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**Jewish Report** 

SOUTH AFRICAN

www.sajewishreport.co.za Friday, 26 August 2011 / 26 Av, 5771 Volume 15 Number 32

# Terror attacks highlight Israel's new challenges on Egyptian border

PAGE 11



**CYCLING FOR GOODWILL – AND FOR FUN**

Off to Durban they go. Boys from Torah Academy, from three black schools around Johannesburg and even a smattering of boys from Israel, last Sunday left on the iconic Cyalive bicycle relay to Durban, to foster goodwill between youngsters from different races, to raise funds for the schools and create lasting friendships. "Father" of Cyalive, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, again accompanied the boys on their long journey. Cyalive has forged close links with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, allowing it to spread its wings even wider. (PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER) **PAGE 5**

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## SHABBAT TIMES

August 26/26 Av  
August 27/27 Av

Re'eh

Starts	Ends	
17:35	18:25	Johannesburg
18:06	18:58	Cape Town
17:20	18:11	Durban
17:40	18:30	Bloemfontein
17:38	18:30	Port Elizabeth
17:29	18:21	East London

## PARSHA OF THE WEEK

## The wrong cut to make



## PARSHAT RE'EH

Rabbi M Liebenberg  
Claremont Wynberg Shul, Cape Town

Judaism has a complex ritual of mourning that serves to acclimatise the surviving relatives to their loss, and offer them support and consolation.

However, the Torah prohibited certain mourning rituals it viewed as destructive and counter-productive: "You are children of Hashem your G-d, do not make welts in your skin and do not pull out hair from your forehead for the dead."

In the ancient world and in some societies today, it was common for mourners to gouge out their skin to express their pain and loss. Others would pull out their hair in anguish. Judaism finds such practices abhorrent, a fact made clear by the introductory words to this prohibition: "You are children of Hashem your G-d," which Rashi explains as an expression of love. "Since you are children of the A-mighty it is proper that you be beautiful and not gouged or hairless."

It cannot be denied that a mourner often feels pain and anger and needs to vent his feelings, but this is accomplished through the practice of kria, the rending of a garment, and not through self-flagellation.

The Sages of the Talmud saw in the words of this prohibition another important law, that if disobeyed could be more destructive than the cutting of flesh.

The phrase "lo titgodadu", "do not cut yourself", can also mean, "do not splinter into groups (agudot)". Hence the Torah is warning the Jewish people: "You are children of Hashem your G-d, do not break up into many groups."

Rashi explains that this gives the impression that there are two Torahs. The Rambam puts this prohibition into context: "There should not be two Beth Dins in one city, one ruling this way and the other ruling that way, for the matter will lead to argument and dissension."

The Torah does not demand a standard ruling on all cases of Jewish law or that customs should apply universally. That is almost an impossible task as each and every case has its own subjective peculiarities. However, within one community there should be a standardisation of halachic practices so as to prevent fragmentation.

Judaism today finds itself in an unfortunate situation. Whereas, before the Holocaust, every town, city or even country rigorously followed the customs and laws laid down by its religious leaders, today it is not uncommon to find hundreds of different customs in one city.

This is because communities that for centuries had been in a single location were transplanted to new shores together with Jews from many other countries.

Naturally every community wanted to continue the ways of their ancestors and indeed Jewish law can accommodate such a situation. However, when this leads to friction, the Torah is not quite so tolerant.

Of course one must follow the ways of his forefathers but not when he finds himself a guest or visitor in another community where their customs differ. In such instances the individual must carefully ascertain what the customs of the place are and endeavour to follow them diligently so as to prevent the inevitable ramifications of acting differently.

We in South Africa are blessed to be almost entirely of Lithuanian descent and therefore the customs practised in most shuls are virtually identical. Nevertheless, it is not unusual to find certain minor nuances in the way in which some mitzvot are practised.

Even if these customs are different to our own, if they have a credible source in Jewish law we may not disparage them, but, on the contrary, we should uphold them and do our utmost to prevent arguments and disputes.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Pretoria's Rabbi Gidon Fox of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation and guest Chazzan, Berel Zucker.

## A joyous PHC celebration of Jewish music

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIANE WOLFSON  
PRETORIA

THIS PAST Sunday evening, the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation celebrated its Festival of Jewish Music to commemorate the 10th anniversary since the consecration of its new synagogue, which coincided with the 10th year since the start of its yeshiva programme, Mahon L'Hora'ah.

The evening started with Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag leading the packed shul with Tehillim for Israel.

In quoting: "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him," Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said that when we fulfilled the commandments of Hashem, we must do it beautifully. He added: "Tonight we celebrate the 10th anniversary of this beautiful shul, the fulfilment of this verse and Torah values.

"We show Hashem that His mitzvot are important to us, as well as what Judaism means to all of us. The beauty of music is a fitting tribute to this occasion."

Rabbi Goldstein mentioned that, having been born and educated in Pretoria, for him this was not merely another official function. "A powerful emotion fills me when I drive into Pretoria and I have special nachas and joy.

"It is also the celebration of 10 years since the PHC embarked on another project with boldness and courage to recreate, rebuild and restructure the PHC.

"We salute the vision of those whose forward thinking has changed and developed the community as it has." The Chief Rabbi congratulated PHC's Rabbi Gidon Fox, who has provided strong leadership, together with the PHC committees over the years, and Rabbi Levi Wineberg, head of the yeshiva programme.

Connecting the 10th anniversary of both the PHC shul and the yeshiva, Rabbi Goldstein quoted from the Mishna which says that the world was created with 10 statements and in Pirkei Avot it states that number 10 represents unity and bringing together different parts, solidifying everything.

Rabbi Goldstein explained that this community had many different parts and that the shul and its yeshiva held all those together. In the brocha he gave he asked Hashem to continue blessing the Pretoria Jewish community as it charts its way forward, with blessing and success.

The crowd of approximately 500, comprising Pretorians and guests from Johannesburg and elsewhere, were enthralled by the singing of the PHC and Pine Street Shul chazzans and choirs, the guest appearance of the Rimon Chuppah Choir and solos by Chazzanim Nachie Levin, Shmuly Goldman, Ezra Sher, Asher Goldberg and Choni Goldman. This was very much a "reunion", with all except Sher having been either a chazzan or yeshiva graduate at the PHC during the past 10 years.

The music ranged from up-beat Shabbos medleys and chazzonus by Chazzan Asher Goldberg and the PHC Choir as well as pieces by Chazzanim Berel Zucker, Nachie Levin and Shmuly Goldman and Chazzan Ezra Sher and the Pine Street Shul Choir under choirmaster Dennis Goldman and of course the jazzed-up singing by Pretoria's choirmaster, Choni Goldman, a graduate of the Machon L'Hora'ah who toured as a back-up vocalist with Matisyahu in 2007. His spine-chilling rendition of Bo'ee, proved that our local choirs and soloists can stand proud alongside international artists.

Rabbi Fox said that Pretoria had certainly set a high benchmark for celebrating simchas and paid tribute to the organising committee under Sharon Kumin.

The programme may have been long, but for those who came, the crescendo reached in the finale with all the choirs and soloists coming together, was a fitting end to a perfect evening.

## KASHRUT NOTICE

## OF CHICKEN WINGS AND MINT IMPERIALS

THE KASHRUT department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues has announced that Tenderchick chickens have "Pesach" clips attached to the wings. These chickens are fresh, but due to suppliers' shortages, they are unable to supply the regular clips. These chickens are not kosher for Pesach.

The department hopes to have this rectified soon. It should also be noted that only Beacon Mint Imperials are certified as Parev and Mehadrin, while Wilson Mint Imperials are NOT certified.

AROUND THE WORLD  
NEWS IN BRIEF

## ROCK 'N ROLL SONGWRITER JERRY LEIBER DIES

LOS ANGELES - Songwriter Jerry Leiber, who with composer Mike Stoller wrote such rock 'n roll hits as "Hound Dog", "Stand By Me", and "Jailhouse Rock", died on Monday in Los Angeles at the age of 78, of cardiopulmonary failure.

Leiber and Stoller, who met as teenagers in the 1950s, wrote 200 hits that were performed by artists including Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, James Brown, BB King, the Drifters and Peggy Lee.

Leiber's first language was Yiddish, and he was frequently taunted as a child on the streets of Baltimore by a gang that called him "Jewboy".

"He was my friend, my buddy, my writing partner for 61 years," Stoller said in a statement. "He had a way with words. There was nobody better. I'm going to miss him."

Leiber and Stoller have been honoured by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Songwriters Hall of Fame and numerous other music organisations. (JTA)

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ON SHOW: SUNDAY 2-5 PM

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## COMMENT



Members from SAUJS and the Israeli student contingent, meet with Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. The students around Tutu are Joshua Schewitz; Alon Kimhi; Maya Sharon; Stephanie Hodes; Oliver Worth; Josh Benjamin; and Roi Wolf.

## Israeli students make friends through cogent debate

STEPHANIE HODES  
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN, SAUJS  
PHOTOGRAPH: TSHEPO TSHABALALA

DESPITE CALLS by student groups to boycott a visiting Israeli student delegation, the students received unexpectedly warm welcomes from Palestinian envoy Ambassador Ali Halimeh, and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, during their visit to SA.

The students, who were invited and hosted by the SA Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) and the World Union of Jewish Students, represented the broad spectrum of political views in Israel.

With the increase of anti-Israel propaganda on campuses across South Africa, SAUJS felt it was time for a fresh approach to traditional Israel advocacy. The objective of the project was for ordinary South African students to meet authentic Israelis and engage in honest and open dialogue about Israel.

Catching wind of the project before the students arrived, pro-Palestinian groups called on student societies to boycott the visit of what they labelled "apartheid agents coming to polish Israel's image".

They also claimed the students had been deployed by the Israeli government and declared "SA campuses must be apartheid Israel-free zones". However, despite intimidation by various student societies, the Israeli students held panel discussions at Wits, the University of Johannesburg, and Cape Town, Pretoria and Stellenbosch Universities.

Attempts by pro-Palestinian groups to disrupt these visits were disappointing. Their insistence that ordinary students be prevented from engaging in dialogue with the Israelis, displayed their immense discomfort with contradicting views on campus. It revealed what appeared to be their own skewed narrative and a clear agenda by those purporting to represent Palestinians.

Using the apartheid analogy to stir up emotions, they rejected dialogue on all fronts, stating that boycotts were "instrumental in the defeat of the apartheid regime in South Africa", and in turn, boycotting Israel would be the "kernel in overthrowing the oppression of Palestinians".

In doing so, these groups trampled on freedom of thought and expression, fundamental values held dear by our universities. Instead of recognising the role South Africans could play in this conflict, namely that of sharing our own lessons of reconciliation and nation-building, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) working

group was shown up for acting "more Palestinian than the Palestinians", and presenting radical views that were later dismissed by Palestinian Ambassador Hamleeh.

The Ambassador, who welcomed the students personally at a meeting at his office in Pretoria, assured them that the pro-Palestinian groups they had encountered on campus, were not funded by the embassy.

He said these groups did not represent the views of the Palestinian Authority, which rejected the notion of boycotting Israel altogether. He endorsed the idea of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and wished the group well on their visit to South Africa.

At the request of SAUJS, Tutu met with the students in Cape Town. The Archbishop Emeritus who has been a figurehead in the boycott of Israel campaign, affirmed his belief that Israel has a right to exist within secure borders.

He did, however, convey his disapproval of some actions of the Jewish State, whose people he says have a long history of oppression and persecution, and should thus be more sensitive than anyone else to human rights.

He expressed his sincere desire for peace between Israelis and Palestinians and an end to the conflict. At the request of one of the Israeli students, Tutu said a prayer for the victims of a terrorism attack that had taken place in Israel just minutes before the meeting.

What was by far the most disappointing aspect of the trip, was the unwillingness of South African student representatives to stand up for the values of freedom of speech and democracy. The only Student Representative Council to denounce the dirty tactics of the student groups, who tried to prevent dialogue with the Israeli students, was UCT.

Its president, Amanda Ngwenya, attended the panel discussion at the university and later expressed outrage and regret after well-known activist Zackie Achmat and Israeli anarchist Jonathan Pollack, continuously disrupted the event in an aggressive and undignified manner.

Ngwenya took a stand against what she labelled "bully tactics". Writing to the Mail & Guardian about the experience, Ngwenya said Achmat's behaviour "was an affront to freedom of thought and expression".

She further wrote that "UCT students did not reap the benefit of being at a university - that of being able to process ideas. Instead they were bullied and prevented from individual inquiry."

• See story on page 5.

## KDSF fraud suspect gets bail

ROBYN SASSEN

THE JEWISH Report has been informed that bail has been granted to the alleged perpetrator of fraud at the King David Schools Foundation, which was reported in last week's paper. Jewish community organisations and their legal teams have been assisting in expediting the legal process as swiftly as possible, to achieve the release of the suspect from prison. The successful bail application was made on Tuesday and a court date has been set for the end of September.

According to Rabbi Craig Kacev, director

of the SA Board of Jewish Education and a member of the board of trustees of the KDSF, the forensic investigation of the fraud accusation is still underway. The Foundation has tentatively mentioned a figure of R2,7 million.

"The Foundation has been 100 per cent transparent in this matter, which is why we were so quick to send our message to alumni out as soon as we were aware of the situation" Rabbi Kacev told the Jewish Report on Wednesday, assuring our readership that the KDSF will inform the community as soon as there are any new developments in the case.

## SAZF condemns 'in strongest terms' terror attack in Israel

THE SOUTH African Zionist Federation has condemned the terrorist attack on an Israeli bus last week by terrorists operating out of Gaza, "in the strongest terms".

In a media release on behalf of the SAZF Chairman Avrom Krengel, the SAZF says: "In the deadliest terrorist assault in Israel in more than four years, terrorists operating out of Gaza carried out a co-ordinated, multi-layered attack on innocent civilians in the south of Israel.

"Three terrorists opened fire on an Israeli bus filled with IDF soldiers leaving their bases for the weekend, as it was travelling south to Eilat, near the Egyptian-Israeli border, and a number of young soldiers were severely injured."

IDF forces heading to the scene of the attack were targeted with many being wounded; and this was followed by anti-tank missile attacks on two private vehicles, injuring seven in the first car and killing six in the second.

"There is no doubt that the assailants had crossed into Israel from the Sinai Peninsula, which belongs to Egypt, and

launched their attacks from Gaza. This unprovoked and despicable terrorist action has yet again proved the determination of Israel's enemies to sabotage any chance of negotiations with Israel for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" The release said that according to Defence Minister Ehud Barak, "it reflects Egypt's failing hold on Sinai and the rise of terror elements".

"The SAZF condemns these brutal and abhorrent terrorist attacks in the strongest terms. The SAZF trusts that the international community will take cognisance of the unprovoked and horrendous actions which confirmed Israel's need to protect her citizens at all costs on all her borders.

"Increased violence between Israel and those groups who call for her destruction and refuse to acknowledge her existence as a Jewish state, is inevitable; and her right as a sovereign state to defend herself and her populace is inviolable.

"The SAZF expresses its deepest sympathies to the families of those wounded and killed by the terrorists."

## AJC conference promises to be stimulating

DAVID SAKS

IMMEDIATELY following the SAJBD national conference on Sunday, delegates representing the Jewish communities of seven southern African countries, will come together for the biennial meeting of the African Jewish Congress (AJC). Participating countries are South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Swaziland and Zambia.

The opening address is by Israeli Minister of Information and Diaspora Yuli Edelstein. Prior to this, AJC President Mervyn Smith will deliver a message of welcome followed by an overview of the AJC's main activities over the past two years.

Later in the programme, Smith will also be speaking on the topic of African peoples who claim Jewish descent.

Following Edelstein's address, there will be a presentation by Dan Shaham, newly-appointed non-resident Ambassador of Israel to Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Ann Harris, an executive member of the AJC, will speak on Jewish social outreach activities in Bulawayo.

At the last AJC meeting in August 2009, the crisis in Zimbabwe loomed large on the agenda, but in light of the relative amelioration of conditions in the country since then, it is not expected to be as much to the fore.

# RABBI YY JACOBSON

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Harold Novick presents the award to Rabbi Yossi Baumgarten for 30 years of distinguished service.

## Seventy years of SA kashrut celebrated in style

ALISON GOLDBERG  
PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

"HAVE YOU heard the one about the two pigs who wished more people were Jewish?"

In traditional Sydenham Highlands North Shul style, master of ceremonies, Rabbi Yossi Goldman, mixed levity and sobriety in conducting the celebratory dinner a fortnight ago of the 70th anniversary of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues' kashrut department in South Africa.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein traced its history, from the issue of kosher certification for 11 products in 1941, the UOS kashrut department and its Beth Din diamond logo, has grown to provide internationally recognised kosher certification to over 1 400 companies, some abroad, 12 000 products, and over 70 000 ingredients in South Africa.

Its team of rabbis, inspectors, scientific and administrative staff, numbered over 50 fulltime and 160 part-time employees. In Johannesburg alone it supervises 55 kosher establishments.

Receiving an award from UOS President Harold Novick at the Sandton Synagogue Hall, was the kashrut department's principal rabbinical supervisor, Rabbi Yossi Baumgarten, to honour his distinguished service of 30 years.

He told the audience he had received a special blessing for kashrut in South Africa from the late Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, before coming to this country. He thanked his wife Liebe for her support, as well as Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, his colleagues and lay leaders. He also paid tribute to guest of honour, Pick n Pay founder and now its ambassador, Raymond Ackerman, for putting kosher products on his shelves.

Rabbi Goldstein reminded the audience how easily one could take for granted the ubiquity of the Beth Din kosher logo in South Africa on so many food products. Outside of Israel, the US and South Africa, this was not the practice in most countries; it was a symbol of pride for

Jews in South Africa.

Perhaps not known to many, South Africa had in fact provided the blueprint for the labelling of national products by the UK's kashrut authorities, some 25 years ago. Both countries had relatively small Jewish communities. South Africa had shown it was possible, even so.

Rabbi Goldman also thanked the many suppliers present, among them Nestle chairman and MD, Sullivan O'Carroll. He noted that in the US today, there was concern over a possible shortage of kosher meat because 25 to 40 per cent of consumers of kosher products were actually not Jewish. They regarded kosher food as healing and therapeutic.

In introducing Ackerman, a "legend" in South Africa and an ambassador not only for Pick n Pay but for the country, he pointed out how Ackerman had grown his business from four small shops. Ackerman filled in the details in his own talk. Describing himself as a simple "grocer", he said that Pick n Pay today had 350 franchise stores and 360 Pick n Pay stores.

Ackerman said he had always been determined to stay in the country, throughout its chequered history, believing in its future. He viewed South Africa as a land of opportunity for all.

He expressed in particular his pride in enabling the growth of black franchisees and getting business to the small man on the street.

He talked about the necessity for Pick n Pay to lay down a two-year plan to protect its supply lines in preparation for the entry of Walmart into South Africa, even to the extent of having to curb profit growth.

On profit, he said while he supported free enterprise, companies in South Africa, like many abroad, had to become givers, and identify themselves with their communities. This was coming to the country.

A highlight of the evening was the performance of Chazzan Yudi Cohen and his all-male operatic group, Diversity.

# Intermarriage must be combated through education - Kurtstag

LESLIE HARRIS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER

INTERMARRIAGE remained a problem in South Africa, despite the incidence being lower than in other parts of the world. The best way to combat this was through education, Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, said in his Beth Din report at the Union of Orthodox Synagogues' biennial conference in Johannesburg at the weekend.

Communal discipline was needed to implement Beth Din rulings, he said. One example of this was the decree that those who had married out should not be given honours in shul.

"This way people learn that there are consequences to their actions," Rabbi Kurtstag said.

He said the nature of South African society protected local Jewry from moves to ban shechita, because the challenge would inevitably land in court where the validity of African rituals could also be questioned.

One of the highlights of the past two years were the "first fruits" of the Dayanut programme, when Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, Rabbi Anton Klein and Rabbi Meir Trepp, graduated as dayanim earlier this year after eight years of study.

Chief Rabbi Goldstein told the conference that members of the community knew that if they had a complaint against an organisation, they could approach the Office of the Chief Rabbi.

In most cases these turned out to be simple misunderstandings, though on rare occasions greater intervention was needed to resolve the dispute.

His office was also the point of contact between the broader religious community and South African Jewry. He had fostered good relations with other religious leaders through interfaith organisations in the country.

Personal contact within the community was also important and during the past year he attended 84 communal events

and visited 61 shuls.

The Chief Rabbi said those visits gave him an opportunity to get a feel for what was happening "on the ground" in the community, as well the chance to spread a Torah message to all parts of the community.

The Office of the Chief Rabbi also provided a neutral space for organisations to come together and work on projects for the benefit of the community.

This had been particularly evident in the Sinai Indaba, held immediately after Shavuot, and the Generation Sinai project in schools.

The latter in particular had been an outstanding success, with schools across the country participating. Parents had joined their children at school for a session of Torah learning. About 9 000 learners and 4 000 parents had participated in the programme, and the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.

The Chief Rabbi also established the Beit Midrash programme, which provides more Torah learning for interested learners at King David Linksfield, King David Victory Park and Herzlia. A formal "Memorandum of Understanding" was signed between the schools and the chief rabbi, ensuring the continuity of the programme.

"A guiding principle of my work is to seek to address the real issues and problems that affect the day-to-day life of South African Jews," the Chief Rabbi said. The best example of this was the CAP initiative, which has now been rolled out into less affluent neighbourhoods as well.

Referring to the investigation into the price of kosher chickens last year, Darren Sevitz, executive director of the UOS, said there had been only one kosher chicken abattoir, because applicants had been unable to meet UOS kashrut



Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag (rosh Beth Din)



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

standards.

Since then, however another applicant had approached the UOS and had been granted a licence and there were now two kosher chicken abattoirs.

Rabbi Boruch Talberg, who holds an honours degree in business and finance, has been appointed general manager of the kashrut department. He has introduced measures to streamline the department's procedures and cut costs, without compromising standards.

Staff at the UOS maintained their high morale and increased their productivity even AFTER being told in November last year that there would be no bonuses or salary increases for them.

Sevitz said that telling staff about their salaries was one of the most difficult things he had ever had to do.

"It made good mathematical sense to freeze salaries; we'd immediately save about R1 million. But it's not all about maths. There is also the human factor."

Sevitz paid tribute to the staff and thanked them for their support and understanding.

Jackie Sifris, the outgoing chairman, said the UOS was not exempt from the recession and minimal growth seen in the business environment in South Africa and worldwide.

There was no growth in licence fees or shul affiliation fees and an increase in general expenditure, resulting in losses which had to be covered through fundraising.

Jonathan Levitt, the outgoing treasurer, said there was a healthy debtors to creditors ratio.

The most significant operating expense during the past financial year was for the development of new kashrut software, to replace the current system which was outdated and unable to integrate with modern technology.

## Umhlanga Centre really draws in the Jewish visitors

RITA LEWIS

RABBI SHLOMO Wainer whose shul, Chabad of Umhlanga is central to a new Jewish complex, said they had never been so busy before this winter period. "There have been thousands of holidaymakers in and around Umhlanga, who have come to enjoy the warmer winter, see the sights and have a dip in the Indian Ocean. The Shul in Umhlanga has been hectic." He said the Shabbos minyanim had swelled incredibly and there had been more than 200 people attending the shul services

– especially on Shabbat.

Even during weekdays, his shul had enjoyed fantastic minyanim with at times as many as 50 men coming to daven.

Several families and backpackers were hosted for Shabbos meals and at one Shabbos there were more than 90 people enjoying a four-course dinner and 60 who stayed for the Shabbos lunch and the farbrengen.

Several guest rabbis, including Rabbi Yisroel Haller, had also been in Umhlanga over the holidays and they had given their assistance at some of the prayer

times by davening with the locals and holidaymakers.

They also were there to give various shiurim – all of which were well-attended.

Rabbi Wainer said: "what's quite incredible about the shul in Umhlanga is that visitors from all backgrounds, from different communities, whether frum or not, feel welcome and comfortable here and come to pray, daven together in a warm and peaceful atmosphere. This is their home from home."

The newly-created Kosher Guest House had also been full over the holiday period and had provided many ready-made kosher meals, especially for Shabbos, to locals and holidaymakers.

## AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### OBAMA VACATION READING INCLUDES ISRAELI NOVEL

NEW YORK - President Barack Obama's vacation reading list includes the best-selling Israeli novel "To the End of the Land" by David Grossman.

According to a White House statement, the novel is one of three that Obama took to his 10-day vacation on Martha's Vineyard, in Massachusetts. Since arriving on the island he has bought two more books, according to reports.

Published in 2008 in Israel to enthusiastic reviews, "To the End of the Land" became a bestseller in the United States and Germany.

Finished after the death of Grossman's son in the 2006 Lebanon War, it tells the story of an Israeli mother to a soldier who leaves home on an extended trip so as not to receive the possible news of her son's death. (JTA)

# Cycalive, NMF, vow to make SA a better place

RITA LEWIS  
PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

THE FORMAT of this year's 13th Cycalive relay bicycle ride between Johannesburg and Durban, last Sunday on the Torah Academy campus, was much the same as previously – but there was one major difference.

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, announced some expansion projects which will become a massive outreach initiative in conjunction with the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Since last year's ride, when Cycalive became the first event on the Nelson Mandela Day calendar, some of the cyclists had become an integral part of the diary of the Nelson Mandela Foundation – being among the learners of the selected schools at the launch.

NMF's Chief Executive Achmat

Dangor, said it remained the work of the Foundation to effect change among communities.

This year, there were 12 grade 11 boys from Torah Academy; 10 from Pace Secondary School; two from Durban and 11 from Moletsane High School in Soweto and, for the very first time, five from Bet Shemesh in Israel who were participating under the auspices of Partnership 2000 to afford them the opportunity of being involved in a bridge-building and "Ubuntu" project, taking part.

Cycalive recently employed a youth employment officer - Given Shirinda - based at Torah Academy and operating in the townships to broaden the scope of Cycalive to generate bursaries for learners, regardless of their race or denomination, although preference would be given to Cycalive participants.

In addressing the gathering, Chief

Rabbi Warren Goldstein said this was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to work together. He said, these days far too much time was spent on cellphones, and the like.

Rabbi Hazdan, who together with Nelson Mandela Foundation spokesman, Sello Hatang, was instrumental in making Cycalive an official event on the Nelson Mandela Day programme, said this was a new opportunity "to embrace our new South Africa and make it a better place for everyone".

Hatang offered to assist in involving businesses in the sponsoring of Cycalive; Rabbi Hazdan pledged to direct 9 000 exercise books, which had been donated by BSC/Tiger Packaging to nine underprivileged schools chosen by NMF.

To much excitement, it was then announced that 20 new bicycles had been donated to Cycalive by MTN for every participant from Moletsane and Pace schools.

Referring to the cyclists, he said: "With what they will learn from this event, these young men will end up making South Africa a more united country".



# Combine in prayer for peace in SA and Israel

ROBYN SASSEN

THE PRESIDENT and executive council of the Federation of Synagogues Women's Guilds of South Africa, earnestly appeal to all Jewish women to pledge a donation to any charity, to recite Psalm 27 and then to light Shabbat candles and at 17:25 next Friday, September

2 (3 Elul), for all to pray for peace in our land and the welfare of our brothers and sisters in Israel.

The Federation has upheld this national day of prayer since 1995. "It's about the unity of women everywhere in the country praying for the same things at the same time," said Devorah Nates, president of the Federation.

"One breaks all boundaries with prayer and we have linked this day to candle lighting as this is a uniquely women's mitzvah.

"We chose Psalm 27 because it is the psalm Jews recite during the month of Elul, through to after Succot."

Special candles, at R15 a pair are available for purchase through the Federation office: (010) 214-2600.



# Of true dialogue there was little evidence

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

SIX ISRAELI students faced an often hostile audience when they participated in a panel discussion at the University of Cape Town on Peace in the Middle East last Thursday. Moderator Alan Fisher had his work cut out trying to keep order and on several occasions had to make impassioned pleas to disruptive audience members to allow the panelists to be heard.

The rowdy meeting was peppered with interjections from the floor, so much so, that one of the students, called Barak, commented that of all the South African universities the group had visited, this was "the first time that people don't let us speak and finish an answer.

"In Israel and Palestine we can

converse – it's unfortunate that some in this audience can't."

Replying to a questioner who asked if the 27-strong delegation had spoken to any Palestinians before they came here, he said: "We met with the Palestinian ambassador two days ago and he said that those on campuses that try to prevent us from talking to students and are in favour of boycotts, do not represent the Palestinian interest. We might have different mindsets," he said of the Israelis and Palestinians, "but we do engage in dialogue.

"I hope you'll respect this spirit as well," he said to applause.

The group is a private initiative and was visiting universities in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town to try to convince students that Israel is not an apartheid state.

An audience member with an Israeli passport spoke at length of

"substantial bias against Palestinians when judged in Israeli courts", the difficulty for Palestinians in getting building permits and a Palestinian village destroyed by the Israelis multiple times.

When Fisher intervened, saying "Ask your question", activist Zackie Achmat led a chorus chanting, "Don't shut him up!"

Later, Achmat shouted at Fisher: "You are spreading propaganda – it's not democracy, it's not dialogue!"

Israeli student Ben said he was a peace activist and that the group comprised diverse individuals. "We're here not to defend the country, we don't think Israel is a perfect democracy.

After further exchanges, Achmat chanted "500 000 settlers" and "Stop apartheid Israel" repetitively, while some audience members joined in.

Another questioner asked how the group could expect to engage in dialogue with the local students while the Occupation and "a one-sided" democracy was in place. "Until you tell the Israeli state to stop what it's doing, I'm leaving," he said as he walked out.

Ethiopian panel member Mazal said she wanted "every person in this world to gain human rights" and stressed that as a black person, she enjoyed full rights in Israel.

Panellist Lior said the audience was "generalising" Israelis. "I stand here before you in the Opposition, a member of Meretz, the most left-wing Zionist party in the Knesset.

"We're doing everything we can to defend Palestinian rights, we're against the Occupation. I need you all to know that not all Israelis are the same – you need to know that Israel is very, very diverse."



Part of the audience at the lively UCT panel discussion with the Israeli students.



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# R2 million make the load much more bearable

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

SANDRINGHAM Gardens' main fundraiser, Share the Load, held in the Gerald Horwitz lounge at Golden Acres recently, was once again a success story – as it has been for the past 20 years of its existence.

The event is a culmination of work carried on over the past few months by organiser Myrna Jankelowitz and her team of Phyllis Noick and Janice Skikne.

The two who have worked with Jankelowitz for 13 and four years respectively, spent hours and hours working hard to sell the numbered tickets which are drawn during the evening.

The method of creating the winning numbers is by a set of four glass cylinders each filled with 10 coloured, numbered balls which bounce around inside the cylinders, rising higher and higher, until one ball eventually jumps into the slot at the top of the cylinder.

The auditors - and everyone else in the room - watch carefully as the first numbered ball arrives at the top of each of the four

cylinders.

Four plastic tags with the corresponding numbers are then hung on a frame for all to see – as the balls fall into their slot.

Participants kept their tickets throughout the evening, hoping that if their four digit number did not come up the first time, it would be made up with the next set of balls.

Radio 702's Benita Levin acted as MC. She announced the winning numbers and kept the proceedings together.

Prizes started at R1 800 and rose in multiples of 18 (Chai) to R144 000.

The event was carefully monitored by two auditors from Grant Thornton, who checked that everything was above board.

Several winning numbers were won by anonymous donors with the prize money going straight back to Sandringham Gardens.

Michael Sieff praised everyone involved in the function, saying that over R2 million had been raised.

He said the money was much-needed for the Chevrah's projects with most of it going to Sandringham Gardens.



**Responsible for the décor and food layout are David Ezekiel and Roy Levinson at the chocolate bar.**

**Gaby Lazarus;**  
**Harry Mirels;**  
**Judy Stoch;**  
**and Ruth**  
**Fram, check**  
**the balls jump-**  
**ing in their**  
**cylinders.**



**Watching the proceedings is Edna Freinkel with Ruth and Des Garb.**



**The Chevrah Kadisha's CEO Michael Sieff gives Myrna Jankelowitz a presentation for all her efforts.**



**Henry Ulfane and Eunice Faiga who come to Share the Load faithfully every year.**



**An arrangement of chocolate letters spell out "Share the Load 2011".**



**Laurence Molepo beside the beautifully arranged mounds of colourful desserts.**



**Kevin Lacey and Ovadia Kaempf.**

## AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### COURT BOOSTS AUSTRALIA'S BID TO EXTRADITE ACCUSED NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

SYDNEY - An Australian federal court decision has boosted the long-running effort to extradite alleged Nazi war criminal Charles Zentai to his native Hungary.

Three judges agreed on Tuesday to refer the case back to Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor, who originally approved Zentai's extradition to Hungary in 2009 to face a murder charge in the 1944 killing of 18-year-old Peter Balasz in Budapest.

O'Connor's decision was overturned on appeal last year, but the government

appeal of that decision was upheld this week by the three-judge panel on two of the three grounds.

Zentai, 89 and frail, can lodge a further appeal in the High Court. He has fiercely defended his innocence since he was first arrested in 2005.

Australia has never extradited an accused Nazi war criminal.

Konrads Kalejs, also an alleged Nazi war criminal, died in Melbourne in 2001 at 88 while his case crawled through the courts. (JTA)

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## COMMUNITY BUZZ

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### CHALUTZIUT

In the 1930s the ideal of "chalutzit" provided a great deal of inspiration to Zionism in South Africa and to youth movements in particular.

The dream of "building the land and being rebuilt" captured the imagination of many South Africans, despite their largely middle-class backgrounds.

The ideology motivated the SA Zionist Federation in Johannesburg to set up a "chalutz" farm near Klerksdorp in the (then) Transvaal (now Northwest Province) before the Second World War and several of its graduates subsequently came to Israel on aliyah.

The farm was eventually closed down, but agricultural training for would-be "chalutzim" was provided afterwards at Northcliff in Johannesburg for members of Habonim. Later a farm was set up at Palmietfontein for Bnei Zion graduates. Other "chalutz" farms were established near Brits, Ogies and at Balfour Park in Johannesburg.

• From: "Seventy Years of SA Aliyah" by Philip Gillon, 1992.

Philip Gluckman made aliyah soon after the State was established. He changed his name to Philip Gillon. For many years he was a leading writer in The Jerusalem Post.

### ALF JAMES, FORMER ARCADIAN WHO BECAME A PROFESSIONAL BOXING CHAMPION

Alf James was born in Pretoria and raised in Arcadia. He was one of the cleverest and shrewdest tacticians in his chosen sport - boxing. His first coach was Jim Turner who gained his experience in the bare-knuckle days.

Alfie won his first title at the age of 17 in (the then) Natal. He worked his passage on a Union Castle mail boat and arrived in England with £2 (R4) in his pocket.

In London he had a job as an usher in the Trocadero Club in the Elephant and Castle suburb in South London. He then joined the La Bohemia club in Mile End Road in eastern London. He won his first fight at the Black Friars against Alf Hayman on January 30, 1938.

When the Second World War broke out, he returned to South

Africa and joined the Rand Light Infantry and saw service in Egypt. After suffering from malaria he returned to South Africa.

After the war he fought the well-known Laurie Stevens for the South African welterweight title and, conceding weight, he fought out a draw. He won the SA light-weight championship when he fought Willie Miller. A knock-out by George Angel ended James's career; he fought 67 bouts and won 51.

James died in London at the age of 81 - an SA boxing legend.

### THE DIAMOND CUTTING INDUSTRY

The story of Alec Leibowitz continues:

"De Beers decided to manufacture polishing machines designed by Alec Leibowitz. After extensive trials, involving the Bonas Machine Company of Sunderland at De Beers' sight-holder factories, sets of 40 machines were eventually offered to all the diamond trading manufacturing sight-holders.

"The Piermatic Polishing Machine was launched, named after the late De Beers director, Pierre Crockaert. It was an auto-

mated polishing machine for faceted prepared sawable rough diamonds.

"The Diamond Trading Company (De Beers' selling arm) established teams of instructors active throughout the 1970s to install and train their clients' workmen in all the major cutting centres, with Israel being the main focus and machines also being installed in Belgium, back home in South Africa, in Russia, Hong Kong and India.

"Alec Leibowitz who passed away in 2005, made a huge contribution to the diamond cutting industry world-wide."

"Sight holders" are the preferred clients of De Beers, who alone can buy parcels of rough diamonds monthly direct from The Diamond Trading Company.

### LONDON

From Miriam Margolyes:

"I'm a subscriber to the Jewish Report, because I have many family members in South Africa. My interest is largely genealogical and I wonder whether you might be interested in suggesting to the editor, that you also host a 'Family Tree' section.

"Millions of people across the world are interested in tracing their South African relatives. Many Jewish newspapers (the UK Jewish Telegraph for example) have a small section where people can place a search enquiry for their lost families. It helps to reunite families; it's a real mitzvah."

Her e-mail address is: yarra@gmail.com

## Making ORT South Africa's vision a reality

MIKE KING  
ORT SA

ORT SOUTH Africa's vision of making South Africa a better place, is becoming a reality for the pupils of Minerva High School in Alexandra township northeast of Johannesburg.

By training and motivating learners to get involved in the community and using productive food gardens as a tangible means of support to benefit the community, ORT SA will be positioned to secure assistance from corporate companies which will assist in

making these gardens sustainable in the long term.

The first sponsor and driving force who came on board was Advance Seed. Its CEO, Brian Lever has pledged to supply the project with whatever quantity of food seed is required to create sustainable food gardens. In addition to the seed, agronomist Marcus Marune will be available to supply hands-on professional advice on farming practice.

JoJo Tanks have also joined the project and have installed some tanks at the school. Rod Cairns, MD of the company, said: "We are

delighted to be partnering with ORT to provide JoJo water tanks to develop sustainable food gardens in underprivileged communities.

"Our association with ORT gives us an excellent opportunity to make a real difference and to contribute to the global effort to raise awareness of the need to save water. Saving water should be a way of life."

At the Minerva site it is estimated that with the water harvesting system and the JoJo tanks strategically placed, the school will not pay a cent to irrigate their food garden for the whole of the summer.

ORT SA draws on the physical resources in the community, and then goes "many steps" further to bring hope to the seemingly hopeless.

**Agronomist Marcus Marune, from Advance Seed (right) and Richard Ntati from Minerva High School in Alexandra township.**



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## LIMMUD

# No-holds barred discussions at Limmud 2011

The large array of topics, presented by an impressive panel of speakers from SA and abroad, ensured Limmud 2011 had nourishing food for the soul to dispense.

ALISON GOLDBERG  
PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK HAYMANN

LIMMUD held the first conference in its series, at the Riverside Hotel on the Vaal River last weekend, with 400 people attending.

Limmud was in Durban on Monday and Cape Town this weekend.

A key speaker was Basil Kransdorff, soon to be the recipient at the White House of the Ashoka award for his e'Pap feeding schemes in Africa.

In the political sphere and particularly on Israeli-Palestinian issues, were Gerald Steinberg, professor of political studies at Bar Ilan University and president of NGO Monitor, and Prof David Newman, dean of the faculty of humanities and social sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Newman is also editor of the "International Journal of Geopolitics" and a geographer, who for two decades, has worked on the likely boundaries of a new Palestinian state for numerous Israeli government commissions.

Then there was anthropologist and organisational culture expert, Gideon Kunda, a professor in the department of labour studies at Tel Aviv University. Kunda serves on the board of Reut-Sadaka, an Arab-Jewish youth movement, where the increasing radicalisation of Israeli Arabs, many of whom now identify themselves as Palestinians, has resulted in a tenuous relationship.

Kunda, presenting the human face of Israel's minorities, is founder and academic director of the Community Education Centre, which trains and educates members of the foreign worker and refugee communities in Tel Aviv.

The presence of these communities throws up the vexing questions of their and their children's rights and future citizenship in Israel.

Most of the refugees, for instance, are Africans who have come from places such as Sudan, Rwanda and Darfur, and have



Steve Barnett leads a drumming session for Limmud participants.

entered Israel illegally.

Kunda said he and Steinberg had agreed not to attend each other's discussions, each holding polar views on Israel today. Kunda, Newman and Yariv Oppenheimer, another Israeli guest speaker, favour a two-state solution.

Oppenheimer is the director-general of Peace Now, whom Steinberg said had supported selective boycotts against Israel. Oppenheimer surprised Steinberg on a panel discussion on Zionism, claiming his support for Steinberg's position on the Law of Return to maintain a Jewish state.

He argued for full citizenship rights and obligations for the 20 per cent Arab minority. "The game should be over already in Gaza and the West Bank" in terms of full citizenship rights, Oppenheimer said.

Peace Now, with 10 000 followers, supported the Labour Party and believed the social protests that have occurred in recent weeks, largely from the middle class, will augur well for the tempering of the free market policies of Likud and see the introduction of lower taxes on the middle class and affordable housing.

While Israeli issues demanded attention in the Limmud programme, there were many who chose the spiritual route. Even here, though, Israel's future was of concern. Guest speaker Rabbi Simon Jacobson, author of "Towards a Meaningful Life", who documented and published the late Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson's public talks from 1979 to 1992, shared his views on what he considered the short- and long-term

prognosis for Israel.

To appreciate the current battles in Israel and to be able to create a comprehensive game plan, Rabbi Jacobson contended that we had to place it in context by retracing the steps in history that led to our world today.

In his presentation, "The Kabbalah of Today's Global Conflicts", he traced the roots of today's conflicts to the battles in Abraham's home. He then drew a line through the history of the world empires to show how today's wars were part of a long process.

This meant integrating G-dliness into the material world. "This would lead to the Messianic age - a world where there is no more destruction and terror and all children of Abraham serve the One G-d of Abraham in harmony."

This required two approaches. The first: a stronger passionate embrace of our inner values. The second: the commitment to refining the world.

While there is difference in opinions, even diametrically opposed ones at the Limmud discussions, it creates room for intensely Jewish debate and often, reconciliation.

It attracts people from Israel and other Diaspora communities, who play an integral role in the shaping of world Jewish communities. One such was Atlanta-based Seth Cohen, a senior leader in the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, who leads its global efforts to identify, connect and support networks of young Jews to help them create Jewish experiences and communities.



Lewis Levin surrounded by kids at Limmud with the Havdalah candles.



Rabbi Simon Jacobson addresses a group of Limmudniks.

## Old adage runs true: 'Good fences good neighbours make'

ALISON GOLDBERG  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
FRANK HAYMANN

WERE ISRAEL and the Palestinians to restart peace negotiations, 85 per cent of the work would already have been done on redrawing Israel's borders, leaving only a 15 per cent margin for last minute decisions.

Those borders included options and qualifications and took into account the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and water rights. So said Professor David Newman, dean of the faculty of social studies and humanities at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Prof Newman is a geographer, who has also worked on borders in Europe and the US (with Mexico).

He added that this assumed redrawing of Israel's borders for a two-state solution, was the only basis for resolving the conflict between the sides.

In 1948-49, when the Green Line was drawn, the border between Israel and the West Bank, people asked why such a crazy map. The simple answer was that it reflected the position of Israeli and Jordanian troops at the time, and the Hagannah's desire to protect settlements then in the West Bank, mainly in the lowlands.

While terrorism and the borders hadn't changed since then, the demographics had. From a population of two million in the whole area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River in the thirties, in 2011 there was a population of between eight to nine million. Jews comprised a 58 per cent majority in the area, which included the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Excluding those areas, they represented an 80 per cent majority.

Oslo cut up the West Bank into Area A, which is under Palestinian autonomy and included the majority of the Palestinian



Prof David Newman.

population, situated mostly in towns. Area B consisted of rural Palestinian areas under Israeli security control. Area C consisted of the vast majority of the region under Israel's total civil and security control.

With consensus around the need for more compact areas, since 1949 three approaches had been tried. The first was to look at the West

Bank as a fresh area. A second argued the 1949 armistice created the West Bank, which was not part of Israel.

Newman said the nomenclature of Judea and Samaria was more accurate geographically to describe this area, though it made a political statement.

The third option said: Let's start by looking at the Green Line. We all know 300 000 people cannot be evacuated. Complicating the scenario is the security fence, in reality a political one, about 70 per cent of which followed the Green Line and the rest encompassed settlements. Next to it now was a highway.

"The Palestinians want to go back to the Green Line. We want to ensure equality," explained Newman. What had been proposed was a swap of eight per cent of the land that included the settlements. This could be found either in the south or north of the West Bank or by enlarging the Gaza Strip.

A complicating factor was that Arab Israelis didn't want to be in a new Palestinian state even though they saw themselves as Palestinians.

There were a lot of political and technical considerations, but Newman said those would not take another five years to work out. He did not advocate returning to the Green Line but to work with the new realities created over the past 10 years and which had been discussed openly.

## Painstakingly following the money trail used to harm Israel

ALISON GOLDBERG  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
FRANK HAYMANN



Professor Gerald Steinberg.

PROFESSOR OF political studies at Bar Ilan University and president of NGO Monitor, Gerald Steinberg, believes the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel, and the exploitation of the apartheid South Africa analogy, is as serious a threat to the Jewish state as the danger posed by Iran and its terrorist clients, Hezbollah and Hamas.

Steinberg was one of the opening speakers at the Limmud conference, with his topic, "The BDS Movement - Diagnosis and Effective Responses".

Having researched this issue for 10 years, Steinberg and his NGO Monitor have done much of the spadework for Israel and other governments in tracking and

exposing the funding of the BDS movement and monitoring some 1 500 NGOs that grew out of the Durban Conference of 2001.

Important to realise was the BDS objective. In the words of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), in September 2009: "(BDS is not a) strategy to end only the 42-year old military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip... colonialism or apartheid (cannot be limited to) the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, (but) to historic Palestine which now encompasses the state of Israel."

The BDS movement was not a group of individuals and small organisations that had drifted into it, Steinberg pointed out, but was a very well-funded, international campaign. An estimated 100 million euros from European govern-

ments were annually funnelled secretly to more than 80 Israeli and Palestinian political NGOs.

NGO Monitor uncovered Dutch government funding to the tune of 120 million euros annually via ICCO to the electronic intifada. On exposure, it drew from Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal the pledge "to keep a close eye on the situation at ICCO, and other development organisations".

The forthcoming Russell Tribunal in November in Cape Town, was directly linked to the Durban 2001 strategy to brand Israel "a racist, apartheid state and its (form) of apartheid a crime against humanity".

It was also linked to the Goldstone Report and the BDS movement.

Alliances with real victims of apartheid and human rights violations were necessary. These victims had been almost completely ignored because of the focus on Israel, largely by the Arab-based UN Human Rights Council.

## LIMMUD

# From e'Pap to the plight of foreign workers, to inner city development...

ROBYN SASSEN

TIKKUN OLAM - fixing the ills of the world - was a significant strand of focus in Limmud; among other things, it considered how to supplement health, address urban squalor and foreigners' plights.

Industrial chemist with KwaZulu-Natal qualifications, Basil Kransdorff has developed e'Pap, a synthetic, but easily absorbable and digestible foodstuff, which gives the body the equivalent of a 10-meal course in nutrients.

"G-d designed us to get nutrients from our food: copper, zinc, iron, selenium, magnesium, phosphorus. Urbanised environments cause us to suffer pandemically from anaemia, diabetes, obesity; the trace elements are no longer in our food.

"It's all about money: For instance, the maize germ is removed in the milling of flour. The remaining sterile carbohydrate gets milled. With the germ, the flour rots. Without it, it doesn't; but it lacks nutrients. An apple a day will no longer keep the doctor away.

"We need to be nutrient replete," he added, showing before and after photographs of people with conditions like malnutrition. E'Pap is cheaper than Coke. "The general approach toward designing food for the poor is with cheap materials.

"For e'Pap, we used the costliest technology available." It is distributed to 15 countries in Africa; over 10 million people are able to benefit from this modern-day manna.

MIT-educated professor of anthropology and social activist, Gideon Kunda spoke of the plight of foreign workers and refugees in Israel. "In 1948, Israel represented an unprecedented reality for Jews. It was about redefining boundaries. At the time of the 1987 Intifada, Israel was a democratic economy. Foreigners came in as labourers.

"Globalisation means the collapse of boundaries and the influx of visa-holding workers

"In Israel's case, people from the Philippines, Turkey, Thailand, came. Bound to an employer, they had no language, rights or family. Many couldn't go home, or wouldn't. They wanted to make



**Basil Kransdorff.** (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY BRAND-SOUTHAFRICA.COM)



**Renney Plit.** (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDYVER)



**Gideon Kunda.** (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HAYMANN)

themselves a new life.

"After 1987, a community undefinable ethnically or nationally began. Practically, kids of mixed relationships are Israeli. For some, they're demons, unwanted by society. But they are entitled to healthcare, welfare and education. Approximately 250 000 foreign workers are currently in Israel, with some 60 000 in Tel Aviv.

"Those fleeing genocide in East Africa come to Israel, where they are considered asylum seekers and can't be deported. In Tel Aviv, there are currently about 30 000. Many have visas, suggesting they can work. But the ultra-Orthodox Shas party believes their lives are too easy. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rules circumscribe where these people can live. Many of them land up in the streets.

"NGOs offer alternative welfare services. Consequently, Israel has become a 'Silicon Valley' of start-ups. Direct involvement is critically important."

Direct involvement is part of the ethos of Brakpan-born accountant Renney Plit, who with his brother Wayne, was a winner at this year's Jewish Business Achiever Awards. The Plits run Afhco and have, over the last decade, built it into the most recognised developer of affordable housing in Johannesburg's inner city.

"We began this 15 years ago; everyone else was running away." They bought Lister Medical Centre in Jeppe Street in 1996, for R500 000 and sold it this year, for R43 million. "All that has happened is the market has changed.

"We're doing a residential rejuvenation." He showed before and after photographs of buildings, some of which had been reduced to vertical 'squatter camps', many without sewerage facilities or electricity.

"The city used to be where people worked. Now they will choose to live here. In one building, we've created a rooftop vegetable garden, in another, a rooftop playground.

"We believe we must do something, else we won't have a country left. It's not only about fixing buildings. It's about growing communities."

## Multiple answers to 'What women want next'

ROBYN SASSEN

ONE OF Limmud's final sessions, the panel "What do (Jewish) women want next?" was chaired by respected academic Barbara Buntman. It was one of the few dealing with women issues at Limmud 2011.

It comprised clinical psychologist, Adina Roth, a graduate of Jerusalem's Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies and New York's Drisha Institute for Jewish Education; Capetonian sexologist Marlene Wasserman (Dr Eve); the first woman president of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Israel-based Debbie Weissman; and Brooklyn resident singer/songwriter Michelle Citrin, recently named on Billboard Music's Top Songwriters.

Roth framed this topic with Limmud co-chairman Wayne Sussman, parodying Sigmund Freud's quip "What does a woman want?"

Raised traditionally Orthodox and educated at Chabad and Bnei Akiva-oriented schools, in 1995 she completed a women's leadership programme in Israel, where among other things, she learnt to layn.

"I wanted to create spaces for this in South African orthodoxy."

Roth made attempts in 1996 to introduce women's Torah readings in Johannesburg; she was banned by the broader community, eventually hosting a reading in secret.

Today she prepares girls for their batmitzvahs. "Laying is part of what I teach, in an independent setting. Halachically, women are taught to disconnect from their bodies. A batmitzvah should not just parody a barmitzvah; we do a mikvah ritual. For me it is the next frontier, not excluding, but combining the beauty of Orthodox traditions."

Wasserman commented on how the panel's focus offended her. "I know nothing about Jewish women only," she said. "I treat women from all kinds of faiths and do not distinguish between them. For the women I deal with, the issue of rape interfaces with a context informed by stringent rules in society.

"There is seldom a voice around the use of a condom, fidelity or abuse. One solution is engaging men" - and she celebrated the four men in the otherwise female audience - "if we can get men to be more humble, we have a chance at balance."

Weissman added: "When we try to universalise human beings, we land up dehumanising them. Most cultures are patriarchal; we work within their confines," she recalled being at the Women's Liberation riot in New York in August 1971. "The buzz-



**Adina Roth.** (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WWW.YOGAWARRIOR.CO.ZA)



**Marlene Wasserman.** (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HAYMANN)



**Debbie Weissman.** (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HAYMANN)



**Michelle Citrin.** (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HAYMANN)

word was 'iron while the strike is hot'. I remember thinking at the time this is all well and good, but I don't think we will ever have women rabbis. I was wrong!

"I think progress toward getting women in orthodoxy ordained is remarkable," she cited South African-born Sara Hurwitz ordained in 2009 as "Maharat", by Rabbi Avi Weiss, in Riverdale, New York.

"We have made almost no progress on Agunot. There is movement in Orthodox feminism to talk of sexuality and single parenthood. But abuse remains closeted. So many women still believe that to be married is more important than their own happiness."

Said Citrin, whose mother told her from babyhood to "marry a nice Jewish boy": "I grew up hating skirts and all they represented. I am a working musician. It is a dream job, but my values of honesty and integrity get scuppered: 'You have to think like a dude', I get told. I'm not a dude! I'm a dudette! I want it to be about respect."

The panelists answered questions from the floor; one pondered feminism's urgency. Wasserman replied: "For 3 000 years we've moved one step at a time. It's too slow!"

Another commented on how women enforce misogynist values. Wasserman replied: "There is so much shame, we are complicit in hiding things."



**Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo with Wayne Sussman,** Limmud national co-chairman. (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HAYMANN)

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## Jewish Report

# Being Jewish at the Vaal River

IN THESE confusing times, many people seek a sharper sense of their identities and the communities to which they belong. This includes a hunger among Jews, also in South Africa, for examining their Jewish background. Limmud, which took place last weekend at a Vaal River venue (reported on pages 8 and 9) was - again - both a celebration and exploration of Jewishness in its secular and religious senses.

As in previous years, it attracted "mainstream" Jews and others more on the fringes - a rich mixture participating in workshops and talks by local and international speakers.

Rabbi Simon Jacobson spoke about finding a meaningful life as a Jew. His audience was visibly moved by his story of an internally conflicted woman for whom the phrase "Birth is G-d saying you matter" became a key element of her search for self-worth.

Others approached religious Jewish identity from different directions, including the ritualistic and kabbalistic.

No Jew today can ignore Israel. A major theme was the place the Jewish State occupies in Jews' lives, and the issues it grapples with.

Haim Aronowitz, a former South African who made aliyah some 30 years ago, had his audience enthralled as he took them in detail through the text of Israel's Declaration of Independence - which most Jews have never read - and the values enshrined in it, including "the natural right of the Jewish people to be a nation like all other nations, masters of their own fate in their own sovereign state".

Sadly, some challenges - both internal and external - seem today so intractable that it is hard to see a resolution for this tiny state of seven million people. Perhaps this is a typical Jewish condition: grappling with opposites which cannot be reconciled.

As Israeli anthropologist Gideon Kunda said in his talk: "Israel is an ongoing debate - being Israeli means many things."

If Israel is a homeland for the Jewish people, what about others living there who are not Jewish? Kunda leads humanitarian activities for low-paid foreign workers - of whom there are some 250 000 and growing - including Filipinos, Turks and others. They come on a five-year visa, allowed to work for only one employer, and despite often poor conditions, don't want to leave since circumstances in their home countries are infinitely worse.

Israel represents a form of "sanity" for them. They have established communities in south Tel Aviv, their children are growing up as Israelis and Israel faces the dilemma of what to do with them. Experience worldwide shows foreign workers do not go home, says Kunda.

Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo, speaking about the prickly issue of conversion, raised another conundrum - the thousands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel who, while living fully as Israelis today, are not halachically Jewish - even though their spouses or fathers may be - and are not accepted as Jewish by the authorities.

If this issue is not resolved, he says, a huge group of Israelis could end up hating Israel and even Jews, with disastrous consequences for the state. He suggests a possible radical solution - creating a kind of halfway situation of "non-Jewish Jews" who observe a portion of the 613 mitzvot as much as they are able to, and whose children will perhaps become fully Jewish later, thus absorbing them fully into the Jewish people. We publish the text of his talk at Limmud on this page.

Political commentator Gerald Steinberg added to the mix, describing Israel's enemies' campaign emanating from "Durban" in 2001 to delegitimise it in stages - through NGOs, the media, the UN, diplomats and academia.

Talking about Mr Justice Richard Goldstone's notorious report accusing Israel of war crimes, he said: "The UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) is always looking for Jews to lead the charge against Israel."

Limmud has again shown itself to be a great forum for exploring myriad aspects of what it is to be Jewish. Now in its fifth year, it looks set to consolidate more firmly from year to year and contribute to the richness and "unity-in-diversity" of South African Jewry. We look forward to next year's Limmud.

## OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

# Solving the conversion crisis

**RABBI NATHAN LOPES CARDOZO  
FOUNDER AND DEAN OF THE  
DAVID CARDOZO ACADEMY**



CONVERSION IS a serious matter. It signals a transformation and involves a tremendous amount of soul-searching. Human beings are more than just accumulations of plasma, complex robots, or tool-making creatures that can change and adapt at the drop of a hat.

Human beings have souls and profound emotions. They experience spiritual and moral struggles in which religion plays a major part. Conversion is a far-reaching decision: it culminates in immersion in a mikvah, a ritual bath that symbolises the mother's womb.

"A non-Jew who converts is like a newborn baby," says the Talmud in Yebamoth 22a.

Conversion also implies a deep commitment to Jewish tradition. It requires a pledge to follow a particular lifestyle, the observance of the commandments and a deep emotional connection with the Jewish people. It means becoming part of this mysterious "Jewish soul", which remains unexplainable but is as real as it can be.

So, what should we do with all those people who are unable to take that drastic, far-reaching step but still want to be part of it? Israel is flooded today with thousands of immigrants who are of Jewish descent, yet not halachically Jewish. Should we convert them even though we know that they will not live a fully committed Jewish life? Or should we abandon them, basically ignoring and excluding them as we do now?

Should we suggest that they lie to the rabbinical courts and tell the rabbis that they intend to live a halachic life, although we know that they will not, forcing them to violate a central principle of Judaism which is to speak the truth and nothing but the truth?

Should we make them guilty of ignoring countless other commandments after their conversion, a situation which would be

avoided if they did not convert?

Or should we convert them anyway, because of our obsession with Jewish unity and our fear that the State of Israel would otherwise be unable to survive?

Have we forgotten that the Jews exist to keep the great mission of Judaism alive? It is not the function of Judaism to

keep the Jewish people alive. After all, what is the point of even having a Jewish people if Judaism is compromised and its great ethical and deeply religious message for all mankind, based firmly on halacha, becomes a joke?

The answer, we suggest, is the "two brotherly people solution": Jewish Jews and non-Jewish Jews. This would involve creating communities of "non-Jewish Jews" in which those who are not prepared to go the whole way could develop their own brand of Judaism.

They could have their own synagogues in which to practise aspects of Jewish tradition that they wish to use. They could decide for themselves to what extent to observe Shabbat or keep kosher.

Their wedding ceremonies could make use of many Jewish rituals and they could have their own "Jewish" cemeteries where they could adopt as many Jewish religious practices as possible rather than be forced to bury their dead in totally secular or non-Jewish burial grounds.

We could set up outreach programmes for them, enabling them to study Judaism and choose whatever aspects they wish to adopt. We could even create yeshivot and seminars for this specific purpose.

In this way they would feel part of the wider Jewish community and would not feel coerced into complying with halacha, while the halacha would itself remain uncompromised.

To ensure that they feel at home in the Jewish State, we could offer them various privileges and advantages.

# Jews must respond to the crisis in Somalia

**CARYL M STERN  
NEW YORK**

A TRAGEDY is unfolding in the Horn of Africa, where hundreds of thousands of children are at immediate risk of death. The disastrous combination of the worst drought in 60 years, high food prices and regional conflict has left 12 million people, including more than two million malnourished children, in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

A huge migration is now taking place from the areas of southern Somalia that have been engulfed in famine to the capital, Mogadishu, and to neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

Mothers carry their infants for days or weeks on end, desperate to find them nourishment, clean water and medical assistance. Some have been forced to make an unthinkable "Sophie's choice" about which child to feed - a decision no parent should ever have to make.

The next rains are not due to arrive until October, meaning that no new harvests can be expected in the region before the end of the year. Unless aid to affected areas increases significantly, the famine will like-

ly spread and intensify, putting many more young lives in jeopardy.

However, despite the scale of this catastrophe, the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa have not consistently made headlines, nor have these scourges caught the attention of many Americans. The international donor community, so quick to mobilise after similar disasters, has been slow to respond to the situation in Somalia. This catastrophe is not on the public agenda; it urgently needs to be.

With this in mind, I turn to the Jewish community - my community - for support in our efforts to save the lives of children threatened by conditions beyond their control. After serving nearly two decades in Jewish communal life, I have spent the past five years as president and CEO of the US Fund for UNICEF, which is one of several entities trying to get aid to the afflicted area.

My worldview, personally and professionally, has been shaped by a commitment to tikkun olam - healing the world. It comes from my mother, who was a child in Vienna during Kristallnacht. She survived the Holocaust by being sent to the United States in 1939, at the age of six,

so that they would feel comfortable as loyal citizens of the State of Israel. We should think about paying them better wages, help them succeed in their endeavours, so that they would want to continue living in this great country.

After all, they are our brothers and sisters. They are not goyim. We share a sense of Jewishness with them and they are part of the family, though slightly removed.

True, this would not solve all our problems. There would be "mixed marriages" between the two communities, the non-Jewish Jews and the Jewish Jews. Yet, it would be reasonable to expect that the more familiar they became with Jewish tradition on their own terms, the more likely it would be that they would take that final step and convert properly and honestly according to halacha. In this way they and the halacha would both be protected against dishonesty.

The benefits of this approach would be many. And not just for the non-Jewish Jews. There can be little doubt that many halachic Jews would join the educational programmes and attend the non-Jewish synagogues. It would allow many to rediscover what it means to be a Jew and give them an opportunity to become more observant without being coerced.

Halachic authorities, educators and the government, should consider this option seriously, rather than bury their heads in the sand, pretending nothing can be done. For those who suggest that we should convert our immigrants without asking them to commit to halacha, this is surely a perfect alternative to their convoluted attempts to justify the unjustifiable.

Halachic Judaism offers tremendous scope for flexibility and creativity on a level that many of our leaders have never really considered. It is time they did.

• *This is the gist of the lecture Rabbi Cardozo delivered at Limmud 2011 last weekend.*



**The famine in Somalia is getting worse, rights groups say. (PHOTOGRAPH: UNICEF)**

along with her four-year-old brother.

They were raised for two years in an orphanage for Jewish refugee children in New York. My mother's dislocation as a little girl left both of us with the profound desire to do whatever we could to protect and care for other vulnerable children.

Today, it is in the Horn of Africa where children's survival is most in peril. More than 400 000 refugees, the vast majority of whom are women and children, are crowded into three refugee camps in Kenya. They desperately require nourishment, medicine and access to clean water and sanitation facilities to survive.

Aid organisations are there, providing those services - along with child-friendly spaces and educational opportunities - but the needs are tremendous.

In Somalia, the epicentre of the emergency, tens of thousands of people - mainly children - have died in the last few months.

UNICEF and other humanitarian groups are reaching thousands of malnourished children with nutritional supplies. One highly effective weapon is a nutritional peanut paste that has the power to pull a child back from the brink of starvation. Packed with protein and vitamins, it is ready to use and does not need to be refrigerated or mixed with water. This miracle paste is saving lives. But many more are threatened and will perish if we don't act quickly.

The Jewish community must take notice of the plight of these children. As Jews, we have been at the forefront of humanitarian causes and responses to international disasters. Humanity is facing a devastating crisis in the Horn of Africa. We cannot fail to fulfil our Jewish responsibilities now. (JTA)

• *Caryl M Stern is president and CEO of the US Fund for UNICEF.*

# Build, Buy or Renovate

Compiled by Marlene Bilewitz. Contact (011) 023-8160, Cell 082-475-0288 or e-mail: marlene@sajewishreport.co.za

## Renewable energy is the mantra for the future

**CAREL BALLACK**  
OMBUDSMAN: SUSTAINABLE  
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SOMETIMES THE phrase "The Renewables" conjures up thoughts of a team of three caped superheroes, vigilant in their fight against coal users and carbon-heavy consumers. Their fight... to save Earth through whatever means possible.

However, for those who are a bit more techno-savvy, it has a different meaning altogether. Renewable energy is what we are supposed to be focused on in an attempt to save in more than one aspect and on more than one level.

Renewable energy has the capacity to save money, reduce carbon emissions, save electricity and make you or your organisation look good, all at the same time.

Some of us seem to be waiting for technology to become cheaper, technically more involved, smaller, faster, safer and greener than green.

It has to be said that since the in-

roduction of solar water-heating to South Africa dating back to the 1930s, not much has changed. Yes, you can now have low iron glass to increase radiation, and black crystal paint that would increase the surface area to maximise the area for the collection of radiation/heat, and that is just marvellous.

Or if you want, your panels can be imported from Europe and the water can boil in the panel before lunch, on a sunny day, but beware bigger and faster for solar is not always better.

South Africa's extreme weather patterns should be considered prior to importing or installing new technology. Attempting to implement new technology locally could be costly, failing proper testing under local conditions.

Carel Ballack was recently appointed as ombudsman for the Sustainable Energy Society of Southern Africa (SESSA). SESSA promotes the use of "the renewable" and provides guidance with regards to industry standards and norms.

Ballack says: "As South Africa is one of the countries in the world with a level of solar radiation that is perfect for heating water and solar electricity generation, now is the time to start looking at the return on investment, especially if your business or organisation is a heavy energy consumer."

"You could always convert and cover your roof with solar panels. A clever solar consultant will be able to provide multiple options with regards to saving, whether for a residential, commercial or industrial application."

By February 2012 new building regulation will require that at least 50 per cent of the required energy should be generated by renewable energy technology. This is where SESSA can play a vital role in fulfilling the needs of the industry through setting, maintaining and controlling standards with the assistance of other key stakeholders.

"Not only does SESSA look after the industry, but they also plough funds back into the community through an initiative called 'Sun Power For Life'. Most recently the Qunu Clinic in the



Eastern Cape received a solar water heating system as a result of an Absa and Sasol sponsorship. The process was administered by SESSA's ambassador, Irvan Damon.

Damon said: "It was an amazing

experience to be involved with this project and to see the difference that SESSA and solar water heating can bring to the Qunu (Eastern Cape) community."

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**Solar geysers not only solution to save on electricity bill**



tings and human factor.

Installing a controller has, however, been proven to effect savings of 40 per cent plus, by simply cutting the power to the element after the water has reached thermostat settings once only, thus eliminating any unnecessary on/off switching of the element. The cost is R1 000 plus installation.

Another electricity saving technology that can now be employed in a household, is a Power Factor Corrector (PFC). PFCs are widely used

in industry to optimise electricity consumed by inductive loads, for instance anything that runs an electric motor or has a transformer.

A pure resistive load (such as a kettle for instance) has a power factor of one or unity, any inductive load will have a power factor of less than one.

A PFC works by bringing the out of phase volts and current caused by an inductive load, closer together (closer to a power factor of 1/unity) and save electricity in the process. The higher the number of inductive loads in a household (such as fridges, washing machines, pool pumps, vacuum cleaners, down lights, etc), the higher the saving. The cost is R1 000 plus installation.

To achieve the highest monthly saving on your electricity consumption, install all four items with potential savings of 20 to 30 per cent, all at a fraction of the cost of a solar geyser or heat pump.

INSTALLING A solar geyser, or more recently, a heat pump, has been promoted as the best way to save on our ever-increasing electricity bills. Although this is a good option, it is rather costly and certainly not the only option available.

There are a number of existing technologies and options one can consider before opting for a solar geyser or heat pump. The simplest and least expensive is to install a geyser blanket - better insulation, less heat loss, less electricity consumed and it costs only R250.

Next in line is to install a low flow shower head, with 50 per cent less hot water used per shower, thus a 50 per cent saving (plus the saving on using 50 per cent less water). Costs range from R150 to R350, depending on the make and model.

To reduce the on-time of your geyser element, one can install a timer or simply switch the geyser off when not in use. This gives "potential" savings, but is greatly dependent on timer set-

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Caesarstone is also recognised by The Public Health and Safety Company (NSF), an organisation that creates the standards and certifies products that promote safer living.

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International Slab Sales (Pty) Ltd is the sole distributor of Caesarstone quartz surfaces in southern Africa. With customer-friendly branches in all the major centres, the company can easily assist architects, builders and homeowners in selecting the right surface for their application and provide details of the closest Caesarstone fabricator.

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Caesarstone also understands that its commitment to its customers is equalled only by its responsibility to the environment.

Top priority is given to minimising environmental impact, with a range of programmes including water saving (97 per cent of water used in the production process is recycled); reducing soil pollution (80 per cent of industrial waste produced during production is recycled); responsible

packaging (all boxes used to pack Caesarstone samples are made from recycled cardboard); and energy saving (95 per cent of energy normally required for disposing of harmful gases is saved due to the "Regeneration Thermal Oxydiser" process).

Caesarstone's quartz surfaces meet the International Health and Safety Foundation sanitary standard NSF 51, ensuring that working surfaces are safe for use in all food environments, and are Greenguard certified as low emitting surfaces. Caesarstone also became the world's first quartz surface company to have its "Environmental Management System" certified to comply with ISO 14001.

Caesarstone endeavours to manufacture the highest quality products, with the utmost consideration for the environment, ensuring a brighter future for the next generation and healthier living for today.

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# CoolGuard: it's warm in winter, cool in summer...

COOLGUARD: Warm in winter and cool in summer, multifunctional laminated glass is increasingly utilised as a significant design element in meeting today's architectural challenges.

Glass is a versatile material, with various applications, benefits and options, including safety, security, protection and acoustic, solar and thermal control. CoolGuard offers options.

With the increasing emphasis on thermally efficient dwellings, it is now possible to specify glass that not only enhances the appearance of a building, but also reduces heating and cooling costs by controlling the entry of heat in summer and the loss of warmth in winter.

Furman Glass is a leading manufacturer, distributor, and installer of value-added glass products and systems. The company's CoolGuard laminated glass, with an extensive selection of colour, solar and thermal control options, offers opportunities to add value to the creation of thermally efficient buildings.

CoolGuard assists the building envelope to maintain its overall thermal efficiency. Laminated glass remains in its frame when broken. This feature together with the thermal control features of the CoolGuard PVB interlayers, assists in maintaining the building envelope, its integrity and its thermal and solar control efficiency, while protecting building contents.

CoolGuard provides ultraviolet screening but sufficient day lighting. By selectively filtering the sun's energy in summer, CoolGuard lets in sufficient visible light while blocking 84 per cent of infrared and damaging ultraviolet (UV) solar energy.

The UV filtering performance of the protective interlayer helps protect valuable furnishings, displays or merchandise from the fading and damaging effects of UV radiation and heat.

Utilising natural lighting also contributes to the reduction of cooling costs, as natural light produces less heat than artificial light. The use of energy-efficient CoolGuard glazing products contributes to sustainability goals by safely satisfying the indoor lighting demand while minimising heat gain.

CoolGuard solar control reduces cooling loads in summer. Compared with ordinary laminated glass, CoolGuard's notable energy-saving capability can reject up to 52 per cent of solar energy from entering a room and has a shading coefficient of 0,55.

By reducing solar energy transmittance, CoolGuard reduces cooling loads with a resultant lowering of air-conditioning emissions and costs. It reduces heating loads in winter.

In winter, CoolGuard glass products offer greater comfort by reflecting room heat back into the room, thus reducing the loss of heat from inside to outside.

CoolGuard is custom manufactured for different applications and colour requirements in a wide range of aesthetically pleasing colours - blue bronze, green, grey, brown, white.

• For further information please contact: Leonard Malkin/ Keith Feldman/ Kevin Dudgeon, tel: +27 11 473-6700; cell: 082-451-5662, e-mail us at: keith@furmanglass.co.za. Browse our website at: www.furmanglass.co.za

## For that something special, contact Andrea's Attic

MARLENE BILEWITZ

Talking to Andrea of Andrea's Attic recently about decorating and furnishing a home, she said: "I adored decorating and building my home. In fact, I'm still collecting special pieces.

"I am in a fortunate position, of course, because in my business I get invited to people's homes and get first choice of those rare and old pieces - ornaments, paintings AND even furniture. Do you have any idea of what wonderful bargains one can find?"

In fact I do, because I have been in the fortunate position of being called by Andrea and told: "You know the empty space you have on your bedroom wall that you want to fill? Well, I've got just the right thing for you. I picked up two Walther Battiss paintings from his Fook World collection - and at a very good price too."

Andrea even found me a replacement for my magnificent Margaret Richardson ring that was stolen and could not be replaced as she has been dead for many years.

Now you know what I mean when I say that I am fortunate enough to be in close contact with Andrea who has access to so many complete households, valuables and auctioneers. Not only can she source for you, but she buys and sells at really good prices too.

Her knowledge of art is vast and her interest and expertise lies most particularly in South African masters.

So, if you want to downsize, close house completely, or need immediate cash, but want to know that your much loved pieces will be cared for in the same way that you treasured them, contact Andrea of Andrea's Attic for a really good deal.



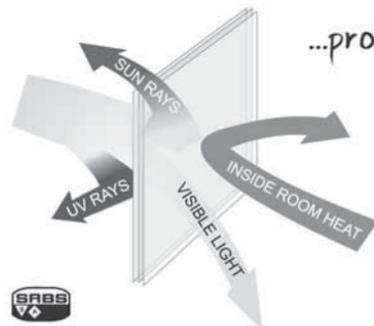
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AS ONE OF the biggest and most valuable assets people would have in their lifetime, a house needs to be properly insured - in terms of its physical structure and its contents.

Both rebuilding costs and the replacement value of the contents escalate every year, sometimes in line with inflation and sometimes more so, depending on what has happened to prices in construction, raw materials and household goods.

The insured value of a home and its contents needs to be evaluated annually so that in the event of a claim there is adequate cover. If the home and household contents are underinsured, an insurer may only reimburse a percentage of the total loss, leaving the policyholder to cover the balance of replacing those lost items.

While policyholders can have peace of mind knowing they are comprehensively insured, they should still take adequate steps to prevent claims.

Good security and vigilance go a very long way. A home and its perimeter should always be well secured. All doors and windows that open to the outside should be fitted with security gates and burglar bars. Shrubbery which could provide convenient cover to intruders, should be cut back.

Alarms must be regularly tested, and always after storms and power cuts. The backup battery must be in working order. The alarm must always be activated, even if you are popping out to the shops for an hour.

Alarm activation is necessary, even if a trusted domestic worker is in charge of the house. The alarm has to be switched on whenever she is not in the house, although she may still be on the premises.

If the alarm is not functioning properly or not switched on, an insurer may reject a claim. Alarms should ideally be linked to security companies.

It is recommended that homeowners should nominate a neighbour, friend or family member, who can respond to alarm signals when they are not available, if out of town for the day, or away on holiday or business.

Out of sight, out of mind is a good premise for minimising loss. Lock away garden furniture and hoses, bicycles, the lawnmower, garden equipment and tools.

Outbuildings and garages should be locked and secured. Don't be lazy about parking in the garage - better that the car be secured at all times.

Many of these tried and tested security measures can bring about a reduction in insurance premiums – and will certainly go a long way in reducing the chances of being a victim of theft or burglary.



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FURMAN GLASS' CEO Leonard Malkin gives some facts about shower doors and the Furman Glass ShowerTime range:

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**Pembury Lodge for the discerning retiree**

MARLENE BILEWITZ

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## BUILD, BUY OR RENOVATE



# Good preparation is key to success

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### Why it is important to prepare walls before painting

All surfaces require a certain amount of surface preparation. If this is not done properly, the end result could be the failure of the complete finishing system.

As a painting contracting company, a large proportion (up to 50 per cent) of our efforts are in the preparation of the surface. This will result in a sound and professional appearance.

When obtaining a quote for a painting job, always make sure that the contractor has a good preparation policy.

### How to prepare the walls for painting

In order to paint a wall, it needs to be clean, dry and free from imperfections. If the wall has been painted a number of times and there are runs or drips on the old surface, it may need to be sanded down to obtain a smooth finish. Depending on the condition,

you may be able to simply go over rough areas with a piece of sandpaper or a sanding block, then remove the dust with a clean tack rag or linen cloth.

Once the surface is smooth, inspect the wall for any cracks, holes or other surface imperfections that needs to be repaired.

Small holes and cracks can be filled with spackling. Apply a small amount in and over the hole with a putty knife and smooth carefully, feathering the putty out in all directions as you move away from the hole. Allow the hole to dry before continuing and if necessary, sand and fill the hole a second time. Once the filler is completely dry, sand the surface smooth.

Larger cracks or missing areas of plaster will need to be repaired with patch plaster.

Wipe the walls down with a damp cloth to remove any dust from the surface. For a neat finish remove all lug covers, light switch covers and window coverings before you begin.

Prepare your room by removing as much furniture as you can; what you can't remove put into the centre of the room and cover with a drop sheet.

If you are painting a plastered wall that has never

been painted before, you need to apply a primer to the wall before painting. Likewise if you are painting a previously painted surface, you need to prime any areas that were patched in your preparation work.

### What materials are available for homeowners (and pros and cons of these products)

We have over 14 different textured products for the homeowner to choose from. It all depends on what kind of look and feel the room or house calls for. We have everything from sprayed-on applications for a rougher textured look, to a polished marble-type finish.

The pros of these products are that they are a lot more luxurious in look and feel than normal paint. They are also a lot more durable and protective for your wall surface. They turn any home or building into a more luxurious asset in an instant.

The cons of the products are that they are more expensive than paint to apply in the short term, however long-term they prove to be more cost effective. They are also not a DIY product. A specialised team of applicators are needed to install our products.



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## Building and renovating tips

**FIRST DRAW** up a wish list. Get the household together and discuss the building. Draw up a list and separate the absolute needs from the nice-to-haves. Remember, no matter what you've been quoted - there are always hidden costs that pop up at the last minute.

Keep renovations in character. Consider the architectural integrity of your building. If partially renovating, retain the style and keep it similar, and in character.

Use colour carefully and thoughtfully. Light colours will not go out of fashion as fast as strong colours.

Give great consideration to the front exterior. The exterior presents the first statement about you and your home. Areas that cost the most are kitchens and bathrooms, so start there.

Don't over-capitalise, for instance, don't spend more money than you will get back when you sell. Only renovate if the basic structure is sound.

Consider your future requirements. Think how your proposals will fit into your present and future lifestyle. Will everybody be able to negotiate stairs?

Try to stick with first choices. Any changes you make during the building process will cost you more money.

Get good drawings done. The more detailed the drawing, the easier it will be to build. Only use an architect if your alteration is sizable, otherwise a draughtsman will suffice.

Changing the configuration of the basic layout costs money. Keep as much of the original configuration of your house because changing it usu-

ally means new plumbing and electrics.

If your renovation is major, use an architect. Always view previous work and get references. Set an affordable budget. If on a restrictive budget, spend the money where the water is first, such as on the kitchen and bathrooms.

Allow 10 per cent for contingencies.

Break down costs, right to the fittings and fixtures, so you know where the money is going.

Check your contract. Understand every aspect of the building contract. Consider having a penalty clause for late work. Consider having a clause on how to deal with disputes (via independent arbitration). Check the schedule of payments. Consider having an attorney check out the contract.

Don't sign a contract until plans and specifications have been completed (and if applicable, approved).

Don't pay for a building stage unless it is complete. If you believe work is substandard, discuss it immediately with the builder or contractor.

Find out if you require permits for what you want to do.



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## OPINION AND ANALYSIS - FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

# Terror attacks highlight new challenges on Israel's border with Egypt

LESLIE SUSSER  
JERUSALEM

LAST WEEK'S multifront Palestinian terrorist attack along the Egyptian-Israeli border highlighted two major new challenges to Israel's national security.

First is the breakdown of Egyptian central authority in the Sinai Peninsula, which has created fertile ground for terrorism against Israel. Complicating matters further is a heightened sensitivity in post-Mubarak Egypt to Israeli retaliation, especially if it entails action in territory nominally controlled by Egypt.

If not carefully managed, the twin challenges could bring the

Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, a cornerstone of regional stability for over three decades, into question, Israeli analysts say.

In separate interviews on Israel Radio, former generals Giora Eiland and Yisrael Ziv both argued that the top priority for Israel now is to take care to prevent any erosion in the peace with Egypt. Nahum Barnea, senior political analyst for Israel's daily Yediot Achronot, expanded on the theme.

"What is at stake," Barnea wrote on Monday, "is: How can Israel help the new Egyptian regime fend off the street pressure to cancel the peace treaty with Israel?"

Ever since former Egyptian

President Hosni Mubarak's ouster in February, the Sinai has been in a state of virtual anarchy. Any semblance of order that existed under Mubarak has been eroded. Scores of terrorists from Gaza and farther afield have been able to move in the area with impunity.

Arms smuggling through the Sinai to Gaza - always a problem - has reached unprecedented levels. The pipeline carrying Egyptian natural gas to Israel has been sabotaged five times since February.

In order to enable the Egyptians to reassert their control, Israeli officials indicate that they may be willing to consider an amendment to the Egyptian-Israeli peace accords to allow a stronger Egyptian military presence in Sinai, close to the border with Israel and in the key area along the border with Gaza.

A week before the terrorist attack, Israel agreed to the deployment of an additional 1 000 Egyptian troops in the sensitive area, despite treaty limitations that allow for only a few hundred lightly armed policemen to ensure that the Sinai never again becomes a staging ground for an Egyptian assault against Israel.

Israeli military analysts say that much will depend on the degree to which the Egyptian forces are willing to take on the smugglers and the terrorists.

Up until now, soldiers in the Sinai or lightly armed policemen closer to the border, have been taking kickbacks to look the other way. Without a change in attitude,

simply beefing up Egyptian forces will not solve the problem, Israeli analysts say. Indeed, some of the Gaza terrorists who fired on Israeli vehicles last week operated unhindered close to an Egyptian military position, they noted.

Even more worrying for Israel than the danger of having terrorists roaming freely around the Sinai is the potential threat the new situation poses to the peace with Egypt.

In the August 18 exchanges of fire with the terrorists, three Egyptian border policemen were killed. Although it is not yet clear how they died, the Egyptians were quick to blame Israel and demand an apology.

The incident sparked angry demonstrations outside the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, where one protester scaled the building to tear down the Israeli flag and replace it with an Egyptian one.

What makes this particularly troubling for Israel is that in the new Egypt, a product of the Arab Spring that has given greater weight to the voice of the people, the country's new leaders will have to take the widespread popular animosity toward Israel into account.

This, the analysts say, could bring the peace treaty with Israel under review.

Still, for all the public debate on the issue in Egypt, most experts do not anticipate a new Egyptian government abrogating the peace treaty with Israel in the near future.

They point out that the two countries still share common interests - for example, a quiet Sinai, in which

forces like al-Qaida, which also threaten Egypt, are neutralised. More importantly, the Egyptians know that if they cancel the peace treaty with Israel, they will forfeit the huge economic and military aid package they have been receiving from the United States ever since the treaty was signed under American auspices in 1979.

A key element that already has changed, however, is Egypt's attitude toward Hamas, which controls Gaza. Mubarak's Egypt strongly opposed Hamas, seeing it as extremist and within the Iranian orbit.

Egypt's new leaders are far less hostile toward both Iran and Hamas. They've used their closer ties with Hamas to create a potentially important role for themselves as mediator - both in matters concerning captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and in negotiating a ceasefire to end the current round of hostilities.

In the meantime, Israel has decided to accelerate the completion of a hi-tech fence along the border with Egypt that is designed to keep both terrorists and asylum seekers from Africa out.

The fence will be approximately 4.5 metre high and equipped with sophisticated electronic warning devices. The big question is whether Israel will have the resources and the manpower to patrol the fence's 232 km from Eilat to Gaza effectively and how much that activity would compromise the IDF's capacity to act elsewhere?

Israeli officials are also working behind the scenes with the Egyptians, primarily to ensure that whatever happens with Gaza or in the Sinai won't compromise the peace treaty, perhaps the single most important element of Israel's national security doctrine. (JTA)



Israeli soldiers patrol the Israel-Egypt border a day after a terrorist attack on August 18 left eight Israelis, several Palestinian gunmen and three Egyptian soldiers dead. (NATI SHOCHAT / FLASH90 / JTA)

### ADVERTORIAL

## Darryl Weisz wins ORT JET business mentor of the year

Every year ORT JET invites their volunteer mentors to a function that is held in their honour. This year the cocktail event, sponsored by Sasfin bank, took place at the HOD and the attendees were given the royal treatment.



Lesley Cohen presents the Sheldon Cohen Award to Darryl Weisz, mentor of the year.

"OUR VOLUNTEER mentors are the driving force of our organisational model; without their participation there would be no ORT JET," said Paul Bacher, ORT JET CEO, as he introduced the evening's proceedings.

ORT JET has over 500 volunteer mentors who are involved with the organisation on various levels. These business people give of their time and expertise to assist Jewish business owners with the various challenges they face. Over the past year more than 180 businesses have benefitted from the free services offered by ORT JET.

Bacher announced the launch of a new, exciting project ORTJET will be implementing, namely a new "Women's Empowerment" training division, which will assist women with skills training needed to make them more financially sustainable and empowered.

The guest speaker of the evening was Prof Mervyn King who was interviewed "talk show style" by David Shapiro of



David Shapiro (Sasfin Bank), Professor Mervyn King (Guest Speaker), Paul Bacher (ORT JET CEO)

Sasfin Bank. The audience was mesmerised by the mere presence of such an accomplished businessman, while Prof King casually spoke about his early career as a corporate attorney and his journey, which culminated in his contribution and involvement with the King Commission.

He emphasised the growing urgency for the private sector companies to be accountable for their actions in terms of creating sustainable economic solutions to ensure that our planet will be around for our great-grandchildren to enjoy.

The evening came to an end as Darryl Weisz was given the Sheldon Cohen Mentor of the Year award for his incredible contribution towards assisting businesses this year.

Weisz is a business growth strategy consultant and has spent a large portion of his time consulting to ORT JET businesses, as well as the operational team this year. Weisz accepted the award explaining how his mentoring had been one of the most rewarding experiences.

As the evening came to a close, the mentors and their partners left feeling uplifted and inspired to do good and appreciate life's blessings!



## ARTS MATTERS

COMPILED BY  
ROBYN SASSEN

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info@frodo.co.za at least one  
week prior to publication

**Artisan Contemporary  
Gallery, Morningside,  
Durban:** "Kimonos  
Unlimited" works by the  
Fibreworks group, opens  
August 28, (031) 312-4364.

**Cinema Nouveau,  
Brooklyn Mall, Pretoria:**  
Israeli Film Festival, until  
September 1, (012) 470-3513.

**Cinema Nouveau, Gateway,  
Durban:** Israeli Film  
Festival, September 2 - 8, (012)  
470-3513.

**Dance Factory, Newtown:**  
(and associated venues) New  
Dance, hosted by Dance  
Forum, September 6 - 18, (011)  
492-0709.

**Elizabeth Sneddon  
Theatre, Durban:** Steven  
Stead directs Kander and  
Ebb's "Cabaret", until August  
28, (031) 260-2296.

**Iziko: SA National  
Museum, Cape Town:**  
"Tretchikoff: The People's  
Painter", curated by Andrew  
Lamprecht, until September  
25, (021) 481-3970.

**Joburg Theatre Complex,  
Braamfontein:** In the Nelson  
Mandela, "The Pink Floyd  
Experience", until September  
4, (011) 877-6800.

**Market Theatre,  
Newtown:** In the Laager,  
"The Table", directed by  
Sylvaine Strike, until  
September 18. In the Main  
Theatre, "Refuse the Hour",  
collaborations between  
Philip Miller, Dada Masilo,  
William Kentridge and oth-  
ers, under the direction of  
Sue Pam-Grant, September 6  
- 18, (011) 832-1641.

**Montecasino, Fourways:** In  
the Main Theatre, Alan  
Bennett's "The History  
Boys", until September 11. In  
the Studio, "Off Beat  
Broadway 4", with Lindy  
Abromowitz, Anton Luitingh  
and Paul du Toit, until  
October 2, (011) 511-1988.

**Old Mutual Theatre on the  
Square, Sandton:** On  
August 30, "The Prize of  
Peace" by Les Morison, a play  
about the architects of peace  
in SA, opens. Friday  
lunchtime concert: Nelly  
Shmukler (violin), Daline  
Wilson (violin), Morkel  
Combrink (viola), Wessel  
Beukes (cello) and Tinus  
Botha (piano), August 26;  
Malcolm Nay (piano) and  
Maceij Lancy (cello),  
September 2. On September  
11, renowned educationist  
Marcelle Pincus performs  
"What if nobody comes?" a  
revue with Zelda Martin,  
Natasha Millar and a cast of  
children. Profits to Hatzolah,  
(011) 883-8606.

**SA Jewish Museum,  
Gardens:** "Jiving with  
Madiba: Jonathan Shapiro's  
Mandela", until November 27,  
(021) 465-1546.

**Wits University  
Braamfontein:** In the  
Nunnery, "Slap Koejawel",  
with veteran performers  
Vanessa Cooke and Annelisa  
Weiland, directed by Robert  
Whitehead, August 27, (011)  
717-1376.

## TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE



**The boys and their master: Scripps  
(David Schlachter); Dakin (Clyde  
Berning); Hector (Michael Richard);  
Posner (Roberto Pombo); Akhtar  
(Gopala Chetty); Timms (Jeremy  
Richard); Crowther (Marcelle  
Richards); Lockwood (Matthew  
Lotter); and Rudge (Asher Stoltz).  
(PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZY BERNSTEIN)**

## Meaty theatre - but lacking gut-wrenching charisma

**Show:** *The History Boys*, Pieter Toerien  
*Theatre, Montecasino, Fourways*, (011) 511-  
1988

**Cast:** Clyde Berning; Gopala Chetty; Graham  
Hopkins; Theo Landey; Matthew Lotter;  
Roberto Pombo; Jeremy Richard; Michael  
Richard; Marcelle Richards; Louise Saint-  
Claire; David Schlachter; Asher Stoltz

**Director:** Alan Swerdlow

**Musical director:** Louis Zurnamer

**Playwright:** Alan Bennett

**Design:** Jannie Swanepoel (set); Charl-Johan  
Lingenfelder (sound); Malcolm Terrey (cos-  
tumes).

**Until:** September 11

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

IN SPITE of impeccable credentials: top of the range collaborators; best-in-the-business adult performers; fabulous newcomers; splinteringly incisive language; a laudatory overseas critical spec, *The History Boys* is not flawless.

Divided into short scenes, it tells of a Sheffield-based boys' grammar school in the Thatcherite '80s. Text-heaviness doesn't always allow the sparkle of throwaway lines their levity, given the work's over two hour duration.

Graham Hopkins plays Hector, the beleaguered yet impassioned teacher pivotal to the story. His physical softness, replete with cardigan and bow-tie, is overplayed: he seems

to more convincingly fit the bill for a tippler than an overzealous school teacher.

Think Michael Caine in the 1983 film of Willy Russell's "Educating Rita", with his laissez-faire nature pushed even further. Opposite Irwin (Theo Landey), a teacher appointed to polish the boys for Oxbridge college suitability, Hector's vulnerabilities are shot into deep relief.

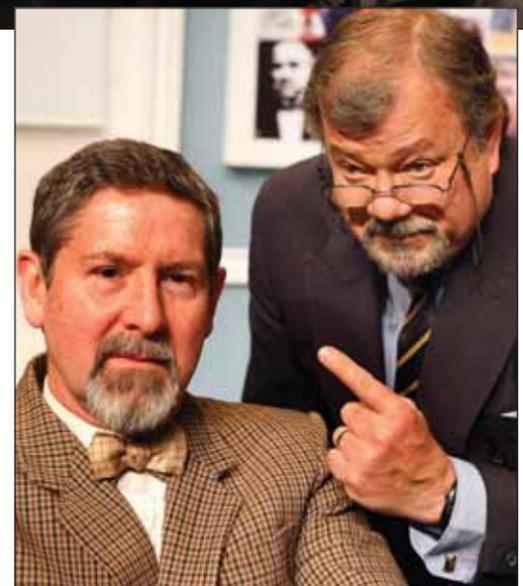
Irwin, debated by the boys to be either meretricious or disingenuous, is disdained because of his youth and sexuality, which leads to the play's tragic denouement.

The horror of this finale becomes murky in the detail of academic politics, value in education, poetry and film culture articulated with campness and an upright piano. In consequence, rather than flesh and blood, the characters, peppered with a fine range of North of England accents, are lent urbaneness, leaving the work cold.

Louise Saint-Claire is Mrs Lintott, another on the school staff and the sole female voice in this sea of testosterone. Her role electrically pinpoints the perversity of a male-generated understanding of history, and the bleak black humour of Bennett's crafted words shines most convincingly through her.

Swerdlow introduces newish faces; of particular note is Clyde Berning as the sex-obsessed Dakin and Roberto Pombo as Posner, not only Jewish and consciously homosexual, but also originating from Sheffield: a triple curse in his own estimation.

With a set so evocative of a classroom



**Confrontation: Hector (Graham Hopkins) and his headmaster (Michael Richard).**

dynamic, you instinctively remember the universal school smells of dried sweat and ancient vomit, set against a wall of photographs of theatre and historical greats, the work takes you from classroom to common room to headmaster's office.

Structurally, the constantly in motion loyalties between students and teacher, how they respond as a single entity and collude against the teacher with the arrogance of youth, is set up magnificently.

*The History Boys* is meaty. It engages the rich pool of issues which spill from the reality of educating teenagers; this interpretation lacks the gut-wrenching charisma that would force you to take home the issues in your heart and head.



### FELDMAN ON FILM

Peter Feldman

#### NOT THE PICK OF THE WEEK

##### Retribution

**Cast:** Joe Mafela; Jeremy Crutchley; Shoki  
Mokgapa; Morne Visser

**Director:** Makunda Michael Dewil

The South African film industry has produced a crop of fascinating films this year, on a diverse range of subjects.

With *Retribution*, first-time director Makunda Michael Dewil has attempted a more artistic approach in creating his psychological thriller. Dewil, better known for his TV commercials, brings this experience to bear in the look and feel of the film.

Its muted texture, almost drained of colour, reminds one of a slow-paced TV commercial - but in this case the punch-line takes a very long time to come.

There are two key characters. One is a retired judge, Khumbulani Maphosa (played by an

almost unrecognisable Joe Mafela) and the other is a white man, Alan Reilly (Jeremy Crutchley), who invades the judge's lonely mountain retreat.

Maphosa is writing his memoirs, cut-off from civilisation, when Alan Reilly stumbles in, professing to be lost.

The kindly Maphosa offers him a meal and a warm bed for the night, hoping this visitor will depart in the morning so that he can continue his writing.

From the outset, director Dewil manages to create a feeling of unease and one begins to question the true motives behind the visit.

It soon transpires that Reilly is seeking some kind of retribution, "to right the wrong" (as he says) by holding the judge responsible for the murder of his 12-year-old daughter some years earlier. It seems the judge, in his wisdom, had set a murderer free. The killer was eventually re-arrested but not before he had killed Reilly's daughter.

With Maphosa's own daughter, Thembi (Shoki Mokgapa), about to visit her father, Reilly sees an ideal opportunity to wreak his revenge - but first he has a plan in mind which will certainly grab the judge's undivided attention.

*Retribution* could have benefited, perhaps, from a stronger back story, because the characters are far too sketchy for us to care about their predicament.

There is no reference to Reilly's past, but when we meet him, it doesn't take a genius to realise that not only is he an angry man, but he's seriously unhinged as well. Who would kill the family dog and then serve up the animal's liver for dinner?

The narrative certainly has moments of high tension, but these are awkwardly telegraphed through a series of pounding drum beats, with any element of surprise rudely removed.

There are also some serious credibility gaps. Another nagging factor is the lack of continuity and flow in the sequences, with a sort of stop/start effect, which only serves to mar the tension.

The fight sequence between the two protagonists bothered me, too, coming across as stagey and unrealistic.

The lead actors, Mafela and Crutchley, are commanding entities in their own right, but are, unfortunately, restricted here by the limitations of the script.

The two lesser characters, Shoki Mokgapa (Thembi) and Morne Visser, as the unfortunate ranger who tries in vain to help, hardly make a dent in the overall scheme of things.

*Retribution* is a valiant attempt at cobbling together the rudimentary components that constitute a psychological thriller; but fails to fully engage.

## TAPESTRY - ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

# A tiny slap exposes a myriad fault lines

*The Slap* by Christos Tsiolkas  
(Atlantic Books, R134)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

IT ALL begins on a hot afternoon in Melbourne when a group of predominantly Greek Australians, connected by family and long-standing friendships, are enjoying a barbecue. Suddenly three-year-old Hugo - bored and petulant - begins throwing a tantrum, yelling, kicking and spitting at the adults within reach.

No attempts to calm him down succeed. Then, picking up a baseball bat, the little boy advances towards another child, ready to attack him with it. Seeing this, Harry - the father of the threatened child and a man possessed of a volatile temper - rushes forward, picks up Hugo and slaps him soundly on the backside, just hard enough to startle him into instant submission.

Pandemonium breaks out. Gary and Rosie, the parents of Hugo, are outraged and take legal action against Harry for "child abuse". In turn, the lives of all the guests are thrown into turmoil as those supporting Harry's action, and those condemning it, form two polarised and increasingly hostile groups.

Behind their divergent opinions lie years of unresolved grievances, tensions and far deeper issues than the method of disciplining a headstrong toddler.

The slap is the catalyst which slowly, but inexorably exposes the fault lines in the marriages and careers of this group of brash, arrogant, second-generation Australians, most of whom have made good and are enjoying a quality of life they know they could not replicate anywhere else.

The slap is also the lynchpin for a series of traumatic events which test - and, in some cases, destroy - both their relationships and their assumptions about each other, their values and their country.

The marriage of good-looking, self-assured Hector and his Indian-born veterinarian wife, Aisha, who

had hosted the barbecue in the first place, is one near-casualty. Hector - like most of his male friends - has committed a string of infidelities, and has his eye on Connie, his wife's teenaged surgery assistant.

Aisha - respected for her professional skill, ever-reliable and rational - is the backbone behind her group of unstable girlfriends. Now forced to choose sides between her warring companions, Aisha takes a long, critical - and unsettling - look at her husband, herself and the compromises she has made to keep their partnership going.

"This, finally, was love. This was its shape and essence, once the lust and ecstasy and adventure had gone. Love, at its core, was negotiation, the surrender of two individuals to the messy, banal, domestic realities of sharing a life together."

There are the wild cards, like Anouk, an outspoken Jewish TV scriptwriter, who openly praises Harry for slapping the boy. And there is Sandi, Harry's downtrodden wife. Long a victim of her husband's bawling, beer-fuelled outbursts, she relies heavily on the moral support of her girlfriends. With this denied her in the controversy sparked by the slap, her foundations begin to crumble.

Segue to the older generation. Manolis and his wife Koula, Hector's ageing, Greek-born parents, with their Mediterranean outlook on child-rearing, have no objections in principle to what took place at the barbecue. However, in the ugly aftermath of the slap, Koula's latent, vicious racism emerges. Manolis - weary and disillusioned with the bewildering values of this new generation of Australians - feels his mortality bearing down.

"Often on the train or the tram, he would be taken aback by some clear lack of civility in a young man, and then realise that the boy had no notion of how crude his behaviour appeared, how dishonourable... It used to anger him... Now he felt pity for them.

"They had no fathers and they had

not learned the meaning of honour, of respect. The mother was everything, of course, everyone knew that. Women gave life and sustained life.

"But women were too selfish to teach honour... That's no good, he mused to himself, no good at all. Something is wrong in the world when the old pity the young."

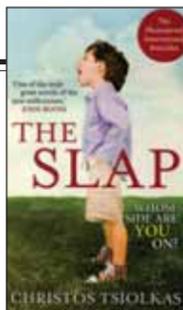
Finally, there is Rosie, the obsessive, New Age-indoctrinated mother of the slapped child. Born, bred and shop-soiled in the slums, she has clawed her way into comparative respectability in Melbourne. Now, with overwhelming financial problems and a wimpish, alcoholic husband, Rosie projects all her fears onto her cosseted little son.

Despite its length (483 pages), Christos Tsiolkas's novel is consistently vibrant, clever, humorous and, just as often, terrifying. It is a trenchant exploration of disintegrating values among the absurd, the vulgar, the brash and the brazen.

Equally, it lays bare the hypocrisy of a wildly consumerist society which insists that the inviolability of children is sacrosanct, but which simultaneously endorses promiscuity and substance abuse among its youth. It also deftly uncovers the deep-seated machismo of both Greek and Australian males (two of the world's most chauvinistic cultures), the aggression and frustrations of arriviste immigrants, the widening generation gap and the residual prejudices of Australians towards their "wog" countrymen.

Piercing in its satire, unerring in its location of the cheap and the nasty lying just below the politically correct surface, the book is hugely entertaining: one thinks of Tom Wolfe. Indeed, so well constructed is its plot and so rapid its pace that one forgives the occasional orthographic blunder and the fact that Tsiolkas's strength is perception, rather than eloquence.

The book was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize and while the gushing endorsement on its cover by John Boyne ("one of the truly great novels of the new millennium") is somewhat far-fetched, it is an important, timely and compulsively readable work.



## Bring on the 'silent' clowns...

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

SCHOOL APTITUDE tests pointed to a career in neurosurgery, but Jayne Batzofin 27, had other ideas. The Wits drama honours graduate is now part of a pioneering movement to involve the deaf in stage careers.

"It's genetic, I can't fight it," she maintains, explaining that her father, David; aunt, Debbie; and grandfather, Jack, were or are all involved in the theatre.

Batzofin is participating in the forthcoming Out the Box Festival of Puppetry and Visual Performance by way of the productions Benchmarks and Kardiavale. The latter, for which she has written the lyrics and designed the costumes, set and props, is presented by A Conspiracy of Clowns, a collective of theatre practitioners that is bringing the old traditions of skilled clowning back on to the contemporary stage.

She is also a member of FTH:K (From the Hip: Khulumakhale), a young deaf and hearing theatre company that has as its goal the integration of the deaf into the performance arts in South Africa.

A Conspiracy of Clowns has all but reinvented mask work in this coun-



The masked cast of "Benchmarks", Liezl de Kock, Daniel Buckland and Thumeka Mzayiya. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOAST COETZER)

try, she agrees. "Mask work's been popularised in Europe, but has not yet filtered into the South African theatre ethos and I really feel that Rob Murray and Liezl de Kock - who started Conspiracy - are pushing the boundaries of mask work here."

As to her involvement with FTH:K, she says she has always been interested in non-verbal theatre, it was the subject of her university thesis.

After two years at what she labels the "theatre-making" Jacques Lecoq School in Paris, she returned to this country and relocated to Cape Town in 2009 - her first visit and "not knowing a single soul" - to commence her journey with the company, followed thereafter by joining Conspiracy.

Benchmarks, produced by FTH:K, a non-verbal, full mask

work, has just returned from the National Arts Festival where it was "very well" received. She admits, though, that for local audiences, the genre is an acquired taste.

"I'd say what we're doing is quite forward-thinking, but in terms of Europe, we're doing what they've been doing for a long time."

This type of work is more challenging, she agrees, naming "trying not to want to talk" as a difficulty.

"Also, the attention to detail: You can't just have your hands sit on a table without thinking about the angle, the quality of that hand, because that's going to express your entire mood. Your face has gone, you have no words.

"Clowning is even more challenging," she says, "because you're connecting with the audience, so if they are not with you, you fail. Also, making people laugh is much harder than making them cry.

"It's just a rigorous precision - getting that clown to be the right amount of naive, but also realness. It's a lot of work."

Kardiavale is at the Arena Theatre, September 5-6. Benchmarks is at the Little Theatre, September 8-9. See [www.outtheboxfestival.com](http://www.outtheboxfestival.com) for the full programme.

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## LETTERS

The Editor, Suite 175, Postnet X10039, Randburg, 2125 email: carro@global.co.za

**Guidelines for letters:** Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact telephone or cell number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

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

## JEWISH ENTREPRENEURS BOX WELL ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT

IN YOUR editorial of August 19, you write about the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards. "Ultimately this inspiring event is an antidote to the pessimism we often talk ourselves into."

These achievements by Jewish entrepreneurs are spectacular, possibly even supernatural, considering that Jews account for only about 0,2 per cent of the South African population.

In the same vein, Israeli companies have more listings, apart from America, than anyone else on the Nasdaq (technology exchange).

Entrepreneurs of any religious persuasion, are a major source of job creation, but unfortunately they are a rare breed. An entrepreneur needs to be competent in the technical aspects of his product, in marketing, in finance, and in personnel management.

Although this entrepreneurial endeavour is commendable, it hardly ameliorates the situation of our macro-economics and the attendant unemployment.

To quote Ann Bernstein of the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), 80 per cent of women in Limpopo between the ages of 20 and 30, are unemployed.

If the unemployment scenario is not sufficiently serious, three medium size companies have recently terminated operations, namely the Zincor smelter,

a Sappi paper mill and Cisco (steel processing). Moreover, there is the shambles of the Department of Labour closing down small clothing factories in Newcastle.

If the unemployment and closure of firms are not enough, we have been the recipients of less foreign direct investment (FDI) than Egypt, Angola, the Congo and a similar amount to the Sudan, (the same Sudan that was in the middle of a civil war).

As if the labour laws, closure of firms and lack of FDI are insufficient, we have parastatals whose price increases are unrestrained and whose forward planning is somewhere below par, for instance Eskom and Transnet.

On a slightly more positive note, some quarters are realising that our labour laws and monopolistic nature of collective bargaining are a bottleneck in the process of job creation. Those who have acknowledged this are Pravin Gordhan, Trevor Manuel, Gareth Ackerman, and Ann Bernstein. They are voicing the opinion long voiced by the IMF and World Bank.

Keep up the good work of the Absa Achiever Awards - at least it's a beacon of light in a sea of darkness.

**John Brenner  
Cyrildene  
Johannesburg**

## WHO IS GUILTY OF THE CRIME OF SILENCE?

TERRY CRAWFORD-BROWNE, secretary of the upcoming Russell Tribunal set for Cape Town in November, intent on branding Israel an apartheid state, says the tribunal is made up of "jurists of international significance".

We have one, Alberto San Juan (on the tribunals website) - a Spanish actor; acting of course qualifies him as a "juror of international significance".

Among those invited to give "evidence" are Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Ronnie Kasrils, Zackie and Pierre Galand, all with a well-documented history of extreme bias against Israel.

Yet Crawford-Browne states that this tribunal won't be another Israel bashing exercise! Indeed, but a hate fest it will certainly be, given the "impartial" make-up of the invitees.

When questioned why other Middle Eastern countries are not under focus, he states: "Israel claims to be a democracy", so of course this exonerates all those countries whose human rights records pale in insignificance to even that of South Africa at the height of apartheid.

But, wait, to my understanding Lebanon is also a democracy where over 400 000 Palestinians live in cramped "refugee" camps under some of the most draconian apartheid laws, denied educa-

tion, medical care and jobs!

Wasn't Hamas democratically elected in Gaza, where human rights abuses abound just last week two people were put to death after "confessing" to have spied for Israel? None of these "impartial referees" ever criticised Libya, Egypt or Tunisia, prior to the "Arab Spring" or since.

None of these have criticised Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, not to mention Syria, where the regime is murdering its own population by the thousands!

But this tribunal is blind to genocide in Africa and carnage in the Arab world.

While, as Crawford-Browne states, the tribunal "cannot take on every issue in the world", we must ask by what yardstick it measures Israel where it would be hard pressed to find but one apartheid-style law on its statute book, as opposed to the apartheid existing in Israel's neighbouring countries.

This tribunal's website front page mission statement reads: "May this tribunal prevent the crime of silence" - how apt, given its silence on the carnage in Syria and more importantly, the millions of African starving to death in the Horn of Africa!

**Allan Wolman  
Norwood, Johannesburg**

## LOOKING FOR...

### RICHARD BACHRACH IS LOOKING FOR FAMILY IN SOUTH AFRICA

RICHARD BACHRACH from Minneapolis, Minnesota, is looking for his family in Johannesburg.

He writes: "There should be a Richard Mendelssohn. I believe him to be about my age: 63. His father was Bert Mendelssohn.

They are my first cousins. My grandfather spelled it Mindelsohn in the US."

Anybody with information may contact Bachrach at 6520 Josephine Ave, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55439, USA or 952-911-2308.

### INFORMATION WANTED ON KURT BAMBUS AND HIS FAMILY

SOMEONE IN Germany who is researching the life of Kurt Bambus, is appealing to anyone in South Africa with any information on Bambus.

If anyone knew the family, or if there are any descendants in South Africa, could they please contact Lynne on 083-378-1114 or e-mail lynner@ibi.co.za

Kurt Bambus, born on May 9, 1896,

married Ellen Seehof, born on July 4, 1894. They had three children: Hans, born June 6, 1924; Annelise, born September 9, 1922 and Gerhard born June 27, 1925.

The entire family left Germany in 1935 and emigrated to South Africa, where they lived at 74 Kerry Road. (No other details known). Kurt returned to Germany in 1949.

## FOR THE RECORD

### GORDON RIOTS TOOK PLACE IN 1780

IN LAST week's Barbaric Yawp column, it is stated that the Gordon Riots took place in 1882, whereas in fact they took

place in 1780. We apologise for the "finger trouble" adding a century to the riots.

## 'JEWISH ACHIEVERS' HAVE NO FOUNDATION IN JUDAISM AT ALL

YOUR COVERAGE of the Jewish Achiever Awards was extensive. In fact, not only did you devote five pages to it, but you even had a supplement magazine all about the Awards.

However, although they are named the Jewish Achiever Awards, they do not have any foundation in Judaism at all. On the contrary, these awards go completely against Torah philosophy. Achieving in Torah belief, has absolutely nothing to do with the amount of wealth one accumulates, nor about his efforts or talents in business.

Judaism believes that nothing in the material world is based on a man's efforts. The Gemorah (Megilla 25a) says: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except the Fear of Heaven."

The Torah itself warns the same thing, saying: "...lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle, and cattle and goats increase, and everything that you have will increase - and your heart will get haughty and you will forget Hashem... and you will say 'My strength and my might, made me all this wealth.' Rather you must remember that it was G-d who gave you this strength." (Devarim 8:17). We see that accumulation of wealth is not in man's hands, but in Hashem's.

It is true that the Gemorah (Nedorim 38a) states: "Hashem's presence dwells on one who is rich." This seems to go against the sources above. But the major commentators (The Ran, Rambam) say that this does not mean that one must be physically powerful and materially wealthy.

Rather, it means that one must be powerful in spirit, having full self-control over his physical desires and drives. He must be "rich" in that he leads a simple life and is content with what he has, in accordance with the Mishnah in Avos (4:1): "Who is the rich one? The one who is happy with his lot."

The Chovos Halevavos repeats this exact message saying: "A person must engage in an occupation to the extent necessary to fulfil his needs. If G-d has ordained more for him, it will come. If G-d decrees less, even if all those in Heaven or Earth were to try increase it, they would not succeed in any way." (Sha'ar Bitachon)

## GILAD SHALIT SOLIDARITY RALLY: THANK YOU TO ALL WHO TOOK PART

THIS LETTER was submitted in order to amend an article published in last week's issue of the Jewish Report, with regards to the Gilad Shalit Solidarity Rally. Unfortunately some of the information in this article was inaccurate. We would like to state that the Gilad Shalit Solidarity Rally held on Thursday August 11, was initiated and organised by the Israel Centre together with the Zionist youth movements of South Africa.

This event was the peak of an educational programme which the youth movements held from August 1 to 8 in the Jewish day schools in Gauteng. Youth movement leaders and Israeli representatives visited the schools and held sessions with each of the grades, where they educated the learners about Shalit in order to create awareness and understanding.

Activities in the schools were related to the dilemmas and the controversy that Israeli society faces today, with the focus being on the plight of Shalit.

The rally began at Yeshiva College, Rabbi Laurence Perez and Israel Centre Director Shimon Shamila, addressed the hundreds of learners and members of the community. They focused on the importance of the rally and the

And so, if the accumulation of wealth has absolutely nothing to do with man's efforts, what is considered an achievement according to Judaism? The answer is straight from the Torah itself: "Now, Oh Israel, what does G-d ask of you? Only to fear Him, to walk in His ways, to love Him and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Devarim 10:12).

We see that real achievement in Judaism is one who does all that Hashem asks, does all His mitzvos - both in the realm between Man and G-d; and between Man and man.

It follows, naturally, that one who does not pursue the serving of Hashem "with all his heart and all his soul" and has not mastered Hashem's mitzvos, is not just an underachiever; he is even a failure. On this basis, the only awards deserving of giving out, would have been for those of community service.

Note also, that from a halachic point, these Awards may in fact be under the category of "putting a stumbling block before the blind". The majority of attendees and readers are certainly unaware of the aforementioned principles.

These awards only further their pursuit for wealth and honour, which in the Torah's eyes, is completely out of their hands. This leads to a distraction from what is one's real purpose in the world, which is to serve Hashem. It also reduces a person's belief and Emuna in Hashem.

In addition, history has continuously shown that where Jews exhibit their wealth in foreign lands, they attract hatred towards them. If one reads up the Kli Yakar's commentary on Devarim (2:3), one will see that the misery continuously faced by exiled Jews, is often preceded by their inciting their non-Jewish neighbours through the parading of their ostentatious lifestyles.

I would strongly suggest that the Board consult Torah authorities and reconsider these awards - if not from a halachic and Torah standpoint, then certainly from a danger perspective.

**Saul Schlessinger  
Jerusalem**

necessity to be in solidarity with Shalit and his family.

They stressed the Jewish value of Pidyon Shvuim, which obligates us to do everything we can for Shalit's immediate release and to show the rest of the world that we stand together.

The rally then continued to Genesis Park where the leaders of the community, Avrom Kregel, chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Yaakov Finkelstein, deputy ambassador of the Israeli Embassy in South Africa, addressed everyone.

We were also encouraged by the deputy ambassador of the French Embassy, Olivier Brochenin, who stated very clearly that "the French authorities will not end their efforts until Gilad Shalit is free".

We thank everyone for attending our Solidarity Rally. A special thank you goes to Nathanel Gozlan, Netzer shaliach; Nathan Alexander, Bnei Akiva Youth movement, King David Schools, Yeshiva College, Torah Academy and everyone else who helped make this event possible.

**Shimon Shamila  
Director,  
Israel Centre South Africa**

### MIZRACHI TOUR TO POLAND A VERY MOVING EXPERIENCE

I WAS fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel to Poland with Mizrachi in May this year. I would like to express my feelings by way of your newspaper and tell your readers what an informative and emotional experience it was for me to be in Poland.

I saw the horrors of what remains in Poland from the war years, but I learnt that Jewish life continues there even if there were those who tried to obliterate the Jewish nation.

I feel that it is important for all to try and visit

### HATZOLAH DOES THE JEWISH COMMUNITY - AGAIN - PROUD

While parking in front of my kids' house in Forest Town last Sunday afternoon, I noticed a group of middle-aged and an elderly couple walking in the street - there is no pavement, just grass verges.

An elderly woman suddenly collapsed, falling flat on her face. Getting out my car, I realised she was only half-conscious, so I got my blanket out my car and rushed over, phoning Hatzolah.

Within a few minutes two cars arrived, lights flashing, and the woman was stabilised. Her husband was stunned and couldn't help.

In another minute the Hatzolah ambulance arrived, while Chaim (in the office) was talking to

Poland if possible, especially for South Africans, as many of us have Lithuanian roots, and although not descended from Polish Jewry, this tour gave us the opportunity to fully identify with the destruction of our Polish Jewish brethren.

Mizrachi is sending another tour towards the end of October to Poland; give it some thought and consideration!

**Shoshana Wolfson  
Glenhazel, Johannesburg**

me on my cellphone, and Prof Steele's wife was taken off to hospital. One of the neighbours came up to me, put her arms around me, kissing me, and said: "I do so admire you Jewish people; you are so caring and community minded. I have never seen such wonderful people, and I was a nurse."

I was so proud! Hatzolah didn't ask whether the older couple were Jewish or not, but just came to assist.

Thank you, thank you, Hatzolah.

**Shelly Rosenberg  
Parkwood, Johannesburg**

## COMMUNITY COLUMNS



## ABOVE BOARD

Zev Krengel,  
National Chairman

*A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies*

## Bowing out after a fruitful four years at the SAJBD helm

SINCE TAKING office as national chairman of the SAJBD in August 2007, I have used this space to report back to our community on the work of our organisation, the issues in which it has involved itself on behalf of the constituency it represents and my own views on how such issues should be understood and addressed.

This being my last column before I step down at this weekend's conference, I would like to begin by thanking the SA Jewish Report for providing us with this important report-back vehicle. Whenever our community has wanted to know what the Board's stance is on matters of pressing concern - the latter have included Fatima Hajaig's anti-Semitic tirade of two years ago and threats to the community issued by Cosatu's Bongani Masuku - they have had to look no further than our Above Board column.

The parting message I have chosen to leave you with is something that I have already touched on in some form or other in many previous columns. In summary, it is that while our Jewish community should never hold back in standing up for what it believes in, it must continually be wary of being sucked into a spiral of negativity about this country.

For good reason, our community is admired by its counterparts throughout the Diaspora for its vibrancy, organisational strength and commitment, but if it has a weakness, it is in the tendency of its members to take too gloomy a view of things.

This is always dangerous. Negativity is something that feeds off itself, and if unchecked, it can all too easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One of the biggest challenges of my term in office has been to try to foster a more positive mindset about South Africa within South African Jewry. As those who have read my columns will know, I am someone who believes passionately in South Africa - what it has accomplished, what it stands for and where it is going.

I am far from being in denial about the challenges we face, yet the manner in which we have successfully overcome even more daunting problems in the past, gives me the confidence that we will be able to successfully address those of today and tomorrow.

I step down as chairman in the sure knowledge that I am leaving the Board in excellent hands. Having worked closely with the incoming leadership, I have every confidence in their ability to take the institution forward.

I thank the SAJBD executive and all members of our national executive and regional councils for their valued advice, friendship and support. I would like to specifically thank the staff of the Board, headed so capably by National Director Wendy Kahn and ably assisted by Associate Director David Saks, Communications Head Charisse Zeifert, Researcher and Diplomatic Liaison Steven Gruzd (a post held with distinction until recently by Alana Baranov), Administrative Director Shirley Beagle and Head Office Manager Jenni Fearnley.

It has been a privilege working with so fine a team, and even more of a privilege to have led so outstanding a Jewish community as ours over the past four years.

*This column is paid for by the SAJBD*

## A concert and dinner to warm the cockles of your heart

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
RITA LEWIS

THE RECENT third Annual Chazzonus Club Dinner and Concert held at the Hebrew Order of David in Orchards in aid of Hatzolah featured internationally renowned Chazzan Berel Zucker from Israel and three "local" chazzanim, Rabbi Ari Kievman and Ezra Sher both from Johannesburg and Barry Braun from Cape Town.

Not only did they perform separately, but were also accompanied by the 14 local adult male Lebedek Singers as well as the 30 members of The Young Jewish Stars Children's Choir.

They were accompanied by Evelyn Green at the piano with Adam Golding conducting.

The concept of having a concert combined with a three course dinner, had already previously proved to be extremely successful and this one was no different, with all 320 seats for the dinner and concert taken up.

The programme consisted of a variety of well-known songs, including Laufer's Shehecheyanu, in which we bless Hashem for keeping us alive and preserved us to reach this occasion; Y Green's Retzei in which our fervent prayer is that we return to our Holy Land; and Gross's Ani Ma'Amim, a basic tenet of Jewish faith that, although it has been so long, we still await the coming of Moshiach every day.

Guest performer, Chazzan Zucker, the winner of the 2005 Cantors' World Cantorial Talent Search, was born in Detroit in 1981. His father, a



Barry Braun; Berel Zucker; Rabbi Ari Kievman; and Ezra Sher, sing their hearts out accompanied by the Lebedek Singers and the Young Jewish Stars.

Lubavitcher Chassid and chazzan, instilled in Berel and his brothers the rich Chassidic legacy of nigun and chazzanus.

Rabbi Ari Kievman began his chazzanus career at age 14 when he was commissioned to lead the services of the Yomtavin, High Holy Days at a shul just outside New York City. He came to South Africa in 2002 for rabbinical training at Machon L'Hora'ah in Pretoria and has since done sterling work with the Chabad seniors - among his other projects.

Chazzan Ezra Sher started singing at age nine and performed regularly as a child soloist at Berea Shul.

Since then he has been the chazzan at various venues throughout South Africa for the High Holy Days and has been Pine Street's chazzan for some 14 years.

After studying privately for some years and attending the Pretoria Opera School, he won the Eugenie Chopin Award for the most promising male singer in South Africa. He

has often performed overseas and is currently doing a B Mus through Unisa.

He took upon himself the selection of the musical content and training of performers for this concert.

Accompanist Evelyn Green needs no introduction as she has accompanied many visiting chazzanim, is a founder member of the JJMC and is one of South Africa's foremost accompanists and repetiteurs.

She is an examiner for Unisa and is actively involved in teaching.

Adam Golding was this year appointed to be the conductor of the Linksfield Choir, having previously trained and conducted the Sydenham Shul Choir for their Celebration 60 tour, which performed in Cape Town, Melbourne and Sydney.

He was exposed to classical music from an early age and played the horn in various small groups and orchestras when only 10 years old. He began conducting in 2003.

## AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### EUROPE'S LARGEST JEWISH CEMETERY VANDALISED

BERLIN - After vandals struck Europe's largest Jewish cemetery in Berlin, local Jewish leaders are asking area metal dealers to check for unusual, wrought-iron objects that might have been stolen from the cemetery.

Vandals recently damaged 16 gravesites and stole 47 items from the Weissensee Cemetery in the former East Berlin. According to the community, renovations on some of the tombs had been completed as recently as last April. The stolen

items are worth about \$16 000.

"But the immaterial damage is much greater," the community said in a statement issued on Monday.

"Theft in general is a serious offence," Grigory Kristal, head of cultural affairs for the community, said. "But to destroy graves at the Jewish cemetery demonstrates a lack of respect and lack of understanding of the past."

Observers suggested the motive was profit and not anti-Semitism, since specifically metal objects were

removed. Such thefts reportedly are on the rise at cemeteries all over Berlin from all religious denominations. Police patrols and surveillance have been stepped up at Weissensee.

The Jewish community plans to contact metal dealers to warn them to be vigilant regarding sellers of potentially stolen goods.

The cemetery is the subject of a recent award-winning documentary, called "Im Himmel unter der Erde," or "In Heaven Underground". (JTA)

### BARACK OBAMA TELLS ASSAD TO 'STEP ASIDE'

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama has called for Syrian President Bashar Assad to resign in the wake of attacks by his government that have killed thousands.

"For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside," Obama said in a written statement, last week Thursday morning.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, at a news conference in Washington later told Assad "to get out of the way" and accused him of "slaughtering thousands of unarmed Syrian citizens, including children".

Along with the call for Assad's resignation, Obama signed an executive order strengthening economic sanctions on Syria in order to "further tighten the circle of isolation around the regime," Clinton said.

The Obama statement came a day after Syrian

troops reportedly killed nine citizens during prayers in the city of Homs, which has been at the epicentre of Syrian protests and the violent government crackdowns. The same day, Assad told an official of the United Nations that military action in Syria was over, The Associated Press reported.

Obama administration officials apparently had alerted world leaders in Europe and the Middle East that the US call for Assad to step down was imminent.

As recently as Tuesday, the Obama administration had pushed back at publicly calling for Assad to leave.

"It's not going to be any news if the United States says Assad needs to go," Clinton said at the time. "OK, fine. What's next? If Turkey says it, if King Abdullah (of Saudi Arabia) says it, if other people say it, there is no way the Assad regime can ignore it." (JTA)

**The Second South African Union for Progressive Judaism Public Lecture**  
Tuesday 30 August 2011  
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**Beit Emanuel - Progressive Synagogue**  
38 Oxford Road, Parktown  
(junction of Oxford Road and Third Avenue, entrance in Third Avenue)

**Prof. Paul Liptz**  
will deliver the second lecture in the annual series of public lectures on Progressive Judaism

**The Progressive Jewish Movement: A Contemporary Global Overview**

Professor Paul Liptz is a social historian who lectures in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University, and in Israel Studies at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. He has published articles on contemporary Jewry and Jewish History and has lectured and conducted workshops in 12 countries.

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Learners at KD High, Victory Park, Kelsey Rosin; Hayley Saat; Dina Singer; Alexa Kotzen; and Lauren Davis, are excited and proud to disembark from a brand new KD bus on the first day of the new fleet's operation. The SA Board of Jewish Education has recently bought eight new 65-seater buses and five new 35-seaters to replace the existing ageing fleet.

## Spanking new buses for King David Schools

**RONEL ZEFF**  
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

FOR THE first time in 40 years of King David history, our learners will now be transported to and from school in a brand-new fleet of buses, which recently became operational.

The buses were bought by the SA Board of Jewish Education to replace the existing ageing fleet. There are eight new 65-seater buses and five new 35-seaters, all equipped with seatbelts, tracking devices, cameras, as well as fingerprint machines, to account for all present on a journey. The buses will be used for sport events, outings, Shabbatons, outreach, or any other transportation needs.

A bank organised a preferential rate and ensured a smooth acquisition process. The old fleet will be sold to offset some of the costs and the vehicles will be paid off over the next five years through the SABJE's ongoing budget. Advertising on the buses will also contribute to offsetting the cost.

The acquisition of the new fleet is in line with the SABJE's policy of continuous commitment to the upgrading of facilities. SABJE acknowledges and thanks the transport subcommittee, Colin Gamsu (chairman); Frank Davidson; Jon Harding; Henk du Preez; and Philip Smith, for their commitment and dedication to ensure that our children will be transported in safety and comfort.

## KDL introduces newly-elected student leaders to school

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY BLOCK**

THE NEWLY-ELECTED student leaders for King David High School Linksfield, were introduced to the school last week. Pictured are Eitan Egdes (deputy head boy); Talya Harris (head girl); Tyler Fouche (head boy); and Gabriella Hyman (deputy head girl).



## Building a Kotel through acts of goodness and kindness

**OWN CORRESPONDENT**  
**PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE BELLING**

TORAH ACADEMY Primary School has launched a special programme in honour of Gimmel Tammuz, with a competition that will run until Chai Elul.

It chose some of the Rebbe's mitzvaim – the special mitzvahs which the Rebbe encouraged, with hope of participation by all Jews.

Each family received as a gift from the school a printout of Perek 32 of Tanya

which was kindly sponsored by Chayenu and the Deitsch family in the US. Examples of the deeds the children are exhorted to perform, include chesed and limmud Torah.

Learners have to bring in their documented special acts or learning signed by parents, teachers, rabbis or institutions. Each learner who takes part, will receive a prize, with an additional top prize for a learner in each class (to be judged by teachers and principals).

The final prizes will be given out on Chai Elul which falls on Friday, September 17.



Grade three TA learners in front of the "Kotel" they are building with their acts of goodness and kindness. Above the wall is the credo "Each mitzvah we do builds a brick in the Beis Hamikdash".

## A sarmie every Wednesday, helps keep hunger at bay

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY STACY FLEISHMAN**

WEDNESDAY AT King David Victory Park Primary School, means one thing; bring an extra sandwich for those who are less fortunate.

King David Primary has steadily built a relationship with Sekolo sa Borokgo Middle School in Blairgowrie in Johannesburg, over the years, which relies largely on donations.

The pupils delight in handing in their extra sandwiches and are truly learning about the joy of giving. Proudly showing off their donation of sandwiches are Elias Judin and Loren Kramer.



### Send a Rosh Hashanah greeting KarD and send a child to school

As Jews, we have been celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for generations. This year, celebrate with us by making a donation to our *Dor le Dor* (Generation to Generation) Campaign.

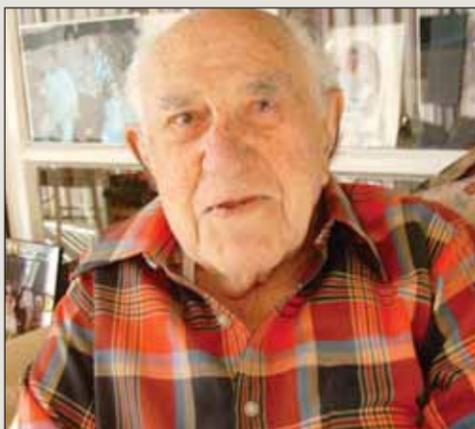
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**Teddy Cohen, who turned 103 last week, recalls some of the highlights of his life.**

## At age 103, still as bright as a penny!

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY RITA LEWIS

"I AM 103 – not out," Teddy Cohen - who celebrated his 103rd birthday last week in Johannesburg - remarked cheerfully.

Cohen, who was born in Barkley West in the Northern Cape, just after the turn of the century, recalled his learning to be an entrepreneur at an early age, while accompanying his father in their black Model T Ford, delivering goods to the diamond diggers along the beautiful banks of the Vaal River near his home.

By the 1920s the family had moved to Kimberley where an epidemic was in full force. It was found that barley was needed to feed the afflicted.

Although only 13, Cohen had been driving the family's car, a Maxwell, for some time. He offered to transport some barley – but obviously illegally.

Accordingly, he went to the local police officer, drove him around and came home with a driving licence – which he has now had for over 90 years. "This surely must be a record," he remarked.

He still drives around – still with a licence!

From an early age Cohen realised he was accident prone. The first broken bone occurred when his hand was on the "starting rod" on the steering wheel of his father's Model T. Someone decided to touch the cranking handle and his hand caught in the movement.

He recalls having to wear a leather band around his arm to keep the screws in his hand in place – completely disabling him "while my brother could go out and do everything".

At 18, another car drove into the side of his car, breaking Cohen's leg. The doctor at the time was Noel Kretzmar whose son Theodor later married Cohen's daughter Gwenda.

Cohen felt the need to become independent and against his family's wishes, left for the then Rhodesia where his love of "tinkering" came in handy when he was offered a job in a cycle manufacturing plant.

This was just a starting point, for he later stayed in Broken Hill, Bulawayo and then in Kitwe.

After returning "home" aged 23, he opened a cycle shop in Bloemfontein where he met his first wife Selma. The couple had two children, Ronnie and Gwenda.

Now on his own, Cohen looks over his balcony in Killarney with pride, seeing the garden below him which he planted out when he first moved into the building "many years ago".

He said he had always been a keen gardener and had won prizes for his gardens. However, his main love was fixing and creating things in wood.

He has cupboards full of tools and a home full of beautiful handmade furniture of which he is very proud.

It is this love that has kept him going all these years apart from his three granddaughters and three grandsons and the anticipation of a great-grandson expected in December.

# Elaine Greenblatt is driving a spanking new car!

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY RITA LEWIS

AT THE recent Annual Bowls Day of the Jewish Guild Melrose Bowls Club, a lucky Elaine Greenblatt won a brand-new Kia car in a raffle during the event.

During the initial planning period, there were requests for a donation that could be used as a first prize for the raffle.

Kia CEO, Ray Levin, who is a member of the bowling club – as is his father Mike – decided together with Kia, to sponsor one of their latest model cars to boost the interest in the raffle.

There can be 96 people participating in a bowls event - with many of them coming from various other bowling clubs in and around Johannesburg – but only two winners: one being Hatzolah and the other an excited Greenblatt.

This year the popular event was organised to show the club members' appreciation to, and to raise funds for, Hatzolah which does such sterling work in the medical field for the community.

At the handover, Hatzolah's Des Goldberg thanked everyone for their efforts and donations.

The present-day Jewish Guild Melrose Bowls Club is an amalgamation of the previous Jewish Guild, Waverley, Linksfield and Cyrilene Bowling Clubs, all of which have since closed down.

This year around R280 000 was raised at the event, which Chairman Ronnie Bass said was wonderful, "bearing in mind that we are in recessionary times".



**An excited Elaine Greenblatt is handed the keys of her brand-new Kia car by Janice Blechman, wife of Clive Blechman, CEO of Eastvaal Motors who together with Kia, sponsored this latest Kia car. With them are Ronnie Bass, chairman of the Jewish Guild Melrose Bowling Club and (behind) Gerald Harris and Des Goldberg, representing Hatzolah.**

Recalling the old days, Bass said that the annual event was originally started in memory of Woolfie Lifshitz, a staunch member of the club, who passed away some years ago.

His family had asked that something be done to perpetuate his memory and this event was the result.

The club agreed, and at the first event six

years ago, around R57 000 was collected. Now, only six years later, the amount raised was this huge sum.

Bass thanked all the organisers of the event adding that he was also grateful to all those people who had participated in the competition, those who had donated money as well as the donors of the many prizes given out.

## 'What you don't talk about, does not go away..'

ROBYN SASSEN  
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

THE CHARACTER "Michal", a conglomerate of abused women from all financial and social spheres who performer Naomi Ackerman (pictured) has met, tells her harrowing tale with a smile so close to tears she holds your focus through sheer suspended emotion that runs authentic.

"Hit me, rather," she secretly wishes to tell her abusive husband in her compelling monodrama, *Flowers Aren't Enough*. "The words hurt deeper. They kill the soul."

Ackerman performed to an almost capacity audience at Beyachad last week, under the auspices of the Shalom Bayit project, steered by the Co-ordinating Council of National Jewish Women's Organisations of South Africa, invited by the Israel Embassy and Tararam.

The CCNJW, under the chairmanship of Irene Zuckerman, and in existence since 1994, comprises five women's organisations: the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, WIZO, the Union of Jewish Women, the United Sisterhood Project of Jewish Women and the Sephardic Ladies Society.

Ackerman's recent South African visit, was also supported by the Chevrah Kadisha and the Cape Zionist Federation. She performed not only for adult Jewish audiences, but for schoolchildren, university students and residents of the black townships Khayelitsha in the Western Cape and Alexandra, northeast of Johannesburg.

In introducing the evening, Zuckerman explained the value of a project like

Shalom Bayit in South Africa. "When we began addressing the reality of domestic violence in this community 18 years ago, we were travelling an uncharted road. On our first presentation, 100 women attended. A few had the courage to stand up. They represented the tip of the iceberg.

"South African Jewry is no different from the rest of the world, in domestic violence statistics. It harbours a secret problem," she said, introducing Wits-educated social worker Roselyn Yudelowitz, who consults for the Chevrah Kadisha's community services, having co-ordinated the domestic violence project run by the Chev between 2006 and 2011.

Israel's Ambassador to South Africa Dov Segev-Steinberg, told the audience how he met Ackerman in 1999 in India, where she was performing this work, which has seen over 1 000 audiences.

It grew out of a commission from the Israeli Ministry of Welfare, 15 years ago, where Ackerman, an actress educated at the prestigious Nissan Nativ Acting Studio in Tel Aviv, was approached to construct a no-frills consideration of the scourge of domestic violence.

"Its truth was the success of the show," she explained, after the performance, speaking of the need to raise public awareness of it as well as to heal the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators.

"Michal", distinguished from Naomi by a spunky short wig with a headband, and bandages on both wrists, is a compelling character, who you immediately respond to and like. The horror and embarrassment she articulates in discovering her success-



ful, handsome, bright lawyer of a boyfriend, is unable to hold back on hurting her body and breaking her self-esteem with his fists and his words at any given and often illogical moment, touches deeply.

"The proverbial carpet becomes so high with secrets shoved underneath, she can't walk on it anymore."

After her play, Ackerman spoke of the strength an abused woman has and the need for "outstretched arms of those around her, even if she is unable to reach them immediately.

"We have an obligation as a community to reach out to the person in trouble," she added. "What you don't talk about does not go away. Addressing these problems is how we facilitate change."

Shalom Bayit has issued a pamphlet on domestic abuse in the South African Jewish community. If you are a victim, it is important to know you are not alone. Call the Chevrah Kadisha's community social services: (011) 532-9616; LifeLine: (011) 728-1347; or Powa (24-hour no): 083-765-1235.

## Some beanies a day keep the winter chill away

RITA LEWIS

AS ONE of their projects to assist some of the impoverished residents in the country's township, struggling to keep their children warm during this inclement weather, the Union of Jewish Women is calling on all women who have some knowledge of wools, knitting, etc, to assist the UJW by knitting small beanies (baby caps and bonnets) for their

"beanie bank".

It is hoped that with everyone's support and co-operation, the UJW will be able to supply beanies of different colours and sizes to a host of needy babies and other children at the various crèches and children's projects operating under their auspices in the impoverished areas.

There are a host of premature and newborn babies, as well as toddlers at home or in special care facilities and about to be

fostered by Johannesburg Child Welfare, all needing help to keep warm.

With knitting no longer as popular as it once was, availability of knitting needles, wool, patterns, etc might not be readily accessible to those willing to help.

If you are able to assist by either by knitting the actual beanies or donating wool, needles or patterns for others to do so, please contact the UJW offices on (011) 648-1053.



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## Something 'Fishy' about this year's US Open

JACK MILNER  
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE US Open, the final tennis Grand Slam of the year, begins at Flushing Meadows in New York on Sunday and we have a man we can all cheer for - Mardy Fish.

To answer the questions I have been asked on many occasions - Fish IS Jewish. What is remarkable about him - he turns 30 in December - is his magnificent comeback. He has often been in the top 30 of the world rankings, but has fluctuated over the 11 years since turning professional.

He started last year ranked at 108, but in a magnificent turnaround, has reached a career-high ranking of No 7 after reaching the final of the Canadian Masters in Montreal 10 days ago.

During the week he put out former world No 1 (now number 2) Rafael Nadal, before succumbing in a tight three-set final to current world No 1 Novak Djokovic.

Last week Fish played in the Cincinnati Masters where he beat Roger Federer for the first time and lost in semifinals to Andy Murray. He will therefore go into the US open with confidence.

It is a new-look, slimmer and fitter Fish who has suddenly taken the tennis circuit by storm and perhaps one man who can take a lot of credit for the rebirth is former South African player David Nainkin, who is now coaching the American.

Those who watched some of Fish's matches, would have noticed an intense looking Nainkin sitting court side. David was known as an unwavering fitness fanatic and he clearly has passed that on to Fish. Nainkin has been part of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) for some time and currently coaches both Fish and Sam Querrey.

However, Fish realised he also had to toughen up mentally. "Physically, I definitely needed to change some things, get fit

and get in a position where I could be consistent, without injury, and I've put in a lot of work to stay fit," Fish said.

"But (mentally) showing up for every match and every tournament, was something I wasn't very good at. I am now. I'm much more driven and much more focused. I make the right decisions now during tournaments and before tournaments."

For a long time Fish enjoyed a good life, jetting around the globe as a top-50 player. But season-ending knee surgery in 2009 forced him to take stock of how badly he wanted success on a grander scale. Shedding 15 kg helped his stamina and movement.

"All of this gives him more options of what kind of game he wants to play," says Nainkin, who has coached Fish since 2009. "He has always had the ability to come forward and get to the net; now he has the ability to stay in some longer points."

Fish is also more composed on court and more mature off it - something he credits his 2008 marriage to Stacey Gardner for and the realisation that his career no longer is just about him.

"I've got someone to take care of now, and I want to do well for my new family," Fish says. "I realise there are a lot of people putting in a lot of time and effort for me, and I want to do well for them, too. There's a team around me now. And when I win, we win."



Mardy Fish is playing wonderful tennis and has high expectations for the US Open which starts this coming Sunday

## SA team shines at the JCC Maccabi Games

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

IT IS not an unusual image - 18 South African high school learners boarding an airplane to Israel. Local groups and delegations are sent to Israel for various projects on a regular basis. But you shouldn't confuse this trip with any other, as it would be a mismatched affair.

The learners who boarded that plane on July 23, were carefully selected delegates of the JCC (Jewish Community Centre) Maccabi Games, chosen on the basis of excellence in their field.

South Africa has never before competed in the innovative JCC Maccabi Games and so we know little about it. The JCC Maccabi Games is an annual event where thousands of Jewish teenagers from all over the world come together to meet, celebrate and compete in a festival of sport as well as art.

What is now a large international event held in Israel, began in 1982 in Jewish community centres in the United States. The Games aim to strengthen youths' sense of Jewish identity and belonging and provide a platform for talented young Jews to showcase their abilities in a myriad ways.

There are two main sections within the JCC Maccabi Games: an arts festival and a sports competition. The exciting arts festival allows learners to compete and take part in workshops in dance, vocals, acting, journalism, digital photography, culinary arts, rock music and visual art.

In the sports section youths are able to compete in tennis, table tennis, swimming and soccer.

What is more unusual about this delegation is the supporters behind it, such as Motty Sacks and other generous anonymous donors, who believed in the purpose of the Games and ability of the delegates, to the extent that they magnanimously sponsored the entire cost of the trip.

The learners from King David, Yeshiva College and Herzlia Schools, were supervised by Greg Hurvitz, director of sport at Yeshiva College and a member of Maccabi South Africa executive, and Tamar Goldin, a physical education teacher at King David Linksfield Junior Primary School and a former three-time Maccabiah participant.



The girls of the South African Maccabi team, with their kit for the tournament in Israel. (PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

For our talented South African delegates, the Games' significance went beyond the competition itself. The trip began with team-building events to strengthen group cohesion before a tough competition week.

The popularity of our South African group was palpable in the rousing welcome they received during the spectacular opening ceremony.

The soccer team reached the quarterfinals and our 10 singers, visual artists, actors, dancers and rock band, truly excelled in the Artsfest. During the closing ceremony the South African Artsfest delegates wowed the audience with their abundant talent and local delegate Jonathan Judin was selected to play guitar for the closing band.

Their hard work certainly paid off in the post-Games touring where the group were exposed to the meaningful sites of Israel from Yad Vashem and the Kotel to the Ayalon Institute and the Independence Hall in Tel Aviv.

A unique opportunity to be hosted by Israeli families and learn more about Israeli life, was enjoyed by the delegates. Hurvitz said this unified group of delegates "represented Maccabi SA, the SA Jewish community and South Africa with much diplomacy and pride".

On the international platform of the JCC Maccabi Games we were held in very high regard and expectations are deservedly high for our 2013 Maccabi Games contingent.

There is no doubt that it will be a success, for the JCC Maccabi Games exceeded expectations and, in the words of delegate Adam Rabinovitch, was "the best experience of my life".

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