for 15 hours where they huddled together with his younger brother and cat. Gun-wielding terrorists who had breached Be’eri brutally murdered, ransacked, burnt, and destroyed everything around them. They had no way of comprehending the extent of the life-and-death struggle that took place outside their safe room, which ignited a major war that still rages.

Many close friends of Leora Baskin and Yonah Kahn, 23 – not their real names for the sake of their safety – died that day. Dozens of homes, including Kahn’s parents’ house, were burnt to a smouldering cinder.

“We lost 10% of the community that day,” Kahn told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“There are still 11 hostages from Be’eri in Gaza, seven of them aren’t alive. I know them all well,” he said.

Be’eri, a largely secular, peaceful, left-wing farming community, was one of the worst affected as Hamas terrorists penetrated Israel from Gaza and attacked communities in the south.

The couple recently visited South Africa to tell their survival story. Brought here by Chabad of Savoy, Chabad of Strathavon, and the South African Zionist Federation, this is the first time in 18 months Baskin has seen her parents and brother, who live in Johannesburg.

“Israel is living but not living,” she told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“Young people are going to nature festivals and taking back the dancing after the massacre at the Nova festival but nothing is the same. Everyone is dealing with a lot,” said Baskin, who grew up in Johannesburg and made aliya three years ago.

Baskin said that weekend started much like any other – Shabbos with Kahn’s family and a braai planned for the following day.

At the crack of dawn, they awoke to what sounded like a heavy rainstorm, only to realise it was the familiar sound of rockets from Gaza and loud interceptions, something they had become used to.

They scurried into their safe room in their pyjamas at the sound of the red alarm, still unperturbed.

“Something was different though. It was louder and heavier, the doors and windows were shaking” said Baskin.

Said Kahn, “My brother, who lives 50m away, sounded anxious. I decided to go check on him, shirtless and with no shoes, leaving Leora half asleep in the safe room.”

It soon became clear to the brothers that they weren’t safe as terrorists were now shooting outside. They called frantically for help. In the meantime, Baskin struggled to close the heavy metal window of the safe room.

“Through the window, I could see neighbours with guns getting into formation, very unusual in a kibbutz,” she said.

Kahn’s close friend, who left the Nova festival earlier when the rockets from Gaza started, went back to Be’eri to try help protect the community.

He helped to secure the area, allowing the brothers to dash back to Baskin.

“I knocked over some pot plants and a bicycle to make it seem like my place had been ransacked,” said Kahn. This is what they believe may have saved them from attack.

Inside, they grabbed whatever they could find to protect themselves, a nun chuck stick and three kitchen knives, before sealing themselves inside the safe room.

“We only had three bottles of water between us,” said Baskin. Kahn panicked and battled to breathe. “I shut down. I told Leora and my brother to read the WhatsApp messages and check on everyone. My brother was very brave. He stayed next to the door but after a while, I saw that he also wasn’t coping so I somehow managed to take

over from him,” said Kahn.

Cut off from the outside world, with only the distressing news from WhatsApp messages, their imaginations ran wild as screams and gunshots were heard outside.

Hours dragged by.

“It was all so confusing. I would drift off to sleep and then wake to more gun shots and noise,” said Baskin. They heard footsteps on the roof and believed them to be terrorists.

They didn’t believe it was the army because they had read messages about terrorists pretending to be soldiers.

“There were many soldiers outside. I was still holding a knife, totally terrified. People were dressed as they had woken up, shirtless, in pyjamas, only it was 15 hours later,” said Kahn.

“The soldiers arranged us in two lines, it was surreal like a scene out of a horror movie. The smell was unbearable, everything was smoky. We started walking, and Yonah shielded my eyes from the carnage. We were told to look down and walk.”

The kibbutz was evacuated to Netivot, where they were reunited with Kahn’s parents. “We hugged. It was very emotional. Yonah’s dad was still in his underwear, he had no shoes on,” she said.

“We saw a nine-year-old boy that we knew who told us his whole family had been killed. That was an impossible moment,” said Baskin.

After a few hours at Netivot, survivors were taken to hotels in the Dead Sea.



She tried to call her parents in Johannesburg but it being Shabbos, didn’t manage to get hold of them. Eventually they were tracked down and alerted.

They stopped hearing from Kahn’s parents, and grew worried. “We could only imagine what they were experiencing, having told us earlier that they were ok but that their house was on fire,” he said.

It turns out they were rescued after 11 hours huddling under a wet blanket battling to breathe from the smoke.

“It’s a miracle they survived, rescued three hours before us by strangers from another kibbutz who came to help,” said Kahn.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, they were rescued at about 20:30 by members of the Israel Defense Forces.

“We reached The David Hotel at 04:00 and I remember my brother wishing me happy birthday. I had forgotten my birthday was on 8 October,” said Kahn.

Five months afterwards, the couple finally found the strength to return home. With therapy and Shelby their emotional-support Labrador, they were among the first to return after spending time in Tel Aviv.

“Nothing is the same. It’s still a warzone. We can hear and feel every blast,” said Baskin.

“We chose to go back because someone has to help rebuild. Many don’t have that choice,” said Kahn. “At first, I felt like my life had ended. We had all lost way too much to go back. Now I see it as my duty. I’ve come to understand that anything that doesn’t kill you is meant to make you stronger.”

## Independent living for senior citizens



### Garden Place

**From R14 999,00 per Month**  
Fully furnished suites in magnificent surroundings  
24-hour security | serviced 5 days a week  
Affordable rates – **no monthly levy**

Situated in Orchards, Garden Place offers the ultimate in **choice and value for money** when it comes to independent living for senior citizens.

WE’LL CREATE A PACKAGE THAT SUITS YOUR STYLE OF LIVING

Three different types of accommodation to choose from:  
**Standard units:** Double bedroom en-suite  
**Studio units:** Overlooking the garden, double bedroom en-suite with fully equipped kitchenette  
**Cottages:** Lounge/dining room, double bedroom, bathroom en-suite, bath and walk-in shower, TV in bedroom and lounge, queen size wall-bed in living room (ideal for grandchildren or overseas visitors), fully equipped kitchen

- All units are fully furnished with DSTv, Wi-Fi, air-conditioning/heating, fridge, microwave, safe, bed linen, towels, crockery and cutlery
- Take your unit fully furnished or bring your own special pieces – either way, we will help create your home away from home
- Let us provide your meals and teas in our dining room or in the privacy of your unit, or choose to make your own meals
- Use our shuttle service or take your own car

The **CHOICE** is yours!

THE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE YOU DESERVE FOR A GREAT PRICE

RATE INCLUDES

- Electricity, Wi-Fi, DSTv, 24-hour security and parking
- Idyllic gardens with two swimming pools
- Dining room and braai area
- Conference facilities at your disposal – have a game of cards or listen to a guest speaker
- Easy access to doctors, dentists, nurses, physio and Hatzolah
- Full-time management living on the property
- Daily shuttle to Norwood Mall, Melrose Arch and Balfour Park
- Laundry service available
- Situated close to clinics, fitness centres and golf courses
- Within walking distance to 4 shuls

**CALL US TO VIEW**

**011 485 3800**  
53 Garden Road  
Orchards Johannesburg  
[www.gardenplace.co.za](http://www.gardenplace.co.za)  
[info@gardenplace.co.za](mailto:info@gardenplace.co.za)

## Life is more than a balancing act.

Empowering the Jewish community with interest-free loans, helping to build lives on a solid foundation.

CREDIT CARD DEBT • DEBT RELIEF • CARS • MEDICAL • HOUSE • SCHOOL FEES • LIVING EXPENSES • SIMCHAS



Together with the Rambam Trust, we'll help you overcome life's financial obstacles, building a stronger and more resilient community. Learn more about our interest-free loans during these challenging times. T's & C's apply.

**Full confidentiality and privacy guaranteed.**  
011 485 5441 • [rambam@mweb.co.za](mailto:rambam@mweb.co.za)  
[rambam.co.za](http://rambam.co.za)



### RAMBAM

CHARITABLE TRUST

Unity Community Responsibility



## Things are looking up

For the first time in ages, it’s difficult not to be hopeful about South Africa’s future. The rand is growing stronger, our experts are cautiously optimistic, and things are looking good. I have to say that to witness the rand dropping below R18 to the dollar is quite emotional. It really engenders hope.

This means that not only do we feel like there’s hope, but the rest of the economic world is also feeling better about what’s happening here.

What an incredible relief it is to write that!

I’m not for a minute going to weigh in on what happened to create this situation, and give my views on the political and economic future of our country. I leave that to experts like Tony Leon (page 7), Mandy Wiener, and David Shapiro (both on page 4) who share their knowledge in this newspaper.

However, a colleague of mine suggested that we caution people against getting too “Ramaphoric” with all the good news and perhaps warn our readers what could happen. I was surprised by that, because I cannot see a downside to being optimistic and happy. It smacks, however, of exactly what our sage, Rabbi Levi Avtzon, writes about on this page. Too many of us look for things to stress about, to drive us into a frenzy of worry and distress. I can’t say I’m totally innocent in this regard. The truth is, if you look, you’ll find. But if you choose to look for good, it’s also there.

I agree with Rav Avtzon that we often get hysterical about things that aren’t within our ambit to change. More than that, we get upset about things that don’t need to upset us. When someone writes about it being time to consider emigrating, it doesn’t mean we all need to start packing our bags. It means someone is considering his options. He may be someone you respect and admire, and you think he’s wise, so read what he writes with that in mind. That’s all. But we dare not let one person’s opinion alter our plans or choices. We certainly cannot let it drive us into the doldrums because we cannot afford to emigrate or we aren’t quite sure what the future holds. Really!

Look how much and how quickly things have changed.

Who would have thought three weeks ago that we would be looking at a government with the African National Congress and Democratic Alliance (DA) in partnership? I have so much hope for the future of this partnership and for the wisdom of our leaders to be able to find ways to rebuild what’s broken in our country and economy. Here’s to jobs, prosperity, collaboration, and growth!

As I write this editorial on 19 June, President Cyril Ramaphosa is being inaugurated into the government of national unity. Our chief rabbi is at the Union Buildings in Pretoria for this big day, as is the leadership of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, represented by National Chairperson Karen Milner, and National Vice-President Zev Krengel, among others.

The chief rabbi delivered a prayer sporting his yellow ribbon – a symbol of the call for the return of the Israeli hostages still being held by Hamas. I was so proud that he did this. This is the first time in a while we have been so welcomed, and long may it last. It didn’t pass our community’s notice that the imam who gave a prayer before the chief rabbi was wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh. Each to his own values and beliefs, right?

We’ve not forgotten how Ramaphosa just a few weeks ago called for the obliteration of Israel by publicly chanting, “From the river to the sea!” We’ve not forgiven him, and while we may someday do that, we’ll never forget.

However, if this man along with the DA et al, can take our country forward with a constantly improving economy, rebuild our infrastructure, uplift industries and parastatals, I believe our support for him will grow. If he can focus on South Africa, letting go of his party’s obsession with the Middle East, and go all out to fix what needs fixing in this country, we’ll all be much happier.

And it does appear from where we sit right now that the tides have changed and the country is on an upward trajectory. I agree that it’s early days, but let’s look up rather than down. Let’s celebrate when and where we can. Why not?

As we watch what happens, let’s try our best to see the good in what there is, and there’s so much good right here and now in South Africa.

On a micro scale, we keep being alerted about amazing things that people within our community are doing. We’re told about sports people who are climbing the ranks in their sport, making us proud (see page 14), and this is reason to celebrate.

Last week, we celebrated Shavuot, the commemoration of the day we received the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. It was a time of rebirth of the Jewish people, a time when we could see a new future. Back then, we didn’t know what the future would bring, but it certainly showed signs of brightness. And so, we find ourselves in South Africa, as a country, at a momentous time when there’s hope on our horizon.

Let’s garner that spirit of Shavuot, that spirit of positivity and aspiration, and put our effort into making the future of South Africa great.

**Shabbat Shalom!**  
**Peta Krost**  
**Editor**



## Stop *kvetching* around the dinner table

OPINION

RABBI LEVI AVTZON



G-d created a perfect world. It’s called heaven, where we all go when we pass away from this imperfect world. Heaven is a place of no issues, grudges, sickness, hate, or human weakness. Heaven is a place of peace – one endless spiritual beach stay.

And yet, so many of us hold onto the unrealistic expectation that life on this earth should be heavenly and perfect. They expect it to be akin to an eternal vacation in our ideal spot, with everyone around us embodying their best selves and always feeling healthy and magnificent. However, life on earth is inherently imperfect, and this expectation can lead only to disappointment when our idealised vision is unmet.

It’s a simple truth that often eludes even the wisest among us. When we compare our lives to the perfection of heaven, we can easily fall into the perilous cycle of self-pity, leading to feelings of anxiety and apathy that can be detrimental to our well-being.

Consider the recent election. Before the election, I posed a simple question to a few friends: “Is there any outcome on 29 May that could make you genuinely positive about our country? Could anything alter your perception of our country’s trajectory?” The answers were disappointing. Few could dream of a better future. The narrative of doom had taken over, with no hope for redemption.

This article doesn’t deny the challenges that come as part-and-parcel of living on planet earth, especially in South Africa. At the same time, I wish to pose two questions to you, the reader. First, is the negativity and cynicism warranted? Second, is it worth it?

Let’s delve into the second question, which is more significant. The first is a matter of personal perspective, and we can spend endless time debating various facts or interpretations of facts. However, the second question is straightforward and demands our attention: has the cynicism and negativity many in the community have fostered over three generations been to our betterment or detriment?

Over the decades, tens of thousands of Shabbos and *yomtov* meals across the community have been sabotaged by so-called well-meaning conversations offering doomsday predictions about the future of this country.



First, this has cut our beautiful community by more than 50%, which itself has been a mixed blessing both for those who have left and those who chose to stay. However, the consequences for the mental health of our community has been, in my humble opinion, disastrous.

Why? Because most of us cannot live on the fence in constant self-doubt while maintaining our mental-health equilibrium. It’s like an amateur juggling crystal balls, which will inevitably come crashing down. Or, to borrow from another analogy, when I’m waiting for the other shoe to drop, I cannot sleep and make healthy decisions.

Let’s face the reality that we have a mental-health crisis in our community. Though there’s no single answer and explanation for something this complex, it’s fair and maybe even necessary to pose a simple question: is the tension in our homes and our collective decades-long conversation about South Africa contributing to the crisis in any way?

If the answer is even partially yes, then it leads to the next obvious question: can I do better in this department, and bring less anxiety-provoking feelings and conversations into my home?

Some things are outside my control, and there are those

within my control. The wisdom is “to know the difference”. We choose what narratives we bring into our homes, which cliches we repeat repeatedly, and which discussion we allow around the dinner table.

May I suggest that bashing South Africa, coupled with fearmongering about getting into university – a pet peeve of mine – should be removed from our table discussions? If it needs to be spoken about, do it occasionally and not in front of the kids. These conversations usually lead nowhere good, and are mostly counterproductive.

I often quip to my community, “South Africans live in heaven, but think they’re in hell.”

Let’s take loadshedding as an example – a situation that has calmed down lately. How many of us have felt gratitude for this respite? Very few. Instead, we heard constant reminders to “wait until 30 May”. Nu? While this caution might have been warranted, it’s a miserable way to live. Can’t we find joy in the present without prophesising about an uncertain future?

Should I cry when a baby is born because one day – hopefully many years later – it will die? No. “At the time of joy, joy; at the time of mourning, mourning.” (Rashi, Breishit 6:6) It’s good now? Great! Dance! Might tomorrow be hard? We’ll cry then.

This isn’t about burying our heads in the sand. It’s about accepting that life is messy, but messy isn’t Armageddon. When we’re anxious, we tend to lose perspective on what’s a small issue, what’s a mild challenge, and what’s a fully-fledged crisis.

It all becomes a cholent pot of stress. Not every challenge in life is the equivalent of Gog and Magog. And yet, in many of our homes, our level of tension seems to imply that Armageddon is at our doorstep.

Always worrying about the future is the antithesis of faith. Yes, basic caution and staying abreast of events and trends is important. But the art of predicting the future – which is more South African than boerewors on a braai – is a horrible way of living. “I’m telling you, rabbi! Three years left to this country! Three years! Mark my words!” Gimme a break! Go play golf, you have a better chance of getting a hole-in-one than predicting accurately.

People have been giving the “three-year promise” for three generations. Its ring is hollow by now. It almost feels like a cult that keeps changing the date when the world is ending because it can never admit that the premise was false. South Africa doesn’t have to go the way of Zimbabwe just because your great-uncle, who moved to Canada 60 years ago, said it would.

Many of us choose to walk around feeling sorry for ourselves, our anxiety at maximum, and our relationships strained to the breaking point for the sake of being realists so that we can declare with absolute confidence, as if G-d had showed up and told us to share forth His prophecy of doom, “I’m telling you, South Africa has three years left. Get out while you can! So said the L-rd. And He also told me that university overseas – costing R2 million a year – is the only answer for your children. Move now!” And we’re supposed to nod and say, “Amen!”

How about joy? How about walking around with a jump in our step and a flicker in our eye? How about toning down our anxiety levels and regaining some inner peace? How about throwing away the fear that seems to corrode every fibre of serenity within our society? There’s a big difference between reasonable and unreasonable fear, and I pray that G-d gives us the wisdom to know the difference.

We have a crisis, and there’s something we can do about it. It might not solve it, but it will surely help – stop kvetching, start living. It’s a great life here, and we have lots to be grateful for. Choosing gratitude and living with more serenity is one of the best things we can do to combat our mental-health crisis. Do you agree?

• Rabbi Levi Avtzon is the rabbi of the Linksfield Shul.



# Coalition nation: how history didn’t repeat itself

OPINION

TONY LEON



South Africa’s 29 May election produced a political earthquake. The great and assumed hegemon of our polity, the African National Congress (ANC) lost power by crashing down to just on 40% of the vote. Unlike the ANC, the Democratic Alliance (DA) didn’t shed 17% of its support, and went up marginally to 21.8%, finishing second, well ahead of Jacob Zuma’s uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MK) and Julius Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). It was this extraordinary result which led me, 15 years after departing party leadership and Parliament, to join John Steenhuisen’s team in the negotiations that led to the agreement last Friday, 14 June, for a government of national unity (GNU).

the largest minority party – the ANC – whereby the DA would lend its support to electing the president and keeping him in office (confidence). It would also support the minority government’s budget (supply) in exchange for an agreed bare-bones policy agenda. The attraction of this confidence and supply model was that the DA could avert the “doomsday coalition” of ANC-MK-EFF. And, from the outside, prop up a Cyril Ramaphosa minority government. With this arrangement, the DA would be able to simultaneously support and oppose the same government. It was United States President Richard Nixon who offered the best response to this arrangement

reform agenda, as per Operation Vulindlela. This approach met key DA objectives and provided a point of common agreement to which, theoretically at least, the ANC was also committed. There were only two other red lines. First, the party wouldn’t be signatory to any provincial arrangements in the absence of a national deal. This meant that, in the battleground province of KwaZulu-Natal where no non-MK provincial government could be formed without the DA, the party wouldn’t lend its support there without a national agreement as well. Although we finished only fourth in the

KwaZulu-Natal election, we had asymmetrical power there precisely in the absence of any clear winner, and we used that fact and those numbers to press for an all-in deal. Then came the second requirement. As our meetings with the ANC indicated it was moving toward a GNU model, we indicated there could be no participation in this with parties that would break the basis of common agreement we had outlined, namely the MK and EFF. But by then, through word and deed, those two parties had begun to exclude themselves. The 1994 government of national unity – ANC, National Party (NP), Inkatha Freedom Party – was the consequence of the 1993 interim Constitution, and came into operation immediately after the election results were posted. But the

biggest difference between then and now was that in that set-up, the ANC had 62% of the vote, not 40% as it obtained last month. Thus, when the NP leader FW de Klerk exited the GNU in 1996, it made no difference to the continuance of government. One reason for De Klerk’s deep disaffection with those arrangements was that the ANC never agreed to a coalition agreement governing how and which modalities would operationalise that GNU. Hence, our requirements were obtained after much last-minute wrangling. They were for both a precise definition of deadlock breaking mechanisms in the event of disputes – ultimately to be settled by the two largest parties to the agreement – and broad representivity in the composition of the new government. The last GNU ended prematurely and in acrimony. If this new 2024 GNU fails or falls, then this government will end. If that happens, only either the MK or EFF entrance into power or fresh elections will resolve the resulting power vacuum. It’s as simple and as terrifying as that.

I recently had a chat with a legal eminence about the “Statement of Intent of the 2024 Government of National Unity” – the document we agreed with the ANC – which now guides the seventh administration. He confirmed that it wasn’t a legal contract which you could take to court to obtain enforcement. It was, in fact, a political settlement and how and whether it worked in practice depended on politicians, not lawyers. Indeed. The success or failure of the brave new world which South Africa has now entered, with its promises and pitfalls, doesn’t rest on a document, however difficult it was to obtain it. Instead, it depends on wise leadership, a spirit of co-operation and compromise, and a country-first approach which will seal the deal and make it work. That’s the hardest part, and it starts right now.

• *Tony Leon was a member of the Democratic Alliance negotiations team which led to the formation of the government of national unity agreed to on 14 June 2024. He previously (from 1994 to 2007) was leader of the Democratic Party and Democratic Alliance.*



While I found myself back in the arena alongside another former DA leader, Helen Zille, the terms of trade and political weather had changed considerably since my last immersion in the murky waters of politics. We were given less than two weeks from the declaration of the election results and election of the president to form the next government and provide the terms of participation. The first order of business from the DA side was to create an outline agreement setting the modus operandi for the next government and its composition. The most difficult policy decisions of the next government, from international affairs and alignments to economic policy, would await the new administration. However, the GNU agreement would define how decisions would be made and deadlocks would be broken. The key questions for the DA in the negotiations were: could we enter sensible power sharing arrangements? Would our participation in government for the first time ever prevent an even worse outcome of an ANC-MK-EFF tie up? And, could we square the circle of participating in power with a party – ANC – which on many issues was diametrically opposed to the core tenets of DA policy?

– the political equivalent of being half pregnant. Nixon, as I reminded our group, had to decide what sort of arms airlift to send to imperilled Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. There was serious disagreement among his cabinet members on how large or small the weapons supply should be. Nixon, according to his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, settled the matter decisively: “We’re going to be blamed as much for three planes as for 300. Send anything that flies.” The politics of half-measures is often an illusion, and voters will be perplexed that their party has lent its support to a government but has no effective way, or power, to influence its outcomes. The DA thus settled on pursuing a full-blown coalition, sharing executive office, as its preferred model for engagement. If both local voters and foreign investors recoiled at the prospects of lingering uncertainty over the next five years, how stable would governance here become if government limped along vote-by-vote in a Parliament where there was no governing majority? Our negotiations group noted with interest the performative posturing and bellicose rhetoric of wannabe ANC coalition partners. MK demanded the head of President Cyril Ramaphosa for the price of its support. The EFF, however, demanded – among other flights of fantasy – the ministry of finance for itself together with unstitching the entire Constitution and upending the economy, already flat on its back.

The first substantive declaration from the DA was not a demand for posts and unattainable concessions, but an agenda for co-operative governance. The DA’s framework contained the party bottom lines:

- The promotion and protection of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights “in its entirety”, which includes the property clause;
- The independence of the Reserve Bank;
- An independent and corruption free public service;
- A sustainable fiscal framework, including reducing the budget deficit to 3.5% or below within three years;
- Devolution of power; and
- The urgent implementation of the president’s

## NEW DEVELOPMENT

*in a brand new neighbourhood of Ra'anana*

EXPECTED DELIVERY 2027

**NEIGHBOURHOOD 100**  
Ra'anana  
From **NIS 4.2MIL**

20% secures the deal with the balance of 80% on delivery  
Full banking guarantee  
Delivery 2027

With over 25 years' experience, our bilingual team will guide you from finding the perfect buying opportunity to handling all the necessary paperwork, mortgages, money transfers, and negotiations.

**Ra'anana has been awarded the most beautiful city in Israel and is home to thousands of new immigrants from around the world.**

This new neighborhood “**Neighborhood 100**” offers a serene living experience for families looking for a modern lifestyle.

- The development consists of:**
- Two modern 7-story buildings
  - Overlooking a green park
  - One of the best locations in Ra'anana
  - Walking distance to Ahuza Street, synagogues, and schools.
  - 4-bedroom apartments fitted with premium finishes.
  - Each apartment comes with underground parking and a storage room.

## CONNECT

*Let's start a conversation.*



**JULIAN NATHAN**  
*Managing Director*

**NICCI RAZ**  
*Head of Marketing & Sales*

**Contact us:**  
✉ info@hold.co.il ☎ +972 58 631 9754  
Visit our website: [www.hold.co.il](http://www.hold.co.il)



SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL

Disclaimer - Specific apartments and prices are subject to availability, and advertised materials are as of the date of advertising. Prices and availability could change and vary from time to time without prior notice. We cannot guarantee a specific apartment or price without signing a registration form.



# Hell on wheels: Kfar Aza family plans next steps

PERSONAL STORY

RALPH LEWINSOHN

South African-born **Ralph Lewinsohn**, his wife, Barbara, and their family survived the hell that befell their beloved home on Kfar Aza on 7 October 2023, when it was attacked by Hamas terrorists, killing 10% of the kibbutz’s inhabitants and destroying everything they had. Eight months on, he writes of this earth shattering experience.



We’ve gone through several phases since then, the first being the most basic instinct of any human, the need to survive, stay alive, protect the family, have a roof over our heads, and take care of basic needs.

The next was to attempt to deal with the new reality – the loss of so many friends, children of friends, friends of my children, and grandchildren. Then to deal with having to abandon our homes and the tight-knit community we lived in.

Now, we’re attempting to plan some sort of future, which will begin in November, when we’ll move from our temporary accommodation in Ra’anana to a trailer park adjoining Kibbutz Ruhama in the south. We intend to be housed there for the next year or two until the conditions for going back to the rebuilt kibbutz have been met. The move will also enable the children to go back to school, which will reopen, and those who worked in the area to go back to their jobs, if they still exist. The idea is to try and start rebuilding the community and the support network it had.

My rough guess is that about 50% of the community will move there, with the intention of returning home to the kibbutz afterwards. There are others who don’t want to return, who are split within the family, too scared to go back, and others who cannot contemplate having to rebuild at the age of 70 to 80, and have moved to assisted living. One of the most important factors in the decision whether or not to return will be the level of security that exists so that such a massacre cannot occur again. There was always an unwritten covenant



Kibbutz Kfar Aza shortly after the 7 October 2023 attacks

between the state and those living on the border that we would live there and the army would look after our security.

That covenant has been destroyed. Then there are those who cannot live in a place where friends and family were murdered next door, or where every corner will be a reminder of the terrible events that happened there.

It was meant to be a stage of our lives, at 72, when we were planning our retirement, enjoying our kibbutz home, and nearby family. Instead, we’re having to deal with so much trauma, mourning, and rebuilding. Even the assumption that your home is an asset which can be sold and you can move elsewhere and settle down is no longer valid. Our homes won’t be marketable for many

Then there are those who cannot live in a place where friends and family were murdered next door, or where every corner will be a reminder of the terrible events that happened there.

years because there will be 50 to 100 homes available from the murdered families and those not returning.

The decision to go about our daily lives also raises the question of dissonance. Are we really allowed to do the things we enjoy when there are still 100 hostages in hell, sometimes

just three to four kilometres from our homes on the kibbutz? Why did we survive when our neighbours and friends were brutally murdered? How can we look friends in the eye when we are with our children and grandchildren and theirs are dead?

Our kibbutz management team is negotiating with the government about the funds that will be allocated for rebuilding destroyed infrastructure and houses, buildings, and facilities. There won’t be enough to cover everything, especially private houses that were totally destroyed, including the lifelong possessions in them.

Rebuilding the houses hasn’t started, as in many cases, there are heirs involved who have to agree how to proceed. Houses that were damaged and can be repaired have slowly been emptied of all remaining reusable items which have been put in storage so that the process of repair can take place.

I stay on the kibbutz one or two nights a week, giving tours to foreign groups who want to see what happened, a reality that cannot be fully understood without seeing the facts on the ground. Many of the visitors leave in shock, crying, because what they see is beyond their worst imagination, while still hearing the sounds of war, explosions, and machine-gun fire in the background from nearby Jebalia, Zeitun, Bet Lahiah, and Beit Hanoun in Gaza, just more than 2km away.

The whole of Israel is in mourning. We don’t know what the future holds for us, but one light that shines through the darkness is that we have friends around the world who support and care about us.

## Israel volunteers help others, heal themselves

LEE TANKLE

When 63-year-old Kyalami resident Penny Van A heard about the massacre in the south of Israel on 7 October, she felt compelled to go and help.

It led to her volunteering in Israel, finding opportunities through the Facebook page “Sword of Iron Israel Volunteer Opportunities”.

“I’m not Jewish, and I don’t have many Jewish friends. I don’t live in a Jewish community. The events of 7 October were just brutal. I couldn’t come to terms with what happened,” she said. “As I watched the world’s reaction, I got quite angry because it was so one-sided and uneducated.”

She was listening to a podcast where an Israeli woman urged people to come and see Israel for themselves, and this deeply affected Van A. She had been looking for something to do to escape the humdrum of her life in South Africa for a while. She struggled to find the perfect destination because she was looking for somewhere to get her hands dirty and interact with the community, so Israel seemed like the ideal time-out place.

As I watched the world's reaction, I got quite angry because it was so one-sided and uneducated.

Similarly, Lauren Dorfman, a primary school teacher originally from Cape Town who now lives in Melbourne, was also looking to volunteer in Israel from 6 until 27 June while in the country for a wedding.

“I decided to go to Israel to volunteer because my heart was aching. I thought that the best thing to do would be to give hands-on assistance as much as possible to help Israelis with what they were going through,” Dorfman said.

She also joined the Facebook group Sword of Iron to plan

her volunteering expedition.

As soon as she stepped off the plane on 6 June, Dorfman jumped straight into it with a group called Eran’s Angels in the Tel Aviv Convention Centre.

“They’ve converted a huge part of the car park of the convention centre into a big warehouse,” said Dorfman. “People bring in all kinds of donations for displaced people, soldiers, and anyone in need. People like me then come and sort and pack depending on what’s needed. I was busy sorting linens, finding duvet covers, bottom sheets, and pillowcases to match.”

“There’s lots and lots of donations flying in from around the world for displaced families and soldiers. Someone must manage all these things, and they do an incredible job there,” said Van A, who was in Israel from 15 May for two weeks.

“Each day, I decided what I was going to do,” said Van A. “There’s a lady called Mor who has a horse farm with 12 horses

that I volunteered at. She broke her leg and couldn’t take care of everything. So, I went to help with the horses, cleaning the stable, cleaning the horses, and various other things. I also worked at an animal shelter. There was one dog called Bookie that some Israel Defense Forces soldiers had found in Gaza. Bookie was very traumatised, and they brought her back to Israel. I spent most of that day just speaking to Bookie,” she said.

Dorfman volunteered at a vegan kosher restaurant called J17 in Tel Aviv.

“The guy who owns J17, Asaf, has been providing meals

for soldiers and Nova festival survivors,” said Dorfman.

“We drove to an army base in Rehovot and provided a vegan lunch for more than 200 soldiers,” she said. “They loved it. They were so grateful, and they wrote to Asaf afterwards saying how much it meant to them for us to be there. It gave them so much strength.”

Van A also spent some time talking to people at Hostages Square in Tel Aviv.

“It touched something so deep inside me that even now that I’m home, I think about it. To be able to sit with people who are hurting so badly but are prepared to share their stories was such a huge opportunity for me,” Van A said. “I live in a bubble inside my head. So, to sit with these people and talk to them was amazing. The astonishing thing was how grateful everybody was that I’d taken the time to go there. The gratitude still overwhelms me.”

Dorfman spent a whole day packing melons on a moshav near the Gaza border with Israel’s food bank *Leket*. The group was picked up in Tel Aviv early in the morning so they could spend the whole day packing.

“There were about 20 or 30 of us from all over the world. Everyone was motivated, and the guy said that he had never had such an amazing group of workers,” said Dorfman.

Said Van A, “To this day, I can’t tell you why I chose to go to Israel. I admire the women of Israel. They’re like me. They’re extremely strong. I was shown the strength of Israelis on this trip, and I hope others feel the same way.”





# Lost World War II letters finally reach home

TALI FEINBERG

A stack of letters, perfectly preserved for more than 80 years since World War II, have finally made their way home after an extraordinary connection made between two Johannesburg Jewish families living just two minutes apart. Twenty-four hours after a Facebook post written just before Shabbat, the letters were in the hands of the recipient’s daughter and granddaughter.

It all started when Heather Superfain, who lives in Johannesburg, was spring cleaning her home at the beginning of June. She came across the stack of letters, tied together with a brown army shoelace, that she had once found in an antique set of drawers that she bought on auction more than 20 years ago. During those two decades, she moved and downsized numerous times, and each time, the letters had come with her.



Heather Superfain and Sandra Ellis

“Every time, something told me not to throw them away,” says Superfain. “This time, they really were the only thing I still had that could have been thrown out.” Over the years, she had tried to find the family of the author and recipients of the letters, but had no luck.

Now, however, she had the power of social media at her fingertips, and spontaneously penned a post on the Facebook group Joburg Jewish Mommies asking if anyone was related to Philip Brom, the fact that he served in the British army in the 1940s, and that she had old letters of his.

As it was close to Shabbos, Superfain thought few people would see the post. But, nearby in Johannesburg, someone did. “My late grandfather was Philip Blom, not Brom. He was in the British army during World War II. Just checking it’s Brom, not Blom?” responded Jackie Raff.



The letters, perfectly preserved since World War II, tied with an army shoelace

Superfain realised she had made a mistake, and that the letters were indeed written to Philip Blom. At this point, both women felt excited knowing that this was a real connection. With a simple Facebook post, they had brought the letters home.

“I’m emigrating at the end of July to America,” Raff says. “I’ve been feeling emotional and worrying if I’m making the right decision. I was extremely close to my late grandfather, Philip, whom I called ‘oupa’, as he was Dutch. My oupa, or ‘pups’, and I travelled to America together when I was seven years old. He died shortly after that trip. So, at this big change in my life, I’ve been

looking for a sign. Out of the blue, I saw the post. Having the letters is a huge source of comfort. It felt like he was sending me a message that he was still with me and I was doing the right thing.”

“My mind was reeling,” says Superfain. “I thought, ‘How can this be?’ His granddaughter responded so quickly, knowing his story. I knew it was definitely him.



Philip Blom during World War II

This shows how we’re all connected.”

In fact, the families had other connections. Raff’s sister, Karen Fait, a teacher, taught Superfain’s younger daughter many years ago. “And then my older daughter became a teacher and taught with Karen,” says Superfain.

The letters were written between 1943 and 1945 by Blom’s parents, Jules and Julia Blom, to their son when he was stationed in London during World War II as a sergeant major in the medical corps of the Dutch army. Julia wrote in English as she was British, and Jules wrote in Dutch as he was from Amsterdam.

Raff’s mother, Sandra Ellis, says she felt like “this was something from the movies” when her daughter told her the news. “As soon as I saw the letters, I recognised my grandmother’s handwriting,” says Ellis. “It’s been an emotional rollercoaster. Essentially, the letters are typical Jewish parents checking on their son.”

“Philip was born in Amsterdam on 14 May 1916, and died on 13 June 1981. We just marked his *yahrzeit*, which makes finding these letters so special,” says Raff.

“My oupa’s sister, Sarah, was on a ship coming to South Africa during the war. The ship was torpedoed and she was killed. Julia writes about their hope that Sarah is still alive.” Then, in one letter, dated 3 March 1944, Julia writes about her daughter, saying, “I can’t believe I will never see her again.”

Amidst this tragedy, “my grandfather went back to Holland, his home, after the war to check if there were any family members that the Nazis didn’t murder. Remarkably, through the underground, he found out about a cousin of his that had survived. She was a teenager that had been hidden during the war. Her parents were murdered. Her name was Bertie. My oupa found Bertie, brought her from Holland to London and then to South Africa. His parents adopted

Bertie.”

Within the letters, Raff found the authorisation that her grandfather had obtained from the Dutch army to bring Bertie on an army plane to South Africa in 1945. “Bertie’s experience was like an Anne Frank story,” says Ellis. “She was hidden by nuns. Her story was recorded by Steven Spielberg’s foundation.

“So, my grandparents lost a daughter and gained a daughter,” says Ellis. After the war, her father met her mother in South Africa, and she and her brother were born. All have since died, so Ellis feels a special responsibility to carry on the family story, and the letters

bring that history to the present.

“I even recognise names in the letters of people I met as a young child, all in the diamond industry,” she says. “Back then, people were formal, so they signed the letters ‘Ma and Pa Blom.’”

“My oupa’s family had all been diamond cutters or dealers in Amsterdam since the 16th century,” says Raff. “My dad, Michael Ellis, continues this tradition, as did my mom’s late brother, Alan.”

As soon as they made the connection, the two families arranged to meet on the morning of Sunday, 9 June. But Ellis, Raff, and their families were so excited that eventually, they went to Superfain – who lives just two minutes away – on the evening of Saturday, 8 June, as soon as Shabbos came out.

“It felt like a Shabbat of miracles in light of the rescue of Israeli hostages on the same day,” says Ellis. “We’re so grateful to Heather. She gave our family exactly what we needed at exactly the right time.”

The two families will stay in close contact.

As for what she’ll do with the letters, Raff says, “I’m reading through them and making notes. I’m going to scan them to send to my sister who lives in London and share with cousins. I was thinking of researching the history. I may look into finding Bertie – she married, had children, and lives in America. One day, I would like to share my grandfather’s story and these letters with others from a historical perspective. At the moment, we’re just enjoying the connection to my grandfather. It’s a gift, a miracle, and a blessing!”



**NORWOOD**  
AT YOUR SERVICE!

**CALL**  
**011 483 0474**  
CNR GRANT AVE AND  
NELLIE ROAD



**RIGHT TYRES  
RIGHT PRODUCTS  
RIGHT PRICE**

**WAS SUPA QUICK,  
NOW TYREMART...**

SAME MANAGEMENT & STAFF, BUT  
FULLY REVAMPED FOR AN EVEN  
BETTER SALES & SERVICE EXPERIENCE

SERVICES • ALL REPAIRS • AIRCON RE-GAS  
TYRES • BATTERIES • BRAKES  
EXHAUSTS • SHOCKS • SUSPENSION

## Mashgiach/ Mashgichot

### Old Aged Home Kosher Kitchen in Pretoria, South Africa Full-time Position

Our old aged home in Pretoria is dedicated to providing high-quality care and services to our residents, including nutritious and strictly kosher meals.

We are seeking a dedicated and experienced Mashgiach to oversee our kosher kitchen and ensure the highest standards of kashrut are maintained from the 1st of August 2024.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Supervise the preparation and cooking of all meals to ensure they comply with kosher dietary laws.
- Inspect incoming food supplies to verify their kosher status.
- Monitor kitchen practices to ensure cleanliness and adherence to kashrut standards.
- Collaborate with kitchen staff to maintain a kosher environment and educate them on kashrut laws and practices.
- Ensure proper separation of meat and dairy products and utensils.
- Report any kashrut violations and take immediate corrective actions.
- Maintain detailed records of food purchases, preparation, and any kashrut-related issues.
- Liaise with the overseeing Rabbi or Kashrut authority as needed.

**Qualifications:**

- Previous experience as a Mashgiach in a kosher kitchen or similar environment.
- Comprehensive knowledge of Jewish dietary laws (kashrut).
- Certification from a recognized kashrut authority is highly desirable.
- Strong attention to detail and the ability to enforce strict guidelines.
- Excellent communication and teamwork skills.
- Ability to work flexible hours, including weekends and holidays.

**Benefits:**

- Competitive salary based on experience.
- Accommodation close to the facilities (must be willing to relocate).
- Supportive and respectful work environment.
- Opportunities for professional development and growth.
- Contribution to a meaningful cause by ensuring the dietary needs of our residents are met.

**How to Apply:**

Interested candidates are invited to submit their resume and a cover letter detailing their experience and qualifications to [admin1@jaffa.org.za](mailto:admin1@jaffa.org.za) with the subject line “Mashgiach Application – [Your Name]”.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

**Closing Date for Applications: 28 June 2024**



# Tornado trio defies death in Drakensberg

TALI FEINBERG

Stuck in one of the worst storms the Drakensberg has ever seen, influencer and photographer Chad Nathan (31) said the *Shema* on a hike in early June, and suggested that he and his fellow hikers write letters to their families in case they didn't survive. An avid traveller, adventurer, and daredevil, Nathan has been in many harrowing situations, but this one was probably the first where he wasn't sure if he was going to make it.



Photos: Chad Nathan

Thanks to the advice of two hikers they encountered on the mountain before the storm hit, Nathan, his brother-in-law, Kevin Harrisberg (38), and his friend, Elan Schneider (28), managed to erect their tent inside a stone hut, which probably saved their lives.

"The hut was built around 1930 for travellers and shepherds on the mountain to shelter in if needed," says Nathan. Ninety-four years after it was built, Nathan watched the corrugated iron roof blow off the hut in gale-force winds, leaving them exposed to the worst of the elements, including icy temperatures, snow, and hail. Not only that, but the heavy rocks they had heaved onto the roof in the middle of the storm to try stop it blowing away began to fly in all directions, including at them.

They survived the falling rocks, but it was at that point that they realised they might not survive without proper shelter. They had to make the difficult decision about what to do next – try to wait out the storm where they were, or hike through it to safety. Both options were hugely risky, especially because after calling for rescue, "we were told no-one was coming," says Nathan.

It all started when Harrisberg suggested that he

and Nathan take a trip to the Drakensberg, and Nathan asked Schneider to join. Though Nathan had been to the Drakensberg before, Harrisberg and Schneider hadn't.

Having worked with Cape Union Mart, Nathan asked if the company would sponsor their gear, which Nathan would also photograph in use on the mountain. The company agreed, and it was probably because they were so well-kitted out that Nathan and his crew managed the dangerous weather they encountered.

"I said that if we wanted the real Drakensberg experience, we needed to camp and carry our own tents and supplies," says Nathan. "We planned a route along the northern traverse, rated by National Geographic as one of the top 10 hikes in the world. It would be a 75km long, five-day hike. We would leave early on Friday morning, 31 May. Before we left, we realised we didn't have all the right tops for our gas canisters, and could take only one gas canister, but we figured we would be fine." In the end, more gas would have helped them stay warmer for longer.

"We saw that the weather might not be great on the fourth day, but we had good gear and the Drakensberg is a big place, so it was difficult to tell if it

would hit us," Nathan says.

They set off from the Sentinel Hotel car park and hiked the 6km to Tugela Falls, the highest waterfall in the world. "We got to our first stop, and it was 18:00 and pitch dark. We met a man, Etienne, who told us a big snowstorm was coming and to leave the mountain. We didn't think it would be that bad, and wanted to continue. In daylight, he pointed to a hut 500m away and said, 'Go to that hut, it will save your lives when the storm hits.'"

The trio continued their hike, saw breathtaking views, and took incredible videos and photographs. "We met another man, James, who also said there was a storm rolling in. He advised finding a cave to sleep in or to head back. At that point, the weather was still beautiful and we thought, 'How bad can it be?'" says Nathan. They set up camp, and it was very cold at night, but they remained in high spirits.

"On day three, we woke up to the most beautiful sunrise I've ever seen," says Nathan, who has seen many sunrises all over the world. Yet, as the day and their hike continued, the mist rolled in. "It was eerie and ominous. We decided we would turn around, head back to the

hut, shelter there for the night, and then head home on day four, cutting our hike a day short," recalls Nathan.

In the end, they made it to the hut just in time, as snow, hail, sleet, and cold hit them with full force. They remained positive, joking about their "Airbnb" accommodation, playing in the snow, and setting up their tent in the hut.

"We had a really amazing sleep as we were so sheltered," he says. However, "at 06:00, we were woken by the sound of the corrugated iron roof flapping and Elan screaming for us to help him keep it down," says Nathan. "It was so dark and stormy that I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. We were in 60km gusts, and we had to protect our shelter. If you've got no shelter, you've got nothing."

They began to heave 20kg rocks onto the roof. "At this point, I was scared," says Nathan. "You can only get one bar of signal on the mountain, and we decided we had to try call for help." They spread out, within sight of each other and the hut, to make calls. "We spent about 30 minutes out in the elements, trying to make phone calls, but in the end, we realised no-one was coming."

They huddled together, realising the situation was serious. "Your survival instincts kick in. We decided to pack up our stuff and each pack a small bag with essentials," says Nathan. "For me, that included my camera! We put more rocks on the roof. As we were



Navigating through the Drakensberg mountain range

huddled, we heard a roar like an earthquake and the roof blew off, with 20kg rocks flying at us. I just screamed, 'Brace!'"

Miraculously, they were uninjured, but realised it wasn't safe to be there anymore. They had to make a decision, and Nathan's instinct was to stay put. However, knowing they couldn't split up, he agreed to go with the others to try reach safety. "It was [a case of] no man left behind," he says. Between them and the Sentinel Hotel were 15m and 45m-long ladders that they would have to descend in the worst weather. Leaving most of their stuff in the hut, they set out.

It was then that they experienced a miracle. Two men, Joseph and Walter, who lived on the mountain had heard about their SOS, and came to find them. They guided the trio to safety, including advising which side of the ladders to take. "I've never felt hail and wind like when I was going down the ladders," says Nathan, who managed to shoot a short video while he was descending.

After the ladders, it was a further two-hour walk to the hotel. With hugs, tears, cheers, food, and drink, the trio celebrated their survival and thanked their rescuers, who even went back later to get their possessions from the hut. "Unbelievably, after we got back, we saw people leaving to go on a hike. We advised them not to, but they went ahead!" says Nathan.

The trio feel exhilarated and grateful to have survived. "We can't stop talking about what happened," says Nathan. "It was life-threatening and life-changing. I've learned to listen to those who know the terrain better than you. The mountains humble you, and you have to respect them."

## South African scores British title with Twinning Project

NICOLA MILTZ

It's not often that a Jewish South African *boyjie* is awarded an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) by King Charles III.

Hilton Freund, 55, who grew up in Johannesburg, has been recognised for helping thousands of prison inmates through a charity initiative called the Twinning Project. It helps reduce reoffending through sport by twinning prisons with their local football team.

"Not bad for someone from Sandown High School," said a proud Freund this week who, in spite of living in the United Kingdom for 30 years, still has very strong ties to South Africa.

An MBE is given for an outstanding achievement or service to the community which has had a long-term, significant impact.

As chief executive officer of the Twinning Project, Freund has touched many lives and helped hundreds of former inmates reintegrate into society.

"Sport is a catalyst for change and the Twinning Project works to reduce reoffending rates by harnessing the power of football and other sports to engage with people in custody and unlock opportunities for future employment in local communities upon release from prison," he said.

Since launching in London in 2018, the Twinning Project has delivered hundreds of coaching and refereeing courses in men's, women's, and young offenders' prisons.

"If you had asked me when I was a student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown if I knew about

football administration, the criminal justice system, or had any real charity experience, the answer would have been a definite no," said Freund, who interacts regularly with special advisors to British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on matters concerning prisoners and their release.

"I always loved football, but that's where it stopped," he said.

In the United Kingdom, more than 70 Premier League and English Football League clubs engage with the Twinning Project and pair with their local prisons to deliver coaching, stewarding, lifestyle skills, and other employable qualifications to prisoners to help them prepare for release.

The Twinning Project was founded by British businessman David Dein, MBE, known for being a former co-owner of Arsenal Football Club and the founder of the Premier League. He approached Freund with the idea.

"We had no idea where it would lead us," said Freund, not knowing then that the initiative would have an impact on so many lives, using the power of football to bring hope, skills, and new opportunities for people after they finish their sentences.

"I find the graduation ceremonies quite emotional," said Freund, recalling many instances where former prisoners have come up to him saying how the project had changed their lives.

"One guy who served time for drug dealing at HMP Wormwood Scrubs is now a community coach for Queens Park Rangers. Another guy who served time in HMP Lincoln is working for Lincoln City Football Club in the finance department. There are

many moving stories, and it feels good to have played a small part," he said.

The Twinning Project aims to engage about 48 prisoners per year at many of the 119 prisons in England and Wales in football-based programmes to improve their mental and physical health.



Hilton Freund MBE outside 10 Downing Street

"The participants can also obtain a qualification that will improve their life chances including by helping them to gain employment on release and in turn reduce the likelihood they will reoffend," said

Freund.

Said Dein, "Hilton has served as chief executive since its launch and has been instrumental in growing and expanding the Twinning Project across the United Kingdom as well as to the United States, and to Italy, South Africa, and Australia in partnership with the FIFA Foundation."

Freund brought the Twinning Project to South Africa earlier this year.

South Africa's Department of Correctional Services and the football club SuperSport United teamed up, with funding from the FIFA Foundation, to launch the Twinning Project at Kgosi Mampuru II Management Area for 48 prisoners from March 2024. Two further prisons in South Africa will benefit from Twinning Project programming in 2024, with Kaiser Chiefs FC and Cape Town City preparing to start offering Twinning Project provision.

The honours list comes out twice a year – once at New Year and a second time for the King's official birthday. The honours are awarded based on merit or on exceptional achievement or service, and have been given out by monarchs since at least 1348.

"Winning this award as an immigrant is the pinnacle of my career," Freund told the *SA Jewish Report*.

"My family is very proud. For my two daughters, it's an opportunity to go shopping for a new outfit, and for my wife, Lee, who went to Carmel High School in Pretoria, it's a great excuse to buy a hat for our family visit to Buckingham Palace later this year."



# Stop sweeping addiction under carpet, say recovering addicts

ELKA COHEN

Brian, 47, describes himself as a “grateful alcoholic”. He has been sober for 18 months, and considers himself a *frum* Jew.

“Mine was a steady decline from the great heights of success to abject failure in which I eventually faced two choices – one was intolerable, the other was recovery,” he says.

A successful businessman, husband, and father, Brian (not his real name) describes his life growing up in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg as “easy”.

“I was born into a traditional dysfunctional family. My parents were affluent. They were in the hotel and restaurant business, so alcohol was a common feature. We grew up in a warm, open household with an abundance of everything. My dad was a loving and kind man when sober, and an abusive drunk when not. My mom drank more than her fair share to cope.”

When Brian’s father passed away in 2021, he returned to South Africa from Los Angeles.

“I drank moderately in Los Angeles, mostly on any day that ended in a ‘y’. I had all the characteristics of an alcoholic, but still I didn’t believe I was one. To the outside world, I was financially successful, good-looking, a husband, and the father of four amazing children. I became desperate to be the person everyone saw. Alcohol abuse was coupled with my inability to tell the truth. Lying was the oxygen of my addiction. I never intended to hurt anyone, but it took a lot of lying to keep up my façade. I lied to everyone, including myself.”

In “having it all”, Brian felt lonely and unfulfilled, and his yearning kept growing, eventually taking him down some dark paths.

Brian recalls his addiction councillor telling him that if there were a pill to cure addiction, addicts would want to see what would happen if they took two.

“My faith has been a pillar of my recovery. In my opinion, Bill Wilson, the author of the 12-Step programme, plagiarised all his ideas from Jewish mysticism and ethics,” he jokes.

“Many addicts prefer to take the easy route, clinging to sobriety for brief periods, believing they can do it on their own, that they have it all figured out, that they’re the ones in control. This is called ‘the white-knuckle approach’ in recovery circles. But recovery is unattainable if you try and control it. Real recovery involved a radical transformation of my character, but above all, it required a more meaningful relationship with G-d.”

Lara B has worked as an addiction-recovery counsellor in Johannesburg for the past five



years. She’s a 52-year-old mother of five, soon to celebrate a decade of sobriety.

“I always thought of addicts as ‘junkies’, the kind you find strung out on a park bench drinking alcohol from a brown paper bag or with a needle sticking out of their arm. But I quickly learnt that addiction doesn’t discriminate, there are many addicts just like me that live within our tight-knit and sheltered community.”

Lara says the biggest problem in dealing with addiction in the Jewish community is denial.

“While the addict denies they have a problem, the family remains stuck in its own denial by enabling their loved one or making excuses for their behaviour. I have seen the ugly claws of addiction rip families apart, leaving marriages and relationships in ruins.

“Addiction is a family disease and in spite of what many may think, it’s not only the addict who suffers. But stigma and fear of judgement often get in the way of seeking help.

“Only 3% of addicts recover,” says Lara, “which is why it’s vital to be open-minded and vocal about it. Addicts who really want recovery will seek it out and do the work, but it’s up to

us as a community to offer a more educated, inviting, and nurturing environment in which to reach out.”

Alan Freeman, the director of Freeman House Recovery, says when he initially opened his rehabilitation facility in 2022, 40% to 50% of his clients were Jewish.

Alan was the previous owner of many popular bars and nightclubs in Johannesburg. “My identity was based on drugs and alcohol until I was drinking three bottles of alcohol a day, hadn’t eaten properly for six months, weighed nothing, and was experiencing an early onset of dementia of sorts,” he says. Today he’s grateful to have been given the opportunity to turn his mess into a message.

“Many rabbis and a lot of men from our *frum* community have been here for treatment for addictions from alcohol and illegal street drugs to prescription dependency, gambling, and sex addiction.”

Pointing out that “alcohol plays a big part in our Jewish world”, from Shabbos to simchas, Alan says the community shouldn’t sweep the problem under the carpet. *Rabbonim* need to be better educated to spot the early signs of

struggling members in their community, be it the alcoholic at the shul *brocha* there for the free booze, or a struggling youngster who is too scared to speak up. Rebbetzins, too, need to be unafraid to ask the right questions of women in their *shiurim*. It shouldn’t be taboo to address the issue if a marriage may be suffering. There are always signs. They are simply not being addressed strongly enough by our spiritual leaders.

In more secular communities, it’s up to parents, school principals, and teachers to create conversations about underage access to alcohol and marijuana among their children, he says.

Recovering addict, Mark (not his real name), 49, admits, “I drank more than was available at most functions. I drank the plane dry on my way to business conferences. I’ve had to bury six friends and my own sister.” Mark has been sober for eight years, but when he found himself in the intensive-care unit of Linksfield Clinic with failing kidneys, a swollen liver, and pancreatitis, he had hit rock bottom.

Mark describes addiction as a cunning, baffling, and powerful disease.

“It doesn’t care about your age, race, or religion. It doesn’t care who you are, who you know, how rich or successful you are. The power of this disease is its raw insanity in expecting a different result while carrying out the same actions over and over again.

“A major fear among addicts in our Jewish community is in admitting that we’re spiritually defunct,” says Mark.

In facing this fear, he says, “I could finally put my big bag of resentment down and take the time to find out who I really was.”

Alan says asking for help is the bravest thing a person can do.

## Chief calls for government led ‘by highest ideals’

>>Continued from page 1

fight with the British against Hitler as if there were no white paper, and we’ll fight the white paper as if there was no war.’

“Like Ben Gurion,” Goldstein said, “we must embrace the contradiction: supporting the GNU’s efforts to uplift the lives of 60 million South Africans while vocally, vehemently opposing the South African government’s stance on Israel.

“And so, holding all these aspirations in my heart – willing the new government to succeed, while staying loyal to our precious values – I went to the Union Buildings to the presidential inauguration, to pray to G-d to bless the government of national unity with success.”

The rabbi’s prayer had many references to Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, and included the eternal words that G-d instructed Moses to tell the children of Israel when they were about to cross the Jordan River to enter the promised land more than 3 300 years ago. These were, “I call on heaven and earth to give testimony today that I have placed before you life and death, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life in order that you and your children may live, to love the

Lord your G-d, to listen to His voice, and to cleave to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days, to dwell upon the land that G-d has promised to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob to give to them.”

Ramaphosa took the oath of office and was sworn in by Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, saying, “I make a solemn commitment to be a president for all South Africans.

“In our brilliant diversity, we gather to affirm our solemn conviction that this country belongs to all who live in it, as articulated in the Freedom Charter almost 70 years ago,” he said.

“We must reject every attempt to divide or distract us, to sow doubt or cynicism, or to turn us against one another. Those who seek to stand in our way, those who seek to inflame tensions, will not succeed, because South Africans are resolute.”

His inauguration heralds a government comprising of the ANC, the Democratic Alliance, the Inkatha Freedom Party, Patriotic Alliance, Pan African Congress, and Good. The collective holds 274 of the 400 seats in the National Assembly or 68% of the seats.



IT’S A GOOD LIFE!

## WILLOWBROOK RETIREMENT VILLAGE

 134 Willowbrook Place, Sandown

ON SHOW

26 June 2024 11:00am

by appointment only

Embrace your stress-free retirement living journey!

Enjoy a *hotel-style* retirement living experience where the levy covers all essentials for a luxurious lifestyle. This includes daily nutritious meals, personalised attention, assistance with daily tasks, and much more.

Bid farewell to stress and welcome tranquility!



### FLOWER FOUNDATION

Retirement Homes

Est 1963  
NPO 000-836

#### LIFE RIGHT PURCHASE

FROM AS LITTLE AS **R450,000**

#### RENTALS

ALL INCLUSIVE AVAILABLE FROM **R20,000**

#### CONTACT US

 011 781 4920

 [info@flower.org.za](mailto:info@flower.org.za)

 [www.flower.org.za](http://www.flower.org.za)





# Why ICJ couldn’t order a ceasefire on Israel

LEE TANKLE

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) couldn’t order a ceasefire in Israel’s war on Hamas because it would be binding only on Israel, but Israel isn’t fighting in a vacuum, Dr Mispa Roux, an expert in international criminal and human rights law told the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre recently.

Roux, an education and research specialist in the fields of international criminal, human rights, and humanitarian law recently told the audience, “It would be extremely problematic if the ICJ had to order a ceasefire in Gaza. The ICJ makes binding decisions only against parties in front of the court. In other words, states that are party to that dispute. In this case, it’s South Africa versus Israel.”

Roux is a senior lecturer at the law faculty at the University of Johannesburg and project co-ordinator at the University of Pretoria’s Centre for Human Rights. “Judging by the three provisional measures that the ICJ has issued so far after South Africa asked for a ceasefire in Gaza, in which [the court] didn’t order a ceasefire, it indicates to me that the war in Israel is a justified war.

“It didn’t come out of nowhere. There was provocation – 7 October,” she said. Roux researches the early warning signs and indicators of genocide and crimes against humanity. In particular, she focuses on the prevention and prosecution thereof, and the question of state responsibility for these crimes and methods that may achieve justice for victims of international crimes.

“If there was a ceasefire ordered, only Israel would have had to lay down its arms. Hamas would then be able to continue as normal,” she said. “And at the ICJ, a group like Hamas, a non-state actor, is mostly viewed as a terrorist organisation. It won’t be able to appear at the ICJ. So, it will never be ordered to cease fire.”

Regarding the term “genocide” bandied about in relation to Israel’s war on Hamas, it links back to the Holocaust and what was done to the Jewish people during World War II, Roux said.

Genocide is “an internationally recognised crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group”, she said.

However, “The atrocities of the Holocaust and the genocide that was committed by the Nazis during World War II weren’t prosecuted as genocide. They were prosecuted as crimes against humanity because at the time, there wasn’t a word for it yet.”

The crimes against humanity that the Nazis were prosecuted for in the Nuremberg Trial were murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian group. This definition also covers any kind of persecution of a group of people on political, racial, or religious grounds.

“Gender-based violence and sexual crimes by the Nazis weren’t mentioned at Nuremberg. Nowadays, these are elements of the definition of crimes against humanity,” she said.

Today, Roux said, for something to be classified as genocide, the acts committed must fall into five categories. First, killing members of a group; second, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the same group; third, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part and/or imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group.

Roux said the watershed moment for international law to deal with crimes against humanity was World War II.

At the Nuremberg tribunal in August 1945, three criminal charges were laid: crimes against peace, which means waging a war which doesn’t have a reason or justification; war crimes; and crimes against humanity.

“In its shortest, simplest form, war crimes are violations of laws or customs of war,” Roux said. “This can be anything from using improper weapons, plundering cultural properties or religious buildings, or murdering hostages and ill-treating prisoners of war. It’s any devastation not justified by military necessity.”

Because of World War II and the atrocities that occurred in that period, the United Nations recognised that there needed to be a permanent place to hold people for such international crimes responsible, she said. From there, “ad-hoc tribunals” were set up



in many parts of the world that aimed to hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable, in particular in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia tribunals were set up to investigate the atrocities committed on state and individual level.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) was set up to have jurisdiction over any international crime happening in any of its 124 member states. “The jurisdiction of the ICC is genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes against peace,” Roux said.

She said there were only 17 cases currently before the ICC, and 10 out of those 17 involved the African continent. “The majority of these

cases are only dealing with three of the four international crimes – crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes against peace.”

The ICC has only one arrest warrant for the crime of genocide – issued to former Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir concerning crimes against the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa ethnic groups.

Up until the 1990s, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) heard disputes only between states – such as maritime or trade disputes or how diplomats should be treated.

“All of a sudden after the war in the Balkans – otherwise known as the Yugoslav wars from 1991 to 2001 – we started to see states starting

to hold other states accountable for committing international crimes,” Roux said.

She said the ICJ’s jurisdiction is for state responsibility for breaches of international law.

There are presently eight cases before the ICJ dealing with international crimes. All of these cases include allegations of genocide, including South Africa’s accusations against Israel.

When asked what the point of these international cases was, Roux said, “We can’t have a defeatist attitude when it comes to crime, especially international crime. The wheels of justice move incredibly slowly, but they do turn, and people are brought to justice.”

## Taylor Swift’s silence on Gaza war speaks volumes

SHIRA LI BARTOV – JTA

Taylor Swift’s detachment from contentious global conflicts is a hallmark of her superstardom. For some fans in Israel, it’s also a selling point.

Michal Paz-Klapp, the young adult editor at Israel’s prominent Modan Publishing House, snatched the opportunity to publish a Hebrew-language edition of *Who Is Taylor Swift?*, by Kirsten Anderson. The United States (US) children’s book came out in April as part of Penguin Workshop’s bestselling *Who Was?* and *Who Is?* series, a range of illustrated biographies chronicling public figures from Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Confucius.

The Hebrew version of *Who Is Taylor Swift?* hit Israeli bookstores last week, making it the book’s first international edition.

don’t know if she supports Israel, actively – but she’s not against Israel, and this is really important for the Israeli crowd, I think,” Paz-Klapp told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Other fans around the world have denounced the pop star’s silence. Thousands flooded X with the hashtag #SwiftiesForPalestine in May, demanding that she take a stand after Israel struck the southern Gaza city of Rafah and set a refugee camp aflame. Some fans have attended her worldwide Eras Tour with Palestinian flags and signs reading, “Speak Now!” a reference to her 2010 hit album.

Swift was also among hundreds of celebrities targeted by a social media campaign called “Blockout 2024”, aimed at blocking artists and influencers who haven’t made public statements in support of Gaza. Selena Gomez, Drake, Justin Bieber, Zendaya, and the Kardashian family were other household names on the “digital-guillotine” lists.

petitioned Swift to intervene on her behalf last year, before Eshel’s death was confirmed.

“When Swifties go to shows, they make bracelets and give them to other fans from all over the world,” said Paz-Klapp. “So in Israel, they prepared Roni Eshel bracelets and they have given them to other fans.”

Swift hasn’t performed in Israel. Its small size and geographic isolation mean relatively few top acts make it a stop on their tours. But Israeli fans have been flying to Europe for her shows there, with a Facebook group just for ticket resales and travel co-ordination drawing nearly 4 000 participants.

Shira Ben-Choreen Schneck is a bookkeeper at The Deborah Harris Agency, the Jerusalem-based literary agency that secured the deal to publish *Who Is Taylor Swift?* at Modan Publishing House. She urged the agency’s foreign rights director to accept the book, sharing her own family’s affinity for Swift. Her three daughters – aged 14, 12, and 9 – are all fans.

Schneck lives in Armon Hanatziv, also known as East Talpiot, a Jerusalem neighbourhood located on land Israel captured in the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed. Israel views the entire city as part of its sovereign territory, though Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as their capital.

According to Schneck, her family enjoyed a sense of camaraderie with their Arab neighbours before 7 October. Then, tensions rose in the neighbourhood. Her children have had rocks thrown at them and a car following them on the street. Schneck’s 12-year-old daughter was particularly affected, and found refuge in Swift’s 20-year discography.

“She basically wouldn’t really leave the house, up until February,” Schneck told JTA. “She insisted on being picked up, she wouldn’t take buses, she just was so shaken by everything that happened. She ended up doing art therapy for it. But for all my kids, it was just kind of great to have a place to escape, and I feel [Swift’s] music definitely contributed to that.”

Schneck’s children already have both the English and Hebrew editions of *Who Is Taylor Swift?* at home. Her 12-year-old approved the book in a message to JTA, although her knowledge of the pop star outpaced its material.

“The Taylor Swift book was very interesting,” she said. “It had a lot of facts about her. As a Swiftie, I knew most of them.”



While Swift’s popularity knows no borders, one non-musical choice has recently added to her appeal in Israel, said Paz-Klapp – her abstention from speaking about the Israel-Hamas war. Her Israeli listeners are well-aware of their growing isolation on the world stage as public opinion turns against Israel’s eight-month-long war, which has ravaged Gaza with a humanitarian crisis and a death toll of more than 37 000. Simply saying nothing about it has won Swift points with Israeli fans, many of whom view her music as an escape from the trauma of the 7 October Hamas attacks that launched the war and the surging global censure of Israel.

“Part of the love that Taylor is receiving is that she’s – I

But while abortion rights and matters concerning the LGBTQ community may divide the US electorate, they are less contentious within Swift’s fan base, which skews toward Democratic, millennial and Gen Z white women. The Israel-Hamas war is a more divisive issue among young liberal-leaning voters.

Swift’s avoidance of the subject has allowed Israelis to assign their own meanings to her music. *Bigger Than the Whole Sky*, a song from Swift’s 2022 *Midnights* album about saying goodbye to someone, has become an anthem for the friends of Roni Eshel, a 19-year-old Israeli soldier and fan of Swift who was killed by Hamas on 7 October. Eshel’s friends



# Paradise and peril: *Wild Zambezi* on the big screen

**Daron Chatz’s** four-part wildlife docuseries *Wild Zambezi* opened this month at Ster-Kinekor in celebration of World Wildlife Month. Chatz, who directed the series, gives us an insight into its magic.

**What was the inspiration for *Wild Zambezi*?**

The project was initiated by my co-director, Grace Harrison, and inspired by our collective interest in telling compelling and entertaining stories that mean something.

In this instance, we were drawing attention to the question, “Are we truly going to protect the world’s last pristine nature strongholds, or are we going to make decisions that will be devastating to our precious planet?”

We were inspired to communicate how important it is to make a stand and set a precedent.

**What do you hope to achieve?**

As film makers and story tellers, the *Wild Zambezi* project was about taking the audience on an adventure to fall in love and reconnect with nature. After all, we’re all part of nature and the global ecosystem that gives us all life.

The threats that we’re facing on this planet are real.

As film makers, we’re compelled to tell our story from diverse perspectives and allow people to choose their options. Hopefully we inspire people along the way.

**It’s unusual to have a documentary series at Ster-Kinekor. How did that come about?**

It’s indeed a unique situation that came about by out-of-the-box thinking and the open attitude of Ster-Kinekor. We’re grateful to it for embracing this opportunity and giving us the platform to premiere our show on the big screen during environmental month at a reduced rate to make it more accessible to people.

This is an exciting step for cinema in South Africa, and cinema is such an important entertainment platform. Perhaps there’s scope to expand our relationship with it? A meaningful partnership indeed.

We’re now talking to various channels and platforms and seeking opportunities to release the series as soon as possible and share it with the world. Our intention is to access a wide global audience.

**What went into creating this series?**

*Wild Zambezi* began with an in-depth research process that included an initial trip to Zambia to start engaging with our characters and to film interviews. We then made some important narrative decisions based on this process.



Screengrabs from an episode of *Wild Zambezi*



Daron Chatz

We then returned to Zambia on another two occasions to complete three months of filming in total. On the last leg of the trip, we used larger cinema cameras, specialised lenses and camera rigs, and focused on the wildlife, nature, and Lower Zambezi National Park as a character. It was a spectacular experience.

We had an amazing crew and a support team in South Africa and Zambia. We couldn’t have done this without them.

You’ve done everything from stills photography, design, advertising/commercials, and other creative forms of work. What drew you to this format?

I’ve been a photographer and film maker for about 35 years, and have worked on a wide variety of projects and categories. For most of my career, I’ve done advertising, editorial, and catalogue work on the stills side, and short-form film such as TV commercials on the film side.

I love all forms of visual storytelling, and both photography and film. It has been my dream to make feature films and documentaries for most of my life, and I’m stepping into this reality. I’m extremely grateful for the opportunity.

**What were the most difficult moments in creating *Wild Zambezi* and the most rewarding?**

Mid-summer in the bush isn’t easy. It was so hot, our computers weren’t functioning properly and we resorted to wearing wet kikoi’s over our heads and bodies in order to cool things down a bit. This was by far the most challenging part of the project.

Seeing people watch our series is rewarding enough, but listening to their feedback afterwards

and the world around me, and am humbled and grateful at the opportunities I’ve been given to share my talents with the world.

**How would you describe *Wild Zambezi*?**

It’s a story about a precious place called the Lower Zambezi National Park and the threats it’s facing. We need to protect our last remaining pristine nature strongholds on the planet, on land and in our oceans, while we still can.

This series is about a courageous man, a conservationist that has risked everything. It’s also about the commitment of many others to conservation, and the threat that an approved copper mine in the park holds not only for this place but as a precedent for all “protected” places on this planet.

Most importantly, it reveals how significant community livelihoods are. We need to look after people before we can focus on nature conservation together.

Everything is connected and we’re the custodians of all living things.

**What kind of reaction have you had?**

We’ve shown *Wild Zambezi* only to a South African and Zambian audience to date, and the reaction has been incredible. It’s rewarding to see people connect deeply with the story and to see the true magic of storytelling taking place in front of our eyes. We’ve had excellent reviews so far, and are excited to share our project with the world.



has been spectacular.

Without doubt, the most rewarding part of the project has been the contribution of the amazing Dr John Kani as our narrator. His voice is so powerful and important to the project, and he’s simply the most beautiful man.

**Outside of work, what do you enjoy doing?**

I love walking in nature, mountain biking, swimming in the sea. I also love people, and enjoy cooking and eating good food. I’m excited by life



## Afrika Tikkun Officially Launches 30-Year Campaign: “What Afrika Tikkun Means to Me”

In celebration of Youth Month, Afrika Tikkun is thrilled to launch its 30-year campaign, “What Afrika Tikkun Means to Me...” This milestone campaign reflects on three decades of empowering South African youth through education, skills development and community support. Afrika Tikkun’s Executive Deputy Chairperson, Marc Lubner, emphasised the significance of this moment: “For 30 years, we have been dedicated to transforming lives and nurturing the potential of our young people. This campaign is a tribute to the countless stories of hope, resilience and success that define our journey.”

Throughout Youth Month, the campaign will feature inspiring testimonials from beneficiaries, staff and partners, highlighting the profound impact Afrika Tikkun has had on their lives. By sharing these personal stories, Afrika Tikkun aims to inspire and engage the broader community, reaffirming its commitment to building a brighter future for South Africa’s youth.

Join us in celebrating this remarkable milestone and be part of our journey towards continued empowerment and transformation.



Go to: [30yearsoftikkun](#) for more!

## ZAKA Advisory

### How to stay safe from fire this winter

**Loadshedding**

- Use battery-operated lights instead of candles during loadshedding;
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets, and ensure all appliances are switched off before the power returns; and
- Keep a torch and extra batteries available.

**Gas**

- Ensure adequate ventilation when using appliances to prevent build-up of harmful gases; and
- Never leave appliances unattended while in use.

**General safety**

- Install smoke detectors in key areas of your home, and test them monthly;
- Develop and practice a fire-escape plan; and
- Keep flammable materials like

curtains and furniture away from heaters and open flames.

**Shabbat and yomtov candles**

- Place candles in sturdy holders and on non-flammable surfaces, away from curtains and other flammable materials;
- Ensure that candles are out of reach of children and pets; and
- Never leave candles unattended, and ensure that they are extinguished before going to bed.

**Essential equipment**

- Ensure your home is equipped with a fire extinguisher and know how to use it; and
- Have a fire blanket accessible in the kitchen and other high-risk areas

**In an emergency**

- Evacuate immediately;
- Use the nearest exit and avoid using elevators;

- Crawl low under smoke to avoid inhaling harmful fumes;
- **Call the ZAKA emergency line at 086 18 000 18** as soon as you are safe; and
- Provide clear information about the location and nature of the fire.

**Extinguishing**

- Use a fire extinguisher only if the fire is small and contained;
- Follow the PASS technique: pull the pin, aim the nozzle, squeeze the handle, and sweep the base of the fire; and
- If you are unable to control the fire, evacuate immediately.

**After evacuation**

- Don’t re-enter the building until it has been declared safe; and
- Gather at a predetermined meeting point to account for all household members.



# Forties and fearless: Herzlia alumnus realises Springbok dreams

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Many athletes in their late 40s have waved goodbye to their chances of representing their country at a World Cup. However, 46-year-old Hayley Landau will be playing for the over-35 Springbok team at the Touch Rugby World Cup in Nottingham, England, starting on 15 July.

This Capetonian and her teammates have made a lot of sacrifices to play at the highest level of touch rugby, a pay-to-play sport in South Africa. “We’re all married with kids, which makes it an even tougher situation because we’ve got families to look after,” Landau says. “We’ve taken the time to get ourselves fit but then also manage family and work.”

Landau, a Herzlia alumnus and

teacher by profession, is one of the six or so players in their mid-to-late 40s who will be representing the over-35 Springbok team. Some of their teammates are about 10 years younger than them.

Landau and her teammates, especially those from Cape Town, have been on the same team for a long time, so it’s a tight-knit group, she says. “With the friendship, the camaraderie, and knowing how we play, it’s comforting to know that we’re all going again.”

This will be Landau’s second World Cup, having played for the over-27 South Africa team at the 2019 edition in Malaysia.

Ahead of the 2019 World Cup squad announcement, “It was almost a shoo-in that I would make the side as there weren’t many players up for selection,” Landau says. She was a little bit more

nervous this time as more players were eligible for the over-35 team and some are almost a decade younger than her. “When I was selected, it was a relief. Speaking to friends, they didn’t know why I was so worried. I realised that I’m very much part of this team and can add lots of value.”

Landau worked incredibly hard to make the team, and consulted a biokineticist for strength training and conditioning. “At our age, if the body isn’t conditioned, you’ll be more prone to injury,” she says. She didn’t want a repeat of the hamstring tear she suffered a while before the 2019 World Cup.

“Our coaches kind of left the fitness and conditioning up to us. It has been great that there is that faith and belief in us. I don’t want to be the weakest link, so I’ve put in hard work. I want to be there



Springbok over-35 touch rugby player, Hayley Landau

and make a difference to the team.”

After all her gym and fitness work, Landau can now push her body to do things she never thought were possible in her mid-40s. “It’s amazing to be able to play the sport at the highest level. At the end of March, we played a three-match series against the French, and we beat them in each game. Now we’re going to the biggest Touch Rugby World Cup ever.”

Thirteen nations took part in the first Touch World Cup in 1988, but this year’s showpiece boasts 39 nations taking part and about 1 000 matches in the week-long tournament. “It’s exciting,” Landau says. “Hopefully we’re good enough to compete for a medal. We’re going there with a positive mindset.”

South Africa has reached the final at three Touch Rugby World Cups, but lost on each occasion – the men’s over-35 side coming out second best in the 2007 final in Stellenbosch and 2011 final in Scotland, and the men’s over-30 side falling at the last hurdle in 2019.

Landau, who has been sporty her entire life, got into touch rugby while doing an internship at Western Province Rugby in 1997. She went on to play for the Western Province B and A sides.

She realised her dream of playing for the Springboks at the highest level at the 2019 World Cup. “Being 42, it took such a long time to get there, but, you know, never give up on your dreams. I scored four tries at the tournament, playing against other ladies who are the best in their country. Our team came fifth out of eight. This time we’re a little bit more hopeful.”

Landau says the top two teams, Australia and New Zealand, “have a very professional setup, so we’re quite lucky that New Zealand isn’t in our division. That gives us a better chance because Australia and New Zealand are really a cut above.”

Landau will play against Australia, where the sport started in the 1960s, as well as England, Fiji, France, Ireland, Singapore, and Wales.

Inasmuch as the Springboks have a team manager and a coach, “England have things like physios, analysts, and psychologists,” Landau says. “Not to say that we’re not a professional setup, we are, but we don’t have the funds for those things. But once you’re on the field, what counts is the experience, the game breakers, and creating magic out of nothing.”

Landau says touch rugby is a wonderful, fast-paced sport which is still gaining popularity. “There’s never a time where something isn’t happening. You’re always attacking or defending. It’s tactical and strategic. You throw in something that’s going to surprise the opposition. That’s how you score your tries. You’ve got to be fit and really switched on.”

## Capetonian pupil sprints to gold in canoeing

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Less than a fortnight after being awarded Western Cape provincial colours for canoeing, 12-year-old Capetonian canoeist Hanna Solomon won a gold medal at the South African Canoe Marathon Championships in Roodeplaat Dam near Pretoria between 14 and 16 June.

This Herzlia pupil claimed gold in the under-14 K1 singles event and third place in the K2 doubles at this prestigious championship. The entry list was packed with world champions, including the world’s most decorated kayak paddler and two 2024 Olympics-bound South African paddlers.

Solomon’s Western Cape provincial colours were bestowed on her during the Western Province Canoe Union annual prize giving on 4 June for her outstanding performance at the South African Sprints Championships last year. She came second in all her races at that tournament.

Solomon says it felt amazing to receive the colours. “I was shocked because my mom told me I wasn’t going to get it. When they called my name, I was very happy.”

“If you get a gold and silver medal at the championships, then you get one point,” Solomon says. “If you get more than three points or more, you can get Western Cape provincial colours.”

At this year’s South African Sprint Championships, which brings together the best canoeists in the country, Solomon bagged a gold medal in the 5 000m sprint for under-14 girls. She collected silvers in most of her other races, and a couple of bronze medals. This was quite an achievement as some of her competitors were 14 years old. There’s an age group for under-12 canoeists, but as Solomon turned 12 last year, she competes in the under-14 age group.

“In canoeing, there’s lots of different disciplines like sprints, marathon, river, surf ski, and polo,” Solomon says. “But I do sprint and marathon.”



Hanna Solomon winning the under-14 South African Canoe Marathon Championships on 16 June

Sprints are raced out on a flatwater course of 200m, 500m, 1 000m or 5 000m.

“For a marathon, you have to get out your boat on a jetty, run across the land to the other side with your boat and your paddle in your hand, and then get back in again, and carry on going. It’s normally 14km,” she says.

Solomon trains five or six days a week near Muizenberg. She does a 10km time trial paddle every week, trying to beat her time from the previous week. She does sprints with other people and the Orka Paddles squad.

Solomon’s dad has won two Berg River Canoe Marathons, four-day odysseys of 240km in the Cape winter from Paarl to Velddrif on the West Coast, and is a world champion marathon paddler and ski paddler, so he was an inspiration for her to get into paddling.

“I never wanted to paddle when I was younger,” Solomon says. “In [the COVID-19 pandemic] lockdown, I decided to try it because my friend had a boat. I said, ‘Dad, I want to try paddling today.’ He never pushed me. I liked it.”

She soon got a surf ski as a birthday present, and went on to paddle at Peninsula Canoe Club with a coach named Anders Hart. “I paddled with them and made friends. I had lots of fun,” she says.

Solomon is one of the few under-14 girl canoeists in the Western Cape “but in the other provinces, there are much more. There were 24 from the whole country at the South African Championships. I have lots of younger friends who do it, and I paddle with older people.”

Canoeing is big in the Solomon family. Her mom, Megan, met her dad through canoeing, and her younger sister also paddles.

Canoeing is a popular sport in South Africa, Megan says. “There are loads of people doing rivers and marathons . It’s not an easy sport to do. It’s quite difficult to stabilise in a canoe. When you first start canoeing, you fall into the water a lot. In winter, it’s tricky because you get cold and then people usually give up. I started paddling when I was 30. It took me a long time to stabilise. So, when you see people paddling, they make it look really easy, but it’s actually really hard.”

Solomon likes the “nice” canoeing community. “I just love the sport. I feel happy when I paddle. It’s hard to explain,” she says.

South Africa’s only medal in canoeing at the Olympic Games was the bronze claimed by Bridgitte Hartley in the 2012 London Olympics.

## Gruzd’s ‘prepaving’ launches him into Scrabble top spot

LEE TANKLE

After two long days filled with Scrabble tiles on 17 and 18 June, political analyst and wordsmith Steven Gruzd came out on top at the South African Masters Scrabble Championships, securing the title for the second time in a row.

Gruzd played against the top-10 players, and after the first day of the tournament, the title seemed out of reach, having lost four of his first five games. However, he managed to recover quickly, and won all of his games the next day, sneaking to the top of the pool.

“Winning this tournament shows that people in their 50s can still be competitive,” Gruzd said, “I’ve been

playing Scrabble for 40 years, and competitively since I was 12 years old. It’s gratifying to know that older people can still show the youngsters how it’s done. And it’s the sort of game you must work hard for.”

Gruzd has won this title three times before, in 2000, 2019, and 2023. He describes the Masters tournament as the toughest tournament in competitive Scrabble in South Africa because “it’s all the top players. There are no weak players in the field.

“I was particularly surprised after having had such a bad start. But as they say, ‘It’s not how you start, it’s how you finish,’” he said, “I just kept my cool. I focused and made fewer mistakes on the second day. It came down to the very last



Steven Gruzd with Gerald Davids, president of Western Cape Scrabble

game, and I had the advantage in that I picked well and played well.”

Gruzd said in preparation for this tournament, he revised his six-letter and four and five-letter words using computer programmes and videos, flashcards, and books that help learn words. “Certainly,

some of those paid off.

“In one game, I started with ‘p-a-v-i-n-g’. And I saw that you could probably put down ‘p-r-e-p-a-v-i-n-g,’” he said, “So the ‘p-r-e’ that I played got to the triple-word score, and I scored 51 points for it, plus five for an unsuccessful challenge by my opponent. It was a crucial game that I was behind in at that point. Just knowing that play was a possibility managed to put me ahead, and I won that game.

“Winning gives me confidence,” Gruzd said. “And it shows that even after the COVID-19 pandemic, in which we lost a number of our Scrabble players to the virus, Scrabble remains strong in South Africa. The competition is getting better and better all the time. A lot of people are putting in work and studying.”



# Torah Academy builds for future with new campus

LEE TANKLE

It was years of planning and hard work, but finally, on 1 June, Torah Academy opened its new Girls High School campus in Johannesburg. Sounds of laughter and chatter abound on the premises as the girls have now moved in.

Amidst the dwindling South African Jewish community, the Chabad community is growing. Rebecca Sarchi, the principal of Torah Academy Girls High, said, “We’re a Chabad school for all Jewish children. The Lubavitcher Rebbe gave a *brocha* for South Africa, and we’re therefore here to stay. Growth is a part of our staying.”

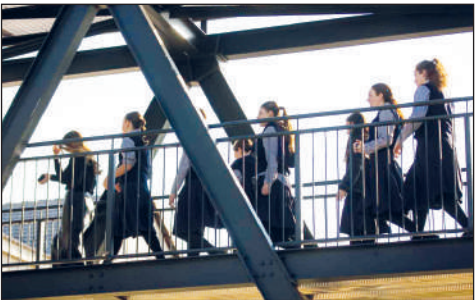
Yossi Liberow, the managing director of Torah Academy, said at the campus opening, “We’re standing here within the Jewish Johannesburg community, often said to be in decline. We constantly hear about mass emigration and the loss of community members. We hear about lack of funds from donors. Yet, here we are, standing in a brand-new campus that cost more than R40 million to build.

“Here we are with our girls, our future mothers and leaders, sitting excited in front of us. Here we are with a growing community, welcoming new families every day. We’ll never stop in our quest for growth, our mission to spread light, our directive from the Lubavitcher Rebbe to build, and our commitment to *chinuch* [education] and the Jewish community of Johannesburg.”

The new campus was created, according to Sarchi, because “the old campus was worn and not suitable for use, and its location, in Orchards, was decidedly unsafe for students, so it was sold”.

The new campus also boasts “bigger classrooms, a science or biology laboratory, a multi-purpose court, and a big davening room”.

Sarchi said Torah Academy Girls was different to other schools because “we’re a school with a *nesama* [soul]. We offer a warm and nurturing environment, as well as



excellence in *kodesh* [holy] and general studies.

“Academics are a core part of our school. General studies are taken very seriously. Until now, sport has been limited at the girls’ high school due to a lack of facilities. Now that we’re blessed with a new school and a multi-purpose court, we look forward to taking our sports offerings to the next level,” she said.

The new campus won’t just help prepare students to pursue a rabbinical route such as going to seminary, becoming rebbetzins, or *shluhois* (representatives), they say. Torah Academy also plans to create youngsters who will go on to be doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, teachers, beauty therapists, homemakers, actuaries, and engineers.

“Our learners become the best version of themselves. Each student attains her academic potential, be it seven or eight distinctions or a university pass,” Sarchi said.

Torah Academy aims to create “well-rounded individuals who are committed to their *Yiddishkeit* and have a passion for learning. We want our learners to be ready to contribute to the communities they will find themselves in anywhere around the world. We want them to succeed in whatever profession they choose, and to make a difference,” said Sarchi.

As the school was being built, passersby saw the mantra of this new campus, “We can’t predict the future, but we can build the future”, plastered on the outside of the building site. Sarchi explained that it meant, “Only Hashem knows what the future holds, but we can build a new campus and look to the future with positivity and growth. So we’ve built a school for the future.”

# Villains and victors – this story is a miracle

It might not be the same as the story of Purim, but it’s worth celebrating.

South Africa and her Jewish community have once again defied the odds and been freed not only from a further five years of a corrupt, Israel-hating, and inept African National Congress (ANC), but from entering a “doomsday” coalition that would likely signal the death of the country as a democracy.

The events leading up to the past few weeks were nothing short of miraculous, and worth recognising as such. In which case it would be quite rude to not acknowledge not only the human players, but also G-d Himself, who seems to spend a significant amount of His valuable time keeping an eye on this neck of the woods. Because, clearly, we can’t be left alone for a minute without breaking something.

If the story of the May 2024 elections were to be codified, like the story of Queen Esther was, it would have an interesting cast of characters. It would be a story of apparent coincidence, violence, and political intrigue. There would be cliffhanger moments as the country held its collective breath, and moments of laugh-out-loud comedy thanks to dedicated court jesters like Carl Niehaus in his red hard hat, Palestinian scarf, and comical countenance.

Naledi Pandor would naturally play the villain. She would be exposed making covert phone calls to Hamas, hob knobbing with her Iranian human rights-abuser friends, all while accusing Israel alone before the International Court of Justice. Videos would surface of her inciting South Africans to march against international diplomats, all in the name of “justice”.



**INNER VOICE**  
*Howard Feldman*

Drunk on the Pandor un-cool aid, her party would build its election campaign on its hatred for Israel. And on the assumption that corruption, the economy, safety, electricity, and water didn’t matter to “fellow South Africans”, when in fact it was all that mattered.

Like Haman in the story of Esther, she too would fail, and she would drag her gullible party with her to the gallows of her own construction.

And then, it would be wrapped up in a magnificent bow of irony, when Democratic Alliance former leader and current Zionist, Tony Leon, would be sent to negotiate the terms of the government of national unity with the ANC.

It’s well known that many Jewish holidays contain repetitive themes: “They tried to kill us. They didn’t succeed. Let’s eat.”

This story isn’t exclusively a Jewish one. Where Jews might have been the focus, it’s a story of all of South Africa. Of what nearly was. Of what was saved at the very last moment. And how, although far from over, there’s the potential to turn it into everything that it should be. A country that celebrates genuine equality, opportunity, and respect. One of integrity and kindness.

Call it incredible coincidence, karma, or luck, but I believe South Africans have witnessed a miracle. I believe we have been guided back from the brink, and that G-d Himself devoted a serious amount of time to ensure that we have reason to cheer.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Hope for change

## International visits

I’ve just returned from the United States, where I attended the conference of the American Jewish Committee and was honoured to speak on a panel at the opening plenary. Joining me were our colleagues from the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD): Chairperson Adrienne Jacobson and Executive Director Daniel Bloch. It was uplifting for us to feel the incredible connection with global Jewry, and see the support and solidarity extended to us at this difficult time. Another highlight for me was the address by Congressman Ritchie Torres, a Democrat whose rock-solid support for Jews through this tumultuous time has been a real beacon of light.

I was asked to focus on our recent elections and its implications for South African Jewry. I spoke about the pride we have in our democracy, and reflected on how the African National Congress’s (ANC’s) performance turned out to be even worse than the worst predictions. In spite of campaigning on a foreign policy platform where the last word to voters by its president was, “From the river to the sea”, a call for the Jewish state to be eradicated, the ANC received a proverbial *snotklap*. It reinforced what we all know, that its foreign policy antics were simply a distraction from its utter failure to deliver fundamental services to South Africans. Thankfully, the electorate saw right through it. I also spoke about how fortunate we are to experience relatively little antisemitism on the ground in South Africa, and how our amazing community continues to live as proud Jews and Zionists in defiance of the stance of our former government. How the new government of national unity may affect the biased South African foreign policy of

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

## ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



recent years cannot, of course, be predicated at this stage.

## The new government

The successful brokering, following extensive and complex negotiations, of an agreement by the two main parties and others to form a government of national unity is to be welcomed. That differences were put to one side in the interests of taking the country forward shows maturity on the part of the leaders concerned, and hopefully augurs well for the prospects of the new administration in future.

The new era in South Africa’s political history commenced last Friday, 14 June, with the opening of Parliament. The Jewish community was represented by Tzvi Brivik, the immediate past chairperson of the SAJBD Cape committee. This past Wednesday, 19 June, National President Zev Krengel and I attended the presidential inauguration on the lawns of the iconic Union Buildings in Pretoria. The decision to attend wasn’t straightforward, and we engaged in much debate about our participation. There’s so much hurt and betrayal in our community associated with the president but in the end, we agreed that at this historic juncture in our country’s political history, and with so much unexpected hope in the air, it was important that our community be represented at the event. Part of that hope is that the SAJBD will be able to chart a different relationship with the government.

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

south african

Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

www.sajr.co.za

COL. MIRI EISIN

THE MIDDLE EAST ON FIRE

SUNDAY 23 JUNE 2024 AT 19:00 SAST

In association with



Few people understand the conflict as well as Col. Miri Eisin, managing director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at Reichman University.

Miri served in Israeli intelligence, was deputy head of the combat intelligence corps, and was assistant to the director of Israeli military intelligence.

After retiring, Col. Eisin served as Israeli government spokesperson and international media advisor to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

If you want to understand what happened on 7 October and how the region has been reshaped since, you cannot miss this broadcast.

Register NOW: [bit.ly/jrlive169](https://bit.ly/jrlive169)



Chabad kinus focuses on Yiddishkeit and unity

RABBI YOSSI CHAIKIN

Chabad Lubavitch shluchim (emissaries) to South Africa gathered for their annual national conference (kinus) recently in a lodge in the countryside. They came from all over the country to connect and learn with and from one another.

Representing the broad spectrum of local Jewish institutions, the gathering focused on best practice, improved leadership, and offering relevant and inspired Yiddishkeit countrywide. Under the leadership of Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, the rabbis discussed building and growing the unity they have prioritised in South Africa. The kinus was dedicated

to the memory of Rabbi Koppel Bacher, one of the founders of Chabad in South Africa in 1972, and the leader of the community for many decades, who died a few weeks ago. The rabbis



Chabad Lubavitch shluchim at the annual local kinus conference

recommitted themselves to enhancing the values he stood for all these years, discussing his interaction and communication with the Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Formal resolutions were taken by the conference

committee to ensure the future of growth of Yiddishkeit in the country. The rabbis committed to more frequent gatherings, both on a social level and in study sessions, to sustain unity.

As far as the wider community is concerned, there will be new Torah study opportunities to familiarise the public with the Rebbe's teachings and in particular, his vision of a transformed world in the Messianic era. Subcommittees were formed to implement these and many other ideas. The kinus organising committee resolved to meet regularly to monitor the progress and implementation of the undertakings.

Letters

HEARTS AND SOUL IN ISRAEL

When we, Heidi and daughters, Maïke and Christine – faithful readers of the SA Jewish Report and constant listeners of ChaiFM – learned that Israel is again open for tourism, our mind was made up at once. After having spent a most wonderful, happy time in the holy land last May, we just have to go again at this heartbreaking time to show our solidarity with this beautiful country and its people.

Unfortunately, Heidi and Maïke won't be able to travel tomorrow due to illness, but Chrissie is all the more determined to fly on her own, with 200 hearts in her luggage made of yellow pearls to be distributed among soldiers and those she thinks might appreciate them. Besides prayers, these little hearts serve as a visible sign of appreciation, compassion, and solidarity. – Heidi, Maïke, and Christine Schlottmann, Johannesburg

LOVE ELECTIONS – BUT NOT ALWAYS THEIR OUTCOME

Your publication just keeps getting better. In this age of information overload, where people churn out content faster than the spell checker can auto correct, the quality is disappointingly shoddy. But not your newspaper! What a delight it was to read Dylan Berger's entertaining and nostalgic article about his voting day escapades – something I'm sure we can all relate to. I must confess, I've been fascinated by the whole voting process since I was a schoolboy. I still remember being overawed by the late Sir De Villiers Graaff's observation in 1970 – "A great breakthrough." Indeed? I even went on to volunteer for the social democrats and later for the Progressive Party, proudly attending its "historic" merger with the Federal Party. I truly believed we were shaping history.

Now, while I remain a die-hard fan of elections, I'm increasingly sceptical of their significance. Hélène Landemore's assertion that democracy is the rule of the "dumb many" seems spot on, judging by some of the eyebrow-raising choices made worldwide, with a few shining exceptions, of course. When we look at transitions to democracy, it's clear the road is always rocky. In England, it led to civil war, and in Europe – particularly Germany, Italy, and Spain – it gave us fascism. So why should South Africa's road be any different? Is it wishful thinking, or just naivete? As we navigate this bumpy path, let's remember the timeless words of Benvenuto Cellini, "If you vote, you have only yourself to blame." – Alan Menachemson, Johannesburg

MANY MORE SPECIALS IN-STORE

KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER

Winter Warmers

ביחד ננצח עם ישראל חי

IMPERFECTION CHARDONNAY & ROSE 750ML EACH

83<sup>99</sup>

WELLINGTON'S FULL FLAVOUR TOMATO SAUCE 700ML

32<sup>99</sup>

ROMANY RUSKS CLASSIC CHOC COCONUT FLAVOUR

48<sup>99</sup>

BAKERS RUSKS ASSTD 450G EACH

48<sup>99</sup>

CAPE POINT HAKE FILLETS SKIN-ON 800G

69<sup>99</sup>

LAMBERT'S BAY FOODS GOLD SEAL FRENCH FRIES 10MM 1KG

32<sup>99</sup>

LANCEWOOD LOW FAT SMOOTH COTTAGE CHEESE PLAIN 250G EACH

41<sup>99</sup>

LANCEWOOD LOW FAT CHUNKY COTTAGE CHEESE CHIVES 250G EACH

41<sup>99</sup>

GOLD SEAL PREMIUM FRIES 10MM 1KG

32<sup>99</sup>

OK 200 FACIAL TISSUES white

18<sup>99</sup>

CLOSEMYER OVEN & BRAAI CLEANER 400ML EACH

37<sup>99</sup>

TASTIC LONG GRAIN PARBOILED RICE 2KG

48<sup>99</sup>

PESTO PRINCESS SOUP ASSTD 600G EACH

57<sup>99</sup>

FUTURELIFE CEREAL ORIGINAL & CHOC FLAVOUR 500G EACH

46<sup>99</sup>

HUG IN A MUG STICKS ASSTD 8 X 1'S EACH

61<sup>99</sup>

MONTAGU PRUNES PITTED 200G

54<sup>99</sup>

MONTAGU ALMONDS RAW 200G

66<sup>99</sup>

BEROCCA BOOST EFFERVESCENT TAB 10

104<sup>99</sup>

087-803-4000

082-711-4342

HOMETOWNPHARMACY@PROPHARM.CO.ZA

IN A HURRY? FRESH BLOOMS, CONVENIENTLY READY FOR YOU.

Yummy!

Tray of 6 Kneidlach

96<sup>99</sup>

KOSHER AT EVERYDAY PRICES

Offers valid till 26 JUNE 2024 or while stocks last

CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE

orders@kosherworld.co.za

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel

011 440 9517 | www.kosherworld.co.za

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. KosherWorld is available at selected Checkers stores. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. E&OE.