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SOUTH AFRICAN

# Jewish Report



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Friday, 30 May 2008 / 25 Iyar, 5768

Volume 12 Number 20

## Tough talks for Israel, Syria

*IN THEIR sixth major peacemaking effort since the unsuccessful 1991 Madrid peace conference, Israeli and Syrian negotiators face even tougher challenges than their failed predecessors. All the old questions - borders, security arrangements, the nature of the peace, water, the timetable for implementation - are back on the table. **SEE PAGE 11***

### BARAK : OLMERT MUST GO

JERUSALEM - Israeli Defence minister Ehud Barak has thrown down the gauntlet by telling the beleaguered Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, to resign or to take a leave of absence, in the light of charges of corruption and bribery against him.

Barak said at a news conference on Wednesday that he did not believe Olmert could lead the country as well as tend to his personal matters.

Barak said he would take his Labour Party out of Olmert's Kadima-led governing coalition if the prime minister did not step down.

### BONFIRES IN GREAT-PARK TRADITION



Bonfires graced the grounds of the Great-Park Shul's forest on Lag B'Omer this year, where the youth and grown-ups shared in the camaraderie of a fire's glow. And of course the young always like poking in a fire! (PHOTOGRAPH: SHELLEY ELK) **PAGE 6, 18, 19**

### Hellig: Is there malevolent neglect of foreigners? / 10

### Collections continue for refugees / 3

### Rosettenville Shul celebrates 100 years / 8

### French court rules in favour of 'Al-Dura' video accuser / 10

YOUTH TALK / 18-19   SPORTS / 24   LETTERS / 14-15   CROSSWORD & BRIDGE / 20   COMMUNITY BUZZ / 7   WHAT'S ON / 20

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 Randburg, 2125  
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**EDITOR** - Geoff Sifrin  
 geoffs@icon.co.za

**Sub-Editor** - Paul Maree

**Senior Reporter** - Rita Lewis  
 jont@global.co.za

**Editorial Assistant** - Shelley Elk  
 carro@global.co.za

**Sports Editor** - Jack Milner  
 jackmilner@telkomsa.net

**Youth Editor** - Shelley Elk  
 jewishreport@yahoo.com

**Books Editor** - Gwen Podbrey

**Arts Editor** - Robyn Sassen  
 info@frodo.co.za

**Cape Town correspondent**  
 Moira Schneider: 021-794-4206

**Pretoria correspondent**  
 Diane Wolfson

**MANAGER: SALES AND DISTRIBUTION**  
 Britt Landsman : brittl@global.co.za

**Sales Executives - (011) 886-0162**  
 Britt Landsman: 082-292-9520  
 Tammy Freedman: 082-820-0509

**Freelance Sales Executives**  
 Marlene Bilewitz & Assoc: 083-475-0288  
 Manuela Bernstein: 082-951-3838

**Classified Sales**  
 jrclassified@global.co.za

**Design and layout**  
 Graphic Descriptions  
 Nicole Matthysen

**Subscription enquiries**  
 Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd  
 Tel: 0860-13-2652

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## PARSHA OF THE WEEK

# Make things happen!

THE PARSHA of Bamidbar which we read this Shabbat, is also the name of the 4th of the 5 books of Moses. This parsha is characteristically also read before Shavuot as a preparation for the festival.

One of the interesting ideas that we find in this week's portion, is G-d's desire to take a census of the Jewish people. Moreover, for 49 days, since the beginning of Pesach, we have embarked on a step-by-step process of self-improvement and emotional refinement.

What significance can we draw from the fact that on the eve of Shavuot, we learn about the census taken in the desert, and how does this connect to the 49 days of the Omer, which we have been counting so diligently?

We all know that when you count something, you affirm its existence and its importance. However, when you count a vast number of things, it's an indication that quantity is far more important than quality.

Now quality plays an important part in the Jewish psyche. We're



**PARSHAT BAMIDBAR**  
**Rabbi Moshe Kazilsky**  
*Johannesburg Sephardi Hebrew Congregation*

told, for example, that regarding charity, it's not how much you give, but the fact that you give. Similarly with prayer - it's not how much you pray - rather that you pray with meaning. But here, in the parsha of Bamidbar we seem to be emphasising the reverse - quantity over quality. Is there worth in that?

Evidently there is, and the message is a powerful one. One of the problems with quality is that it exudes an air of superiority... This week's parsha comes to teach us that when it comes to a human being, each person is endowed with intrinsic worth. Everyone was included in the count.

Status, knowledge and wealth play no part in who was counted.

Each individual is important and each one is counted - regardless. Hence G-d counts each and every soul - and this in turn gives us a sense of belonging. It classifies us and it empowers us. It brings out our intrinsic value.

The counting of the Omer takes this idea to a higher level. Not only are you important and a vital part of creation - your job is to actualise this intrinsic value by becoming a better human being.

We use this period to grow in self-actualisation, by working on the various facets of our character. It's one thing to say you are worthy and part of a greater sum... it's another thing to see that worthiness blossom into giving, caring, sensitive human beings, who leaves their mark on the world in a profound way.

One of my favourite statements is that there are three types of people in this world: Those that MAKE things happen, those that WATCH things happen and those that say: WHAT happened?

The best part of life is that we get to choose which category we want to be in. This week's parsha tells us that there comes a time to stand up

## SHABBAT TIMES

**May 30 / 25 Iyar**  
**May 31 / 26 Iyar**

### Erev Shabbat

Starts	Ends	
17:06	17:57	Johannesburg
17:27	18:21	Cape Town
16:47	17:39	Durban
17:08	18:00	Bloemfontein
16:59	17:53	Port Elizabeth
16:52	17:45	East London

and be counted. There's a time to make things happen, a time to release our own potential that we have and to make sure we are not going to turn around one day and say: "What happened?"

The word "Bamidbar" means a wilderness. We cannot deny that we live in a wilderness - a place which is unpredictable and subject to extreme elements. By adopting the stance of "Stand up and be counted" and by "Making things happen", may we move from the quicksand of the wilderness, to the oasis of Mt Sinai - on a communal level and a personal level.

# Bridging gap between Jews and Christians through goodwill

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY**  
**MOIRA SCHNEIDER**  
**CAPE TOWN**

THE JEWISH community's response to evangelical Christians living in Israel was "almost always negative", Reverend Rebecca Brimmer, international president and CEO of the Christian Zionist organisation Bridges for Peace (BFP), told a gathering held under the auspices of the Western Province

Zionist Council.

The Jerusalem-based Brimmer noted that the "first thing" that was usually asked of her colleagues was whether they were missionaries.

Refuting this, she said that BFP staff received sensitivity training to "avoid words that push buttons and raise suspicions. Our philosophy is to do practical deeds", she stressed.

Things had, however, changed for the better in this regard since

the inception of the Christian Allies Caucus in the Knesset just over four years ago. "Eighty-five per cent of the time, responses are now positive," she maintained.

According to the Knesset website, the mission of the Caucus is to "build a direct line of communication, co-operation and co-ordination between the Knesset and Christian leaders around the world".

Brimmer said the BFP was

working to change the attitude of individuals around the world to the Jewish people.

"I have a dream of a time when Christian anti-Semitism does not exist and people who want to know about it have to go into the back rooms to find the books (dealing with it) covered with dust."

Realising that most of the news about Israel was "not a true picture, not a full picture and needs to be changed", the group had decided to tell the country's story in a positive manner by means of its bi-monthly publication *Dispatch from Jerusalem* and its website.

She added that it also tried to make Christians aware of their Jewish roots. "There's a huge gap between Christians and Jews through centuries of mistreatment and Bridges for Peace has been trying for the last 30 years to bridge the gap."

But talk was cheap, she said, and "corrective action" was what was needed. "So we started programmes and projects around the world to show Jews that there had been a change."

In Israel's Beth Shemesh community, the group had gone "a step further" by means of its sponsorship programme to provide 200 children with hot lunches, school books, uniforms and backpacks.

"We pay for them to go on school outings, to summer school and for tutoring - I believe we can expand this to other communities," she ventured.

Describing BFP's work as "an opportunity to do something", Brimmer said "We don't have the luxury of changing the past, but if men and women of faith and courage step forward and say 'No' to prejudice, intolerance and lack of respect, we can have a different future."



**Mooneyen Castle (chairman WPZC) (extreme left) sports "sunglasses" presented to her on the occasion of Israel's 60th birthday by Chris Eden (national director Bridges for Peace) (on her left). Others in the photograph are (from left): Reverend Kenneth Meshoe MP (leader ACDP), Reverend Rebecca Brimmer (international president and CEO Bridges for Peace) and Steven Swart (ACDP MP).**

## UPCOMING FEATURES 2008....

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Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of Great-Park, Sandy Zacharowitz, Joshua Chuma and John Maluleke before the collection was loaded into the van to be delivered to Beyachad.

# Congregants show their generous spirit

**RABBI DOVID HAZDAN  
GREAT-PARK SYNAGOGUE**

THE RESPONSE to my appeal in my sermon last Friday night for members to donate food, clothing blankets, to assist victims of our refugee crisis, is evident from the

attached photograph.

Over the weekend provisions were brought in that filled an entire van to the brim, which was delivered to Beyachad on Monday morning. It included 200 blankets that were donated at the community-wide Lag

B'Omer celebration at Great-Park.

One congregant went shopping at Makro and brought pots and food supplies to the value of R2 500; others brought bales of children's jackets. We will continue to make this appeal a priority.

# Jewish women heeded UJW call

OWN CORRESPONDENT

UNION OF Jewish Women members Ann Price and Jody Kaempf, with some of the many donations that have poured in for the victims of xenophobic

violence in SA over the past two weeks.

The UJW also boiled 1 200 eggs to distribute among the victims. Many of them escaped with only the clothes they had on and many have small children.



## Chevrah Kadisha

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# Shavuot

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# Shain, Mendelsohn launch tome on SA Jewish history

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

A BOOK with a “very high ‘farri-bel’ factor” was launched at Café Riteve on Tuesday evening. *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History* by noted academics Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain, is the first major general history of this community to appear in over 50 years.

Acknowledging that the book’s “‘farri-bel’ rating” was “at least a factor 30”, Mendelsohn explained that where individuals did appear on its pages, it was to illustrate broad processes in South African Jewish history.

Launching the book, MP and former Leader of the Opposition Tony Leon, praised it as painting a balanced picture, including the “crowning achievements and lamentable lapses” of the community

and referred to its “outsized” contribution in 200 years of “tumultuous triumph”.

Touching on the phenomenon of the Jewish radical opponents of apartheid dealt with in the book, Leon was sharply critical of the community’s attitude to this group post-1990.

“Although there has been some attempt by elements of the current lay Jewish leadership to claim back these apostates and

graft them on to the community as a talisman in future dealings with an all-powerful ANC government, this proved to be strategically inept as the Kasrils affair and the ‘Not in our name’ campaign has so recently demonstrated,” he stated.

Under the spotlight is Leon’s “sharp disagreement” with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies over what he termed its, at times, “sycophantic accommodation with government”. He acknowledges, however, that it has “in recent times, started to take a critical stance on a broader, less parochial agenda of issues”.

Also covered in the book is the extent of Jewish support for the National Party, estimated by the authors as being at 30 per cent. “I can testify to this,” Leon said, adding that in his first three election campaigns as a municipal and parliamentary candidate in Johannesburg, each of his respective NP opponents was Jewish.

Leon lamented the decline in “the long line of civic activism” - recorded in the book - on the part of the community, saying it had all but disappeared. “There is, despite their disproportionate predominance in previous councils, not a single Jewish councillor in Cape Town, perhaps one in Durban and maybe three in Johannesburg.

“In Parliament today, there are but three Jewish MPs, including

one whose religion would be highly contested. After next year’s election, there might well be none.”

Much mention is made in the book of what Leon calls the “extraordinary achievement” of Jewish immigrants “with few resources and no advanced education” in the development of commerce and industry in this country. “Each was what we would today designate as a ‘previously disadvantaged individual’.

“Yet no government charter or scorecard mandated the shares they were to acquire, the percentage of ownership their group was to constitute and the like.”

Mendelsohn said the book was, in a sense, autobiographical. “It is about my family and all of our Jewish families, about our transformation from ‘griener’ immigrants to South African Jews, to Jewish South Africans.”

Recounting his grandmother’s arrival from a Lithuanian shtetl in 1912, he said that her ship’s ticket - included in the book - showed that she was booked into steerage, open berth accommodation, but this had been cancelled.

“My grandmother seems to be the first member of our family to get an upgrade on her ticket,” he joked.

Mendelsohn added that it had been “an enormous personal pleasure” for the two - both professors in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town - to have authored the book. “Historical research and writing can be a very lonely and solitary pursuit,” he noted.

“In this case it has been a delightfully companionable and collegial experience.”



Richard Mendelsohn (left) and Milton Shain sign copies of their book at its Cape Town launch at Café Riteve.

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# Graffiti vitriol passes for 'free speech'

Swastikas and slogans like "Jews Die!", "Zion Will Die" and "Jews = Magen David = Nakba" were sprayed in red paint on walls and dustbins across Wits' West Campus recently, at a time when the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, took place. The Palestinians call it the Nakba (catastrophe).



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL KRANSDORFF

OTHER anti-Semitic comments like the "Holocaust was exaggerated by 5 million" appeared on the free speech wall on East Campus. The graffiti appeared after the Palestinian Solidarity Committee persuaded the university officials to allow the free speech wall to be used to debate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



## AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### GENEVA TO HOST RACISM CONFERENCE

GENEVA - The 2009 UN World Conference Against Racism will be held in Geneva.

UN member-states decided on Monday to hold the conference in the Swiss city rather than in Durban, the site in 2001.

The conference in the South African city was widely criticised for singling out Israel as the world's most racist state.

Jewish activists and Western diplomats had hoped the conference would be held on UN grounds in either Geneva or New York, where security and protocol would be strictly enforced and avoid the more chaotic scenes that marred the 2001 event.

Israel, Canada and the United States have indicated they will boycott the 2009 event, which is slated for April 20-24, as they suspect that Israel again will be targeted unfairly with harsh rhetoric. (JTA)

SHAVUOT

**Sunday  
8 June  
2008**

**RABBI  
ARI  
KAHN**

**21:30**  
"When Moshe went to heaven"

**22:15**  
"The students of Rabbi Akiva: theological implications to messianic aspirations"



Rabbi Kahn is a well known Rabbinic figure both in Israel and around the World. Rabbi Kahn is a graduate of Yeshiva University, having learnt directly with Rabbi Soloveitchik. He moved to Israel and has made a huge impact in the Jewish World. He runs the overseas programme at Bar Ilan University, lectured at Aish HaTorah and has published his own highly acclaimed books, "Emanations on Chaggim" and his latest book, "Explorations on the Parasha". He is an exceptional Talmid Chacham, a renowned author and excellent speaker.

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Rabbi Perez

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Rabbi Perez  
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## SOCIAL SCENE



"Ticket Officers", Gur Geva and Eli Unterslak.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein in the red tie, lines up for the singalong.

# The day the plague miraculously stopped

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
RITA LEWIS

LAG B'OMER is synonymous with bonfires and braais, flames and fun, with a good deal of merriment, mingling and music thrown in for good measure.

This is the one day during Sefirah when haircuts are allowed, when music may be played in public and those who feel like dancing may dance the night away for the morrow will be the continuance of the days of mourning, Sefirah, which will continue until Shavuot.

Briefly, Lag B'Omer commemorates the time of the last Bar Kochbar revolution against the Romans when a plague broke out and many of Rabbi Akiva's students died. The period was declared a time of mourning.

On Lag B'Omer (the 33rd day) however, the plague suddenly stopped and the day is now celebrated as a semi-holiday.

In South Africa, Jews celebrated - with small parties, big parties, on shul grounds, at schools, organisations and private homes, fires were lit, marshmallows braai'd and a

good time was had by all.

However, there was surely no bigger function than the one held in the forest of the Great-Park Shul in Johannesburg where a massive crowd of around 5 000 had gathered.

They came from 30 different communities, each one's logo being shown on a massive screen. There were black hats, no hats, black yarmulkes, no yarmulkes, long skirts, short skirts, slacks, shorts - Jews with differences but people joining together to create one unified crowd having a wonderful time.

Literally thousands of children listened to the music of Nefesh, rode the merry-go-round, tried the jumping bull, and rode the foefie slide.

Not only were all these delights free, but so was the candy floss, sweets, sparklers, swings, et al.

Granted there was a small entrance fee for adults and an even smaller fee for children over 12, but most of the fun was at the behest of the many sponsors who wanted to ensure that this Lag B'Omer would be a day of celebration.

Looking around at all the activities going on, the Great-Park's

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, who, together with his nephew Ari Mandelburg, was responsible for much of the organisation of the event, said: "The greatest joy for Hashem is when communities get together in harmony.

"When Jews are sharing smiles, when His children are close to each other, then they are close to our Father.

"There is so much Ahavas Yisroel here - surely the time to bring Moshiach," he said.

His sentiments were followed by those of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein who paid tribute to Rabbi Hazdan and the organisers, saying that Lag B'Omer in the forest had become an institution for South African Jews who can teach everyone the concept of achdut, unity.

"We are 'one person with one heart'. May this continue to go from strength to strength." Every Jew is a part of Hashem and we have to focus on each other's similarities rather than the discrepancies.

"The night sky is only beautiful because of all the stars in it together."



Robyn and Ari Ginsberg.



Malcolm Rabson with his daughter Shira, winner of the raffle.



Rabbi Mendel Liberow and Dovid Hazdan at the Mitzvah Wall.



Judy Resnick and Shana Waksman.



Ariella Urdang, Leanne Urdang, Gina Lee Ellis, Shari Weinstein and Jody Isaacman.



Dovi Ginsberg, selling blankets for the poor.



Rabbi Mendel Liberow and Boruch Talberg.



Danielle Jaffitz and Leah Hazdan fixing mitzvah bags on to the Mitzvah Wall.



## COMMUNITY BUZZ

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### WATERVAL BOVEN

From Rhona Goodman (Miller) formerly of Pretoria, now of Durban:

"My husband's family lived in a very small dorp called Estancia in Mpumalanga, where they had a concession store. My husband, Hymie, was born in Ermelo 24 km away, a larger town. The other Jews that lived there were the Peiperts and the Luries, who were the grandparents of Rabbi Lurie of Durban. "My husband was a pharmacist and opened his chemist shop in Waterval Boven where he lived for 21 years. I married him in 1965 and lived in Waterval Boven for 10 years. We left there and went to Durban so that our two children could get a better education.

"In Waterval Boven there was one other Jewish couple called, of all things, Cohen. He was an Irish Jew. They were murdered in their house but that was after we had left. My brother-in-law, Issy, had a furniture store, which he sold and moved to Cape Town. The hotel in Waterval Boven was owned by Mr and Mrs Gabbi.

We can also add to the names of Jewish commercial travellers who called on us - Hymie Miller, Effie Galgut, Charlie Blumberg and Hymie Baleson, that wonderful musician who used to bring his trumpet. We would get a pianist and we would have a wonderful evening of jazz.

"As is the norm, our children and their families live overseas - our son, Bernard (Dov) lives in Jerusalem and our daughter, Mandy, lives in Sydney.

"Ermelo is named after a town in Holland. Waterval Boven was a railway depot which grew into a dorp. It is above a waterfall on the Elands Rivier."

### GRAAFF REINET (CONT)

From Rollo Berman:

"Near the Berger's Hotel, on a corner, was a shop run by Ester and Joel Herring. Their son, Leslie, was in my class at school in Port Elizabeth.

"My late father, Maurice D Berman, designed the shul,

which served the community well. He also designed the function hall, called 'Roberta Hall' where many 'banquets' were held. My late cousin, Sedley, had his barmitzvah there.

"Many years later my friend, Brian Sher and I spent a weekend at the Graaff Reinet Hotel and went to a dance which was held at the hall.

"Two Boeremeisies came up and asked if we would like to dance. We obliged and when the band struck up they played a 'settees' and then a 'vastrap'. We did not have a clue so we excused ourselves. Wow, that was so embarrassing!

"Anton Rupert, the cigarette tycoon, contributed a great deal to the welfare of the town. He built the Chelsea cottages where the domestics still wear the black dresses and the white caps, portraying historical times.

"One of the most popular meeting places was the Plaza Bioscope which was designed by my late father. The owner of the bioscope was a Mr Raphael. His daughter, Sylvia, was supposed to have shot an Arab terrorist years ago."

### JOHANNESBURG

Some weeks ago *Community Buzz* ran a story about the Israeli football team that toured South Africa in 1954. The tour caused quite a stir among the local Jewish communities.

The day that the bookings for the test match due to be played against South Africa at the Rand Stadium opened, all the tickets were sold out. The sports writer in the *Rand Daily Mail*, Eric Litchfield, called it "the highest ever for a single day".

One of the players mentioned was Hymie Kloner. Kloner played through the ranks here in Johannesburg ending up with the Transvaal First Division team, Marist Brothers, for whom he played at right half.

He went on to be a regular selection for Southern Transvaal and also represented South Africa in the fifties. He spent some time with Birmingham City, then a Second Division team in England, but as a newspaper wrote at the time, it was largely due to the arduous English weather that he decided to quit.

Although he had little opportunity to come into contact with members of the Jewish community (in the UK) despite many invitations extended to him, he was proud to learn of the high standing they occupied among the population.

His sister, Shirley Skikne, has sent in the following: "As Lithuanian immigrants (and Hymie too) my parents opposed his involvement at such a high level but the principal at Jewish Government (School) was prepared to move heaven and earth, so he continued with soccer.

"When Hymie was about 10 year old, at Jewish Government School, my mother was concerned that he was not concentrating on his studies. She decided to visit the principal, Mr Arenson, and threatened to have him removed from the football team. The principal pleaded with her not to do this and he would see to it that Hymie sat with him during the lunch break and did his work.

"Hymie is remembered by young and old alike. He fervently watches the great football games being played on TV today."

### JOHANNESBURG

From Mervyn Lax (former editor of *The Zionist Record*):

"I have undertaken the project of writing a history of the Lax/Pessen family from about 1880 to the present day. The Lax family lived in Doornfontein from the turn of the 20th century until 1937 when my late grandmother, Emma Lax (nee Pessen) passed away. Her husband, Morris, who came to South Africa from Kurland, Germany, passed away in 1933.

"He was an ostrich feather merchant in Oudtshoorn until the feather market collapsed and the family moved to Johannesburg. A successful businessman, he was prominent in the Jewish community, serving on the executive of the Chevrah Kadisha, and I believe that he served a term as chairman.

"Emma had a brother, Herman Pessen, who also lived in Johannesburg. I recently learnt of another relative, the Late Rabbi Bernhard Pessen, who passed away in Berlin in August 1937.

"He was a reputed Talmudic scholar who learned and prayed at the Munchener Strasse Synagogue. Rabbi Pessen could have been my grandmother, Emma Pessen's brother or uncle.

"Morris and Emma Lax had nine children: Isaac, Dora (Isser), Rebecca (Kentrige/Smith), Louis, Jack, Letitia, Rose (Blumenthal), Barney and Tobias (Teddy, my father, who married Sybil Cohen in 1933).

"I would greatly appreciate any information or anecdotes relating to any of the above."

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# Still lots of kick in the old gal

DAVID SAKS

THE SOUTH-EASTERN Hebrew Congregation, Johannesburg's oldest Jewish religious community, is preparing to celebrate its centenary.

Past and present members of the congregation will be among those gathering at the historic shul's premises in Prairie Street, Rosettenville, on June 22 to participate in the historic occasion. The SAJBD is partnering with the congregation in the organisation of the event.

The Jewish presence in Johannesburg's southern suburbs has always been small, but it has proved to be remarkably tenacious.

Originally known as the La Rochelle-Rosettenville Hebrew Congregation, the community's first religious services in its own premises took place over the High Holidays of 1908. Services had been sporadically held prior to then, however, originally in a private home and thereafter in the Kenilworth Masonic Hall.

It was said to be "beshert" (meant to be) when the house in which the first services were held was badly damaged by a tornado that struck the Southern Suburbs in 1928, resulting in its being sold to the congregation. This became the site of the new shul,

which has served the congregation to this day.

At the time, the spiritual leader was Reverend A L Kaplan, who served the community for 34 years before leaving for the United States in the mid-1950s.

The years immediately following the Second World War, proved to be the hey-day of the congregation. During this period, a cheder and communal hall were built, and in 1957, a record number of barmitzvahs were celebrated. Six hundred people attended the following year's Golden Jubilee, with Johannesburg Mayoress Mrs Ian Maltz officiating.

Thereafter, the community steadily declined as more and more of its members moved northwards. One of those who stayed was Dr Ben Krengel, the current chairman.

Krengel described the congregation today as "an outpost of Johannesburg" (its members jokingly refer to themselves as a "country community"), but it was a close-knit one and its remaining members were committed to keeping its doors open for as long as possible.

He praised the congregation's young spiritual leader, Rael Cynkin, who lived in Glenhazel but commuted to the south for every Shabbat and led the community with

enthusiasm and dedication. Regular Shabbat morning services were held, as well as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.

Krengel, whose parents Shepsel and Chana were married in the shul in 1932, reminisces about Jewish life in the Southern Suburbs in the early years. For example, on Rosh Hashanah, people would go to (nearby) Wemmer Pan to say tashlich.

In addition to Jewish tailors, bootmakers, shopkeepers and numerous doctors, many Jews (given the fact that the Turfontein race course was located in the area) were involved in the horseracing business, among them jockeys and bookmakers. The current chief rabbi, the well-known Krok family and the artist Eileen Lipkin, all hail from the south of Johannesburg. Ben Krengel is the uncle of Avrom and Zev Krengel, today the respective chairmen of the SAZF and SAJBD, both of whom who grew up as active members of the shul. They will both be among the speakers at the centenary function.

The centenary celebration of the South-Eastern Hebrew Congregation will take place at the Rosettenville synagogue, corner Prairie and Rose Streets, Rosettenville, on June 22 (13:30 for 14:00; Mincha at 13:45).

To confirm your attendance or for more information, contact Hilary Sassen on (011) 485-1619.



The historic shul in Rosettenville in south-eastern Johannesburg.



The South-Eastern Congregation today.

# Mugabe - two views of the same man

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

TWO AUTHORS who had, in the words of media mavin and moderator John Matisonn, "shown great courage in exposing injustice", shared their differing views on Zimbabwe at a panel discussion hosted by the Cape Jewish Seniors Association.

Heidi Holland, author of *Dinner with Mugabe*, said she had tried to present a "more nuanced version" of the man as much of the reporting on him was "rather shallow" - due to the fact that he had banned "most" journalists from the country.

She had first met him 30 years ago and said she had been impressed with him then and had thought of him as "caring".

She claims that he has been "deeply hurt" by his rejection by whites and his response has been to take revenge.



Judith Todd, John Matisonn and Heidi Holland at the CJSA panel discussion.

Describing his "traumatised psyche", she said he was "emotionally incapable of accepting defeat" and was "now going for revenge as we've never seen before".

Judith Todd, daughter of Sir Garfield Todd, (reformist) prime minister of (then) Rhodesia before Ian Smith, said her book,

Through the Darkness, started at "the birth of what we thought would be a glorious Zimbabwe". Her father, who initially enjoyed good relations with Mugabe and served in the Senate in the early years of independence, was in 2002 stripped of his citizenship and voting rights by the man.

Judith, who spoke of her eight "painful years of exile" at the hands of Ian Smith, said she had returned to Zimbabwe in 1980 "full of energy and love and wanting to help rebuild. It didn't take long to realise that everything was poisoned," she said.

"So many of us didn't want to know that. Even the first 1985 election had been neither free nor fair" with "exactly the same terror tactic as is being used today".

She had been told by "people on the ground" that the violence was "stiffening the resolve of everyone to vote against Mugabe" at the run-off election on June 27. She noted that the violence had "never been worse or more brutal", adding: "This

is a man and a regime with whom no-one should ever have truck."

Holland disagreed, saying: "I think the West should talk to Mugabe - Britain should engage with him and make peace with him." She described as "tragic" the fact that President Thabo Mbeki had been left to resolve the situation in Zimbabwe.

She predicted that Mugabe would win the election "on his own terms. I think he's still running the place - I don't think he's been displaced," she added.

Todd, on the other hand, did not share this view. "I don't think Mugabe's going to win and the military has already staged a coup.

"The people have voted Mugabe out of power, so to say the solution is up to Zimbabweans..."

Todd expressed hope for support from "strong groups like Cosatu forcing the (SA) government to do something. Mugabe will not stop until he's stopped," she said.

# Migraine team: Harvard expert and SA headache authority

HARVARD MEDICAL School's leading neurological scientist, Professor Egeluis H Speirings, has teamed up with South

African migraine surgery pioneer, Dr Elliot Shevel, to publish new research aimed at deciphering the migraine code.

A media release named Professor Egeluis H Speirings from Harvard, the former editor of "Headache", the world's leading medical journal on the subject, teaming up with Dr Elliot Shevel, medical director of the Headache Clinic in Johannesburg. Speirings met Dr Shevel through the International Headache Society.

Shevel is the founder and chairman of the South African branch of the society.

Shevel, a pioneering South African medical scientist, who specialises in the treatment and prevention of headaches and migraines, has worked with a multinational team to publish research that describes a breakthrough surgical treatment that relieves chronic migraines.

Details about Shevel's groundbreaking migraine surgery were recently published in the prominent British medical journal "Therapy". The research pro-

vides hope for a medication free solution to chronic migraine for millions of sufferers around the world.

The research statistics (published in the July 2007 edition of "Therapy") show major therapeutic benefits for migraine sufferers after the cauterisation of branches of the external carotid artery.

Speirings and Shevel have now combined their expertise to publish further proof that the pain of migraine often originates in the branches of the external carotid artery.

Published in the American medical journal "Cranio", the joint study shows that, "dilation of those blood vessels represents key mechanisms in the generation of the pain of migraine headache".

Since their joint publication in "Cranio", Shevel and Speirings have begun work on a second research project. The results of the next study are expected to enable specialists to pinpoint the exact location of the arteries responsible for the pain of migraine in individual patients.

"This breakthrough will have enormous social and economic consequence as migraine has, till now, been widely misunderstood and often misdiagnosed," says Shevel.

# Right number for CT Holocaust Centre

ON PAGE 4, of last week's edition of SA Jewish Report (May 23), in the article "OPEN LETTER - We should be lining the

streets", the telephone number of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre should read (021) 462-5553.

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# A milestone in Jewish historical writing

DAVID SAKS

THE JOHANNESBURG launch of *The Jews in South Africa*, the new pictorial history of South African Jewry co-written by University of Cape Town academics Milton Shain and Richard Mendelsohn, took place last week at Exclusive Books, Hyde Park.

The book represents a milestone in Jewish historical writing, being the first complete history of the Jewish community to appear in over 50 years. It is also the first pictorial history, illustrating the text with copious photographs and documents, most of which are being published for the first time.

Community leaders, academics, journalists and political leaders, past and present, were among those who attended. Batya Green-Bricker, marketing manager of Exclusive Books, was the master of ceremonies.

In his opening remarks, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein focused on the qualities of creativity and problem solving, both of which, he said, the Jews in South Africa had shown in abundance in building so remarkably vibrant and cohesive a community.

This ability to confront difficulties in a creative and effective way, had been epitomised by political stalwart Helen Suzman (who was among those present at the launch).

For 13 years, he said, she had stuck with courage and tenacity to her apparently hopeless task in confronting the evils of apartheid as the lone Progressive Party voice in Parliament and in so doing, had contributed enormously to their eradication. In the contemporary era, the Jewish community was showing the same kind of "can do" initiative through the success of its anti-crime CAP project.

Mendelsohn, whose previous books include *Sammy Marks: The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, said the book was about the "common and collective transformation from grieners to South African Jews".

In a sense, it was autobiographical, in that it was as much about the history of the authors' families as it was about the community at large. Several members of the Shain and Mendelsohn families feature in the narrative since their experiences were so typical, and therefore reflective of, the common experience of South African Jewry as a whole.

Mendelsohn jocularly observed that the book came with a "very high fariebel" factor, as it was in no way an encyclopaedic "who's who" of South African Jewry. To "cover" himself and his co-author, he (tongue-in-cheek) put the blame on Jonathan Ball, since they had originally included everybody's names but he had insisted on them cutting most of them out.

Shain thanked Jonathan Ball, whom he referred to as "a true publishing friend", for his supportive attitude throughout the project, and singled out the picture researcher, Adrienne Folb, for the outstanding job she had done. He further thanked the staff of the publishing house and warmly acknowledged the assistance given by the SAJBD and Gitlin libraries.

The Cape Town launch of the book took place on May 13. Former Democratic Alliance leader Tony Leon, in his keynote address, was particularly complimentary about the inclusive, comprehensive manner in which the authors had tackled their subject.

"It presents the South African Jewish community in the round: highlighting its binding communalism, its gaping fissures, its fine points, its follies and foibles, its cleaving to tradition and its simultaneous acculturation.

"In other words, our complexities and contradictions are examined, not airbrushed out," he said.

## AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### TALANSKY DEPOSED IN OLMERT CASE

JERUSALEM - Israeli prosecutors have deposed American businessman Morris Talansky as part of the corruption probe against Ehud Olmert.

Talansky, who was detained by police during a Passover visit to Israel, appeared at Jerusalem District Court on Tuesday to answer questions about his ties to the prime minister. He testified to giving Olmert cash gifts amounting to some \$150 000 while he was in previous government posts, but denied that this constituted bribery.

"I never expected anything personally. I never had any personal benefits from this relationship whatsoever," the New York-based financier said, according to courtroom reporters.

When the case came to light this month, Olmert described Talansky's contributions as financing for successful 1993 and 1998 campaigns to be elected Jerusalem mayor and his failed 2003 run to lead the Likud Party.

Israeli media have reported that as much as \$500 000 in money Olmert received from Talansky, is unaccounted for. Israeli law limits political funding from foreign sources.

Olmert has vowed to resign if indicted in the Talansky case.

Talansky's testimony, designated as a "preliminary deposition" by prosecutors, is a condition for him being allowed to return home. He is expected to leave Israel this week. (JTA)

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## OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

## Jewish Report

## Exploiting the children

IN OUR media-saturated age, people's perceptions of a conflict tend to be encapsulated by particular visual images, such as photographs or video clips. Their effects can be enormous.

Today's wars are often as much media battles to influence public perceptions about which side is right and which wrong, as battles in the field.

Iconic examples of such images are the photograph of a naked young Vietnamese girl running screaming down a road away from a South Vietnamese/American napalm bombing, which influenced Americans to change their attitudes towards the Vietnam war; the photograph of a fatally wounded Hector Peterson being borne by a hysterical friend and sister away from police fire during the Soweto uprising in 1976, which epitomised for millions worldwide apartheid's brutality; the photograph of three US Marines bearing the American flag as they captured a Japanese rocky outcrop at Iwo Jima - only some 650 km from Tokyo - in the Second World War, symbolising for Americans the grit and bravery of the US soldier; the video of a lone man standing in front of a Chinese tank in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989 showing the plight of Chinese citizens facing the regime's orders to crush pro-democracy protests.

And so it was for the video of the 12-year-old Palestinian child Mohammed al-Dura, screened on French television, purporting to show him being shot and killed by Israeli soldiers during a battle with Palestinians, after crouching in terror with his father behind a barrel at Gaza's Netzarim Junction in September 2000.

The footage became an iconic image in the Muslim and anti-Israel world, presented as an illustration of Israeli "brutality". Places have been named after Al-Dura, Osama bin Laden referred to him in a post-9/11 video, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl's killers showed a picture of him in the video in which they beheaded Pearl; and pictures of him were pasted on walls at the infamous UN conference against racism in Durban in 2001.

Even some supporters of Israel - and Israelis themselves - were shocked by the video and moved to condemn Israeli actions.

As the article on this page describes, the veracity of the video and the integrity of the French television station have been challenged in French courts by the head of a media watchdog. He claims the footage was a hoax designed to show Israel in a very bad light. After a long battle, French courts have shown increasing receptiveness to his arguments.

It is conceivable that in the end the courts could rule that the video was indeed a hoax. But most people and media will pay little attention. The images of the terrified boy will continue to encapsulate for many the "brutality" of Israel.

Such is the enduring power of images like this.

It is ironic, too, that the saga is being played out in France, site of the infamous Dreyfus trial in the late 1800s, in which a Jewish officer in the French army was wrongly accused of treason. It took the efforts of determined campaigners like the writer Emile Zola to chip away at the French legal edifice and finally prove Dreyfus' innocence.

Whatever the final outcome of the Al-Dura saga, it will not remove the fact that in the bloody conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, there have been many innocent child victims on both sides, some killed purposely by Palestinian suicide terrorists in Israeli restaurants and buses, others killed in the crossfire of battles in Gaza, the West Bank and elsewhere, or wounded and traumatised.

Hopefully a day will come when there will be peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and children on both sides will not present such images - whether genuine or not - and will not have to die and suffer in the wars of adults.

## Vindication for watchdog on al-Dura video

DEVORAH LAUTER  
PARIS

EVER SINCE Mohammed al-Dura was shot and killed at Gaza's Netzarim Junction on September 30, 2000 amid Israeli-Palestinian fighting, claims that the boy's death was staged for prime-time TV have struggled for credence outside the Jewish world.

One French media watchdog who was especially strident in making this claim, Philippe Karsenty, paid a heavy price for his advocacy: He was sued for libel by the TV station that shot the al-Dura footage, France 2 TV, and slapped with fines totalling nearly \$7 000. The 2006 ruling found Karsenty guilty of libel for claiming France 2 TV's report was "pure fiction".

But last week Wednesday, Karsenty was vindicated when a Paris appeals court overturned the original judgment against him.

"It is a great day for the freedom of expression in France, the freedom of media and the truth in the media," Karsenty told JTA after the ruling.

The move lent new credence to the claims by Karsenty and others that the iconic shooting of the 12-year-old Palestinian boy, which fanned the flames of the second intifada, was manipulated by video editing.

The court's decision said Karsenty, director of a group called Media Ratings, had the right to accuse France 2 TV and its Jerusalem correspondent, Charles Enderlin, of manipulating the video of al-Dura.

The video in question showed al-Dura and his father cowering in terror while trying to shelter themselves from gunfire. The film then cut to a slumped, motionless Mohammed lying in his father's lap.

Enderlin, narrating the video shot in Gaza by a France 2 cameraman, pronounced the boy dead and said Israel was responsible.

The footage became an iconic image used around the world to vilify Israel and, in some cases, Jews.

"Even I cried when I saw those images," said Sammy Ghazlan, a French Jewish leader and the president of the National Bureau of Vigilance against Anti-Semitism. "They were everywhere, and they set off the surge of anti-Semitism in France."

But the circumstances of the boy's death later came under question. Israel, after initially apologising for the incident, said a subsequent investigation showed its troops could not possibly have struck the boy from their positions that day.

"Events could not have occurred as they were described by the network's reporter, Charles Enderlin, since they contradict the laws of physics," Israeli government spokesman Danny Seaman wrote in a letter to The Associated Press.

Activists raised further doubts about the film's authenticity when they discovered Enderlin had been in Ramallah the day of the filming, and that a freelance Palestinian photographer had shot the footage.

Additional footage, which was not included in the broadcast by the French network, also appeared to show the al-Dura boy lift his head and open his eyes after being pronounced dead. France 2 TV had refused to make that footage public until ordered to show it to a French court last November.

Other video reports by Reuters on the day of the Gaza clash showed groups of young Palestinian men staging scenes where they were carried into ambulances as if seriously wounded, then emerging from the ambulances uninjured and laughing.

Even as Karsenty celebrated his courtroom victory this week, France 2 appealed



Mohammed al-Dura is generally believed to have been shot and killed in Gaza, but some have claimed the boy's death was staged for prime-time television.

the ruling to the Final Court of Appeals, Paris officials said last Thursday.

The American Jewish Committee and the Zionist Organisation of America applauded last week Wednesday's ruling. The ZOA will honour Karsenty with its Ben Hecht Journalism Award in New York this November.

Karsenty and many of his supporters said they hoped the ruling would help bring the truth behind the al-Dura shooting to light.

"I'm happy that the judge recognises we have a right to ask questions about the media, and that France 2 isn't beyond any suspicion," said Jacque Tarnero, a co-director of the documentary film "Decipherings" that focuses on the French media's portrayals of Israel during the first few years of the second intifada.

"But now we still don't know the truth or the facts."

Tarnero called for the release of additional footage of the al-Dura shooting never made available by France 2. He called for a deeper investigation of the report, which became a symbol of the "supposed barbarism of Israelis who killed children."

"Now it is time for France 2 to acknowledge that it created and is continuing to perpetuate the worst anti-Semitic libel of our era," Karsenty said.

"It's the responsibility of the French government, and ultimately the responsibility of the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to finally reveal the truth." (JTA)

## Local xenophobia and the Holocaust

LAST WEEK'S SA *Jewish Report* justifiably emphasised the local xenophobic violence that is threatening to engulf the country. It also noted the positive response to the crisis by the Jewish community, and the welcome co-operation between religious communities in mobilising concrete help for the targeted refugees.

Given the Jews' historic experience of persecution and genocide, the lessons to be learned about the dangers of xenophobia received due prominence. There were several comparisons with the Holocaust - the most radical outcome of hatred of the stranger.

But it was a letter to the editor in *Business Day* (21.05.08) that put it most succinctly: "Germany 1938; SA 2008. Then it was Jews; now it is 'foreigners'. And it's the same world; deaf, dumb, blind and too busy to care". All true, but the comparison seemed too glib. And yet...

Locally the violence seems random, provoked by a disgruntled minority. Although some analysts suggest a "third force", it is not possible precisely to identify the catalyst that sparked the conflagration.

Undoubtedly, however, grinding poverty, massive unemployment, and frustrated hopes for a better life long-promised by South Africa's ANC government, are powerful causative factors.

Perceived to have stolen the locals' jobs and to have jumped the queue for housing and other scarce resources, "foreigners" from other African countries have been viciously attacked. Mob mentality reigns, stifling reason and compassion. As the perception of unfair privilege spreads, so does the violence.

Government inertia and lack of concern have done nothing to help. Neither has President Thabo Mbeki's absence from the country, nor his pussyfooting around President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, many of whose oppressed and destitute people have crossed our borders seeking a better life.

Nazi Germany was different. There, a well-organised government deliberately orchestrated hateful propaganda about Jews. A prosperous and well-aculturated minority, Jews were artificially identified as an enemy of the Reich



ON  
BALANCE  
Jocelyn Hellig

and were targeted as redundant. They were to be eliminated - initially through enforced emigration and, later, as the war presented unforeseen problems, by means of outright murder.

It was pointless stressing Jewish patriotism and the fact that many Jews had sacrificed their lives for Germany during the First World War. Jews were mercilessly hunted down and it was a crime for non-Jews to help them. The few who did, did so at great risk to themselves and their families.

Nazi propaganda had been made more credible by 2 000 years of anti-Semitism, which had branded the Jew as the betrayer, the Christ-killer, and the demonic force that wanted to overrun and rule the world.

Here things appear to be more spontaneous and chaotic. The poorest of the poor are attacking the minimally more successful. Train and busloads of "foreigners" have been forced to go back to their countries of origin, despite the poverty, pain and struggle they once left behind.

One can but imagine their sense of shock - one shared by Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe - at being savagely betrayed and turned on by neighbours here, previously their friends.

But is our local situation as haphazard as it seems? Although many analysts have blamed the crisis on government incompetence, it needs noting that xenophobic killing of some 60 Somalis in the Western Cape a year ago, constituted no form of warning for our intelligence services.

Perhaps there is method in the madness. Maybe the crisis is the result, not of the government's myopic bungling, but of its malevolent neglect.

The eminent theologian of the Holocaust, Richard L Rubenstein, argued that the Holocaust was the modern world's first and most dramatic programme of state-sponsored mass population riddance and that, as proven by history, it invites repetition.

In confronting modernity's most intractable problem, population explosion, ruling elites play G-d. They feel empowered to kill - or at least allow to die - masses who have somehow been defined as "redundant", a definition, Rubenstein warns, that can, for any reason, be applied to any population group.

Perhaps this helps to explain the Burmese government's stubborn refusal of international aid for its cyclone victims.

Our government's tardiness in handling Aids - which some commentators labelled "genocide" - can be seen in this light. Why give anti-retrovirals to pregnant women when they and their offspring can just disappear?

Why risk breaking brotherly bonds with erstwhile African liberation hero, Mugabe, when turning a blind eye can sort out the problem right here? The "grassroots" are doing the dirty work and refugees are now leaving of their own accord.

Unlike Nazi Germany, here it is not illegal to assist the targeted group. Given our purported democracy, however, it is up to us, not only to help, but also to remind the government that its neglect has consequences.

Ultimately, it is responsible for the safety of all who live within South Africa's borders. Unless government shows that it cares about what happens under its watch, and does what it promised genuinely to improve the lives of South Africa's poor, our efforts will be mere patchwork.



## OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

# Syria, Israel face tough talks

LESLIE SUSSER  
JERUSALEM

IN THEIR sixth major peacemaking effort since the unsuccessful 1991 Madrid peace conference, Israeli and Syrian negotiators face even tougher challenges than their failed predecessors.

All the old questions - borders, security arrangements, the nature of the peace, water, the timetable for implementation - are back on the table.

And two major obstacles have been added: the United States and Iran.

The United States, which would have to underwrite any agreement for Israel-Syria peace to be viable, for the first time is absent from the negotiating mix. Also, Syria's ties with Iran, which would have to be downgraded significantly for Israel to sign an agreement, are much deeper than when the last Israel-Syria peace effort collapsed in March 2000.

Meanwhile, Israeli domestic opposition to a deal that entails withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights remains as strong as ever. So why should the parties succeed this time when past negotiations with ostensibly better opening conditions failed?

Obviously, given the obstacles, success is not guaranteed. But if there is a chance, it is because both sides now know exactly what the other's needs are and can rely on the work done in previous rounds on the core issues.

Furthermore, because the geopolitical stakes are now much higher, each side has more to gain from a peace deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert insists he gave the Syrians nothing to get them to agree to reopen the dialogue. That was one of Israel's great achievements in the current process, he told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee on Monday.

But both the Turkish mediators and the Syrians suggest the prime minister reaffirmed the so-called Rabin "pocket", or "deposit". That was a promise that if Israel's needs on security and the nature of peaceful ties are met, the Jewish state will withdraw to the pre-Six Day War borders of June 4, 1967 - in other words, hand back the entire

Golan Heights.

The border issue in fact was the main focus of the recent indirect Turkish-mediated talks between Israeli and Syrian representatives in Ankara. The Syrians described those exchanges as very encouraging and said they laid the basis for substantial progress.

But even if Olmert has reaffirmed the Rabin "pocket", that does not mean the border issue has been settled - far from it.

One problem is it's not clear where the 1967 border was because no such line was ever demarcated. After the 1949 armistice that ended the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, which itself was based on an earlier 1923 border between Syria and Palestine, the Syrians persistently encroached on no-man's land, moving the border by their physical presence closer to Lake Kinneret.

In the last round of negotiations, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and Geneva in January 2000 and March of that year, the Israelis suggested drawing a line to reflect where the Syrian armed forces were situated on June 4, 1967. The Syrians claimed that at some points they were just 33 feet from the water; Israel insisted on a line at least 1 300 feet from the lake.

The Israelis wanted to make it clear that they had full sovereignty over the Kinneret, Israel's main source of water. Ultimately the talks collapsed over these differences, as Syria's then-president, Hafez Assad, insisted in Geneva that the Kinneret was at least half Syrian.

The late Assad raised this claim out of the blue to scuttle a process in which he was no longer interested. It is unlikely that his son Bashar, the current Syrian leader, will repeat that tactic.

More likely, the parties will set up a joint border demarcation team, as they had planned to do at Shepherdstown. Indeed, the parties in West Virginia seemed very close to a deal on all the core issues.

On security, the outstanding difference was over an Israeli presence in a monitoring station on Mount Hermon. On normalisation, the Israelis wanted ambassadors exchanged in the middle of the process, whereas the Syrians wanted it only at the

end.

On timetables, the Israelis wanted three years for implementation, the Syrians no more than 18 months.

It all seemed doable until Ehud Barak, Israel's prime minister at the time, got cold feet. After a poll showing strong public opposition to returning the Golan, Barak slowed things down to give the impression that he was not giving away major assets easily. The Syrians felt he was backtracking and the talks collapsed.

Although Olmert and Bashar Assad seem ready to pick up the pieces, they find themselves facing very different regional realities. Whereas Barak merely wanted Syrian help in establishing parallel peace talks with Lebanon, Olmert is insisting that Syria sever its ties with Iran. The Syrians reject this condition, even if the United States steps in to make good on any material and diplomatic losses Damascus might incur.

"Our ties with Iran are strategic and historic and can't be sold in a bazaar," Syria Information Minister Mohsen Bilal declared last Sunday.

Israeli experts are divided over whether Syria is ready for a major reorientation - dropping ties with Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas - and in the context of a peace deal with Israel, coming over to the moderate pro-Western camp.

"Syria is ready to pay a huge price for its radical ideology and will never detach itself from Iran - certainly not now that the radicals seem to be getting stronger," said Dan Shueftan, the head of Haifa University's National Security Studies Centre.

Shueftan says the Syrians simply are using Israel to ease international pressure

on Damascus.

But Syria expert Moshe Maoz of Hebrew University argues that Assad sees two clear policy options, American and Iranian. He says Assad can be won over if the Americans offer a package that's attractive enough.

The Americans, however, are not enthusiastic. President George W Bush does not trust Assad nor, according to Israeli officials, does he believe there is much chance of the Syrian leader breaking with Iran.

Yet during his recent visit to Israel, Bush agreed to lift his long-standing opposition to any Israeli engagement with Assad's Syria.

Presumably, if the negotiations make progress and the United States needs to play a role, Bush or his successor in the Oval Office will be ready to make the necessary moves, given the huge geopolitical benefit of a pro-Western Syria.

For the embattled Olmert or his successor, getting the Syrians and the Americans on board for the type of region-changing agreement Israeli leaders envision, will not be easy.

Achieving the domestic support they need might be even more difficult. Most of the Cabinet ministers in Olmert's Kadima Party oppose a deal with Syria that entails withdrawing from the Golan, making a Cabinet majority for a deal nearly impossible.

Moreover, in the Knesset, Likud hawks are moving to enact a law requiring a special two-thirds majority for ceding land. Polls show that most of the Israeli public remains opposed to a withdrawal from the Golan, which Israel annexed in 1981.

The hope of Israel's doves is that all this will change if and when Assad breaks with Iran and the United States comes through with strong backing for the new order. In other words, when Israelis see the results of peace with Syria, the Golan will seem a price worth paying. (JTA)

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ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

## ARTS MATTERS

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ROBYN SASSENCall 084-319-7844 or  
info@frodo.co.za at  
least one week prior to  
publication

**Art Extra, Craighall:** "Aftermath", including work by Joni Brenner, Churchill Madikida, Sandile Zulu, until June 7. (011) 326-0034.

**Civic Theatre, Braamfontein:** In the Nelson Mandela, "Queen: It's a Kinda Magic", until June 15. In the Tesson, Genna Lewis directs "Nipple Caps and G-Strings", until June 5. In the People's Theatre, "Winnie the Pooh", from June 2. (011) 877-6800.

**Linder Auditorium, Parktown:** The fifth concert in JPO's second season features Philippe Graffin (violin) playing Beethoven, Brahms and Elgar. Conductor: Grant Llewellyn. June 4, 5. (011) 789-2733.

**Market, Newtown:** In the Main Theatre, James Ngcobo directs Wole Soyinka's "The Lion and the Jewel", until June 22. In the Laager, "Original Skin" by Phillipa Yaa de Villiers, until June 22. (011) 832-1641.

**Montecasino, Fourways:** In the Studio, "Defending the Caveman" with Alan Committie, until June 1. From June 5, Claire Watling and Brian Heydenrych in "Kissed by Brel Too". In the Pieter Toerien, "One Rocco! One Piano!" with Rocco De Villiers, June 6-29. In the Teatro, Mel Miller's "Big Fat Comedy Show: Live and Relentless" June 11-14. (011) 511-1988.

**Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton:** "Beauty and the B E E", directed by Janice Honeyman, until June 21. (011) 883-8606.

**Origins Centre, Braamfontein:** "Capture the Rain", by Joan Abrahams, until July 1. (011) 717-4700.

**Picture Workshop, Parkview:** Hannah Katz shows oils, until June 4. (011) 646-9216.

**SA Jewish Museum, Cape Town:** "When Cape Art was Coffee with Joe", an exhibition about Joe Wolpe. Until July 31. (021) 465-1546.

**Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg:** Pieter Hugo's "Musina/Messina" upstairs and Joni Brenner shows "Collection" downstairs. Until 5 July. (011) 631-1889.

**Victory Theatre, Houghton:** "Rocky Horror", until July 31. (011) 728-9603.

**Villa Pascal, House of Music, Durbanville:** "From Brel with Love", with Graham Clarke and Michele Maxwell, June 4-6 and 11-12. On June 7, Janine Magnin and Julian Fernandez perform "My Song, Your Song", quoting from famous musicals. (012) 975-2566.

## Gallery filling a niche

ROBYN SASSEN

"I BELIEVE I have an idea for a gallery different from the Goodman", David Brodie declared. Many in the art world might feel similarly, but this gallerist put his professional courage to the test; last November, he celebrated the birth of Art Extra, at 373 Jan Smuts Avenue, Craighall, Johannesburg.

"This part of Jan Smuts Avenue is grungy", Brodie comments, from his tastefully decorated office, replete with a bookcase of catalogues, art journals and new files bearing names of local artists. "Yet, it's two minutes from Hyde Park."

It's hard to believe that this pristine space was the premises of Speedy Garage, not long ago. It's amazing what a bit of dry-walling can do.

"I respect the galleries in Rosebank; I established Art Extra to fill a different market: emerging artists. This is not a project room, offering edgy space and student bravado, like the Lister Building or the Parking Garage in town; it doesn't compete with the big guns-like Goodman, Everard Read or Warren Siebrits."

Having worked for several years at the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Goodman, Brodie's keenly aware of art buyer habits, and knows what artists need.

"The space must be accessible. I was offered a space near the Bag Factory in Newtown, but it lacks professional accessibility - the average buyer doesn't want to brave the heart of Newtown to browse art."

Art Extra is an elegant, cleanly designed white cube that is not in-your-face commercial, but it is also not in-your-face arty. There is off

the street parking and a quiet ambience in the space.

"I will host hand-picked solos, two-person exhibitions and curated themed group shows. There isn't a culture of themed group shows in Johannesburg at the moment. Those at commercial galleries are stock shows, ridiculously open-ended. There's a need for young artists, serious about what they are doing, to voice themselves in a space that would give them significance."

There's an intelligent dignity about the four exhibitions he's already hosted, averting stuffiness and gimmick. His first exhibition was "Impossible Monsters".

"What constitutes a monster? Is it someone like a hermaphrodite? Is it a fantasy creature, like a werewolf, or is it the unknown, like Jacob Zuma?" he quips.

The second, "Tricksters" was about the creature that "traverses boundaries and breaks rules, using wit, mischief and language play to reveal flaws in the system."

"Perfect Lovers" was the third. It engaged with the mortal limits of love.

Then Brodie showed hand-coloured photographs by Youssef Nabil. "These works have a tenderness I found compelling. They are ghostly, frozen in time, yet nostalgic, and remind me of the metaphors for ageing in Oscar Wilde's 'The Portrait of Dorian Gray.'"

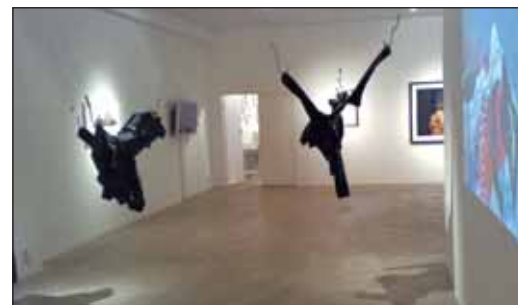
\* On show until June 7 is "Aftermath", an exhibition engaging with the notion of crime and trauma in our culture. Exhibiting artists are Joni Brenner, Guto Bussab, Natasha Christopher, Adam Davies, Stephen Hobbs, Bronwyn Lace, Churchill Madikida and Sandile Zulu, and closes June 7. (011) 326-0034.



"38 Haarlem # 12" (1999), by Natasha Christopher. C-print on aluminium.



Installation shot of "The Trickster". (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY ART EXTRA)



Installation shot of "Impossible Monsters". (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY ART EXTRA)

## Enigmatic Mel fills a comedy void

PETER FELDMAN

JEWES WILL find humour in any kind of situation and that's what makes them such unique people.

Mel Miller is a Jewish comedian who has been going strong for 40 years and he is still able to find a funny side to life. Thank goodness he can do this because it's become his bread and butter.

I have known Mel since the days when he was a folk singer in the early '60s when he sang at the old Troubadour with folk trio, Mel, Mel and Julian. He cracked a joke during one performance, the audience loved it and he was on his way to becoming one of South Africa's best-loved entertainers.

A major influence, he says, was Lenny Bruce, the master of social comment.

With his lived-in look, and chain-smoking habits (he says he's up to two cigarette lighters a day), Mel fills a special void on the comedy scene in South Africa. In his show he manages to insult everybody equally. His opening line is: "Good evening opponents."

Sitting with him over a cup of tea while chatting about his extraordinary career, Yeoville-

born Mel shows a serious side to his make-up. He reads a great deal and can argue intelligently on subjects as diverse as religion, sport, politics, people and what makes a joke work.

Asked what kept him going over four decades, he says without hesitation and with a twinkle in his eye: "Desperation" and then quickly adds: "I have an absolute passion for my work. I love it more than anything else."

He feels the younger generation of comedians today do comedy to make a living. I do it for the passion and the living comes later."

At school he wanted to study to become a vet but admits he didn't have the brains. "Then I started messing around at school and became the class clown."

This father of three contends he has always found humour in every situation. He is an avid reader of newspapers because the characters in them supply him with an endless flow of material.

"I don't pay taxes I pay royalties," he quips.



Mel Miller. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ALISTAIR PLINT AND THE COMEDY SHOP)

He contends his humour stems mainly from anger. "When I see an incidence of injustice I get upset. And then I start putting it across the only way I know how, through humour."

Though described as a hard-core comedian, he refuses to joke about sex and, what he terms, "sick" jokes.

A tough part of the business is trying out fresh material in front of an audience.

"It's the toughest business in the world and the reason it's the toughest is because you rehearse in front of a paying audience."

People expect him to be funny all the time. Does it upset him? "No," he says candidly, "This is my business. I am in a way public property."

Mel will make history on June 11 when he becomes the first one-man show to take on the audience at the massive Teatro Theatre, at Montecasino. The five-performance production, "Mel Miller's Big Fat Comedy Show", is something he has always wanted to do. It should prove a tonic.

## Dworzynski does justice to Russian composers

**Concert:** Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (Linder Auditorium)  
**Conductor:** Michal Dworzynski  
**Soloist:** Dmitry Kouzov, 'cello  
**Programme:** Music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Miaskovsky and Tchaikovsky

REVIEWED BY PAUL BOEKKOOI

AT 29, Polish conductor Michal Dworzynski is both an enlightened and solid conductor who enriched the tonal palette of all three Russian composers on his debut programme with the JPO.

After the tiresome displacement of what should have been refined and truthful performances of French works the week before under another baton, everything sounded perfectly idiomatic this time.

Opening the concert with Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnole, Dworzynski immediately established plenty of drive, whipping up boisterous excitement in the

dance episodes, but also showing the other side of the Russian's fascination with Mediterranean ambience with some less flashy and more atmospheric effects. We especially heard some fine playing in the soloists' cadenzas in "Scena e canto gitano".

Come in, Nikolai Miaskovsky (1881-1950). We all know from the musical dictionaries that you composed 27 symphonies, but it was a pleasure that your 'Cello Concerto in C major, opus 56 came to hand. Some say it was the African premiÈre. More important: It seems that the 'cello has struck a particularly responsive chord in your sensibility.

Dmitry Kouzov's passionately eloquent performance could not hide that the work's innovation hardly stretches past the levels of, say, Glazunov. However, its autumnal world has a warm, lyrical beauty, while its poignancy is cocooned in an evocative simplicity.

Soloist and orchestra were at one in reflecting both the work's emotional fullness and refinement. This last word also describes the

'cellist's solo playing of his encore: Bach's Sarabande from his Suite no 3 in C major.

One of the most compelling versions of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony we've heard in a very long time ended the concert on a high.

Dworzynski was never predictable in his approach. He mixed a broad vision and moments of finely graded impetus with energising quickening of the pulse at central climaxes in the outer movements, without ever disturbing their symphonic strength.

Even in the Andante Cantabile, with a very finely shaded poetic horn solo by Shannon Armer, the conductor had a firm grip on the continuous ebb and flow of tension. The Valse was done at a breakneck tempo: refreshing.

In the finale it was obvious that the dynamic relationship between trombones and trumpets was far too much in favour of the former. My wife commented that the brass trombonist "sounds as if he is blowing an amplified gazoo".



## TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

# It's much more than a eulogy to lost innocence

*The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* by Lauren Liebenberg (Penguin, R170)

REVIEWED BY GWEN POBBREY

GIVEN THE present state of Zimbabwe, it is hard to imagine a farm in the east of the country as the setting for an idyllic childhood. Yet, back in the 1970s, when (then) Rhodesia's bush war was just gaining momentum, it was still possible for little girls - like eight-year-old Nyree O'Callahan and her six-year-old sister, Cia - to revel in an existence that was almost completely insulated from the distant battle-cries of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe.

Other than the frequent disappearances of their father, who set off armed with a rifle to do his bit in the last stand of rural whites against the "terrs" - the children knew very little of these dangers.

The perils, instead, came from within the boundaries of the homestead, from the least likely sources.

With its rambling acres of dense bushveld, riverine patches, magnificent trees and colonies of insects, the farm presented an endless realm of fantasy to the little girls.

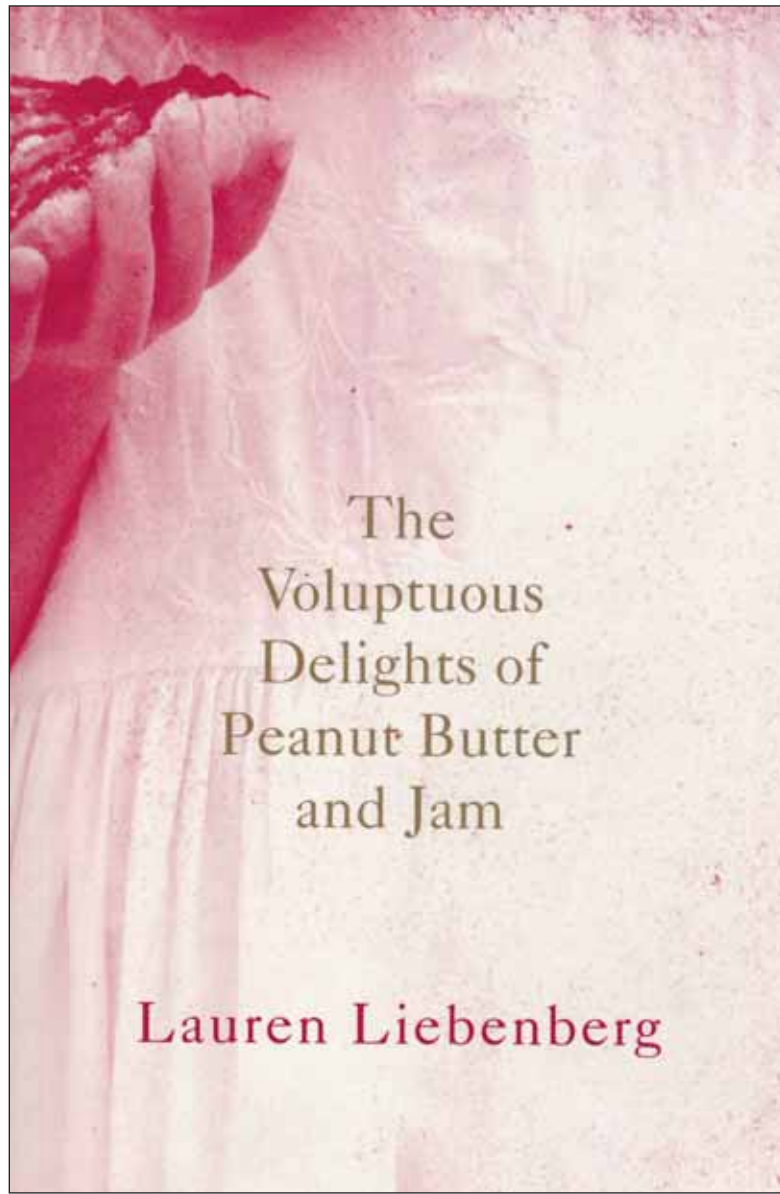
Raised with inchoate visions of Catholicism by their parents, the atheistic outpourings of their grandfather, the folklore of the black labourers around them and the archetypes of Brothers Grimm fairy-tales, the children's imaginations are ignited anew each morning as they undertake long, ecstatic forays into the surroundings.

Lauren Liebenberg evokes a gloriously uninhibited existence in which fairies, sprites, tokoloshes, ancestral spirits, witches, goblins and ghosts cavort freely within the sisters' minds, binding them closely to each other and tingeing the farm with magic: whether they are wallowing in the mud that follows a downpour, swimming in the algae-covered farm dam, conducting secret night rituals to appease the ancestors, teasing the "mombies" (cows) at pasture, ransacking their mother's wardrobe for make-up and high heels, stripping the farm's fruit trees or risking broken bones by devising home-made waterslides from the top of the koppie into the river, the children are blithely innocent.

And, like most children, they are fearless: at least, physically. The rantings of their grandfather - an embittered, alcoholic old man, filled with loathing for the "Afs" and "munts" - cannot frighten them.

They themselves are on excellent terms with the blacks around them, particularly with Jobe, one of the head labourers who keeps a protective eye on them. Nyree - whose voice narrates the novel - is constantly aware of her role as big sister to Cia, and is the leader and instigator of most of the two children's activities.

Yet when Ronin - a distant, 14-year-old cousin who is the illegitimate offspring of now-dead parents, with nowhere else to spend his school holidays - suddenly



arrives at the farm one day, the little girls immediately sense that something sinister has entered their world. For all his blond good looks and apparent diffidence to their mother, Ronin is a sadistic, swinish youngster who gradually infuses the farm with an indefinable poison.

It is the sisters' first encounter with malice, deception and bullying. Week by week, trust is destroyed, tension permeates the surroundings and the girls become afraid of their own home. Too intimidated to expose his behaviour to their mother and grandfather, the sisters try to avoid him: but he is everywhere.

Indeed, Ronin's arrival at the farm has the same disruptive, malevolent impact as Heathcliff's at Wuthering Heights: a mysterious foundling, thrust into a peaceful environment, where it seeps unwholesome, violent, disruptive sexual energy.

This not only corrupts the girls' domestic idyll, but their communion with the enchanting forces they have always depended on: "One evening, as Cia and I are leaving our naked forest glade, the veil of ivy that once clothed it having long ago withered away, Cia pauses to grind a shrivelled fern frond to dust between her fingers. She watches the fern dust powder float downwards, then she looks up at me and says: 'It's like some of the magic is gone, Nyree. Like it's dying softly.'"

and propel Nyree into a premature - and shocking - coming of age.

Against this backdrop, the reality of the bush war will also reach them, forever severing the O'Callahans from everything they have loved and toiled for.

Liebenberg's writing is often breathtaking, particularly in the immediacy and richness of the girls' early innocence: it is a time of unimpeded enjoyment, when the tones, textures and tastes of natural and domestic delights are taken for granted.

The imagery of a suddenly tainted world is vivid: a full moon, suspended "like a distended bladder"; a devastating fire that leaves the golden grassland black, while a "sluggish phlegm hangs in the sky". These are the punctuation marks in a secret, inner dirge.

On some levels, Liebenberg's plot suspiciously echoes that of Barbara Kingsolver's *Poisonwood Bible*, particularly regarding the fate of Cia O'Callahan, the role of omenry and divination in defying mortality and the steady disintegration of traditional African values in the onslaught of Western culture.

Nevertheless, the sheer, translucent joy of the sisters' early days, Nyree's transition from childhood to adulthood and the impact of grief on an already beleaguered family are superbly realised.

More than a eulogy to lost innocence, the novel explores the arrogance of colonialists who dared to invest their all in a dream built on the backs of others. It is a tale only too familiar to us.



## FELDMAN ON FILM

Peter Feldman

Sex and the City

**Cast:** Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon, Kristin Davis

**Director:** Michael Patrick King

A TV series has to enjoy a massive international audience to prompt producers to invest in a full-blown movie about the characters.

But that is exactly what has happened with the phenomenal success of "Sex and the City", a series I must admit to rarely watching.

Utilising the same basic formula that drove the series, director Michael Patrick King, who was executive producer on the original TV series, has put into place the same fundamental issues that kept audiences glued to the little box.

The film version follows the continuing adventures of the four main characters in the series, Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda, as they live their lives in Manhattan four years after the series ended.

Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon reprise their respective role, while it's interesting to note that they have managed to rope in the actors who played the women's love interests in the series. They are Chris Noth, David Eigenberg, Evan Handler and Jason Lewis.

And, to add punch, Academy award-winning actress Jennifer Hudson (of "Dreamgirls" fame) has joined the cast as

Carrie Bradshaw's assistant, a new character.

The players have all grown into their respective roles and what they bring to the party is an air of authenticity. It will be fascinating to observe how genuine fans react to this fully developed production.

El Cantante

**Cast:** Marc Anthony, Jennifer Lopez

**Director:** Leon Ichaso

Few people are familiar with the life and times of salsa king Hector Lavoe. He was a hypnotic singer and songwriter who died in 1993 after having introduced this musical phenomenon to America in the '70s.

Lavoe, played by low-key salsa star Marc Anthony, was a mammoth success because he was able to fuse the hypnotic musical rhythms and energy of his native Puerto Rico with vibrant New York sounds.

His life, as depicted here, was a tragic mess of drugs and drink fuelled by his tempestuous relationship with his wife, Nilda "Puchi" Rosado (Jennifer Lopez).

"El Cantante", co-produced by Lopez, Marc Anthony's wife, is a slushy cross between one of those ruined superstar bio-pics and Lopez's own vain cinematic aspirations.

The Latin music is vibrant and telling and certainly helps lift the spirits. Where the production crashes, however, is in depicting the ugly side of Lavoe's life, because then it becomes tedious and unrewarding.

On final analysis, whatever factors drove this gifted man to sing and to eventually destroy himself with drugs, remain unknown.

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## LETTERS

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

**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

**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 number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

**OSTROFF DOESN'T SPEAK FOR BNEI AKIVA**

AS NATIONAL chairman of Bnei Akiva South Africa, I would like to respond to Rav Rafi Ostroff's article (*SAJR* May 16, "Everything will not just be okay") and to inform the public how we as Bnei Akiva South Africa, view the current situation in the country.

Bnei Akiva's ideology is summarised in our slogan, "Eretz Yisrael, le am Yisrael, Al Pi Torat Yisrael" - "The Land of Israel, for the People of Israel according to the Torah".

We believe strongly in assisting and strengthening our community, with a firm belief in Hashem and Hashem's Torah.

At the same time we support the State of Israel and promote aliyah at every chance we get. A true realisation of this is seen in the fact that over the past few years more members of Bnei Akiva have made aliyah than ever before.

However, we understand the difficulties in just packing up and going to Israel and if people can't do it, we encourage them to be fully involved in their communities. We would like to stress that we also pride ourselves on our commitment to the South African community.

We are actively involved in all aspects of the society, we believe in strengthening the Jewish community here - with ongoing projects that we run.

Bnei Akiva's success at this can be seen by looking at the South African Jewish community today; many of the top leadership came through the ranks of Bnei Akiva.

Currently Bnei Akiva is running many programmes in the different Jewish communities, not to mention the South African community at large.

Two Sundays ago we ran a very successful blood drive, and last Sunday we ran an amazing event making food for the xenophobia victims.

We, Bnei South Africa, encourage as many people who can to go and make aliyah, BUT not because of hard times here, but because of a firm belief and a yearning to live in Eretz Yisrael. At the same time while living here, we love and support this country and get involved in uplifting the community as much as possible.

In conclusion, Rav Rafi Ostroff's article is his own personal view and not one of Bnei Akiva South Africa, and we apologise on behalf of Bnei Akiva South Africa, to anyone who felt it was the views of Bnei Akiva South Africa.

**Daniel Kaplan**  
National chairman  
Bnei Akiva SA  
Johannesburg

**MANY FAMOUS JEWISH REFEREES IN SA**

I NOTED with great interest the overwhelming response to Dave Berkowitz in recent letters to the *SA Jewish Report*, regarding the top South African Jewish rugby players.

Jonathan Kaplan is a world famous South African rugby referee. He has refereed at international level, including World Cup matches.

Top South African soccer referees who spring to mind include, Issie Pimstein, Solly Abkin, Gerry Ostrofsky and Leonard Fine.

Gerry and another South African

referees were invited to officiate in the Fifa World Cup in 1966, but shortly before the start of that World Cup their invitation was withdrawn by Fifa due to South Africa's apartheid policies at the time.

I have no doubt that your readers are aware of other top South African Jewish referees they may wish to bring to the attention of the *Jewish Report*.

**Melvyn Jaye**  
Winston Ridge, Johannesburg

**DON'T ERASE SUFFERING JEWS HAVE BEEN THROUGH**

MYRNA NAYMAN in her letter to the *Jewish Report* (May 23) entitled "Foreigners have themselves to blame" demonstrates the attitude that perpetuates xenophobia.

All people in South Africa, irrespective of their nationality, are protected by the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of our Constitution.

The Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the values of human dignity. Everyone has inherent dignity and has the right to have their dignity respected and

protected.

The Constitution states that as South Africans, we seek to construct a society where human dignity and the advancement of human rights and freedom are abiding values. We deplore the actions of those who have resorted to mob violence not extol them, as Myrna Nayman did in her letter.

Does the writer pause to consider how lawlessness erodes social solidarity, ultimately rendering us all vulnerable, despite our current privileged insulation from the informal settlements and inner city apartment blocks where ter-

ror has taken up residence?

We erase from our historical memory, at our peril, the manner in which Jews from Eastern Europe, at the turn of the 20th century, were branded as Peruvians and made to carry the stigma of "FOREIGNERS".

Jews have been targets of hate crimes for centuries, it is therefore, incumbent on us to speak out when it happens to others.

**Marlene Bethlehem**  
Deputy chairman Cultural,  
Religious and Linguistic  
Rights Commission

**VIEWS I EXPRESSED ARE MY OWN, NOT BNEI'S**

I WOULD like to clarify and stress that the views expressed in my article published by your paper, the *Jewish Report*, represent my own personal views.

In no way do they express the view or ideology of World Bnei Akiva or Bnei Akiva South Africa.

Please have this printed in the paper.

**Rav Rafi Ostroff**  
Director, Year Programme  
Department  
World Bnei Akiva

**XENOPHOBIA: 'ASHAMED TO BE SOUTH AFRICAN'**

AFTER THE heinous xenophobic attacks of the last few weeks, I write this e-mail to express my horror, anger and disgust with the instigators. I used to be proudly South African, but at the moment I am ashamed to be a South African, especially when I have to face the many foreign students and staff I work with daily, and see and feel their fear.

Most of the foreigners here are making a significant contribution to the country.

But what is even harder to understand and beyond my comprehension, is how any Jew living in South Africa can condone and justify these attacks! (I refer to Myrna

Nayman's letter, *Jewish Report* May 23) and I say shame on you! Do you not have a conscience at all?

Surely every human being, irrespective of race, creed or colour, has the right to a decent life for themselves and their families, and if it becomes impossible in their own countries, then they have the right to go elsewhere.

Consider the simple fact that two thirds of the South African Jewish community have left South Africa's shores for greener pastures elsewhere, and they were all entitled to do so.

My maternal grandparents arrived in this country a hundred years ago to escape the pogroms

and anti-Semitic attacks in Russia. My late father and many other family members, fled Poland with the rise of Nazism for the same reasons and found refuge here and were able to start a new life.

My paternal grandparents, my father's first wife, my stepbrother and stepsisters and other family members, were murdered in the death camps. Almost every Jew throughout the world lost relatives in the Holocaust - how can any Jew living in this country support this wave of xenophobia?

**Julie Toblib**  
Killarney  
Johannesburg

**SACP'S REACTION SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED**

THE ARTICLE, "SACP's vitriol follows Ha'atzmaut invite", must surely have been expected of an organisation and their alliance partners, the ANC and Cosatu.

These two organisations have a history of, and continually attack, the democratic State of Israel - a tiny country surrounded by the single largest collection of dictatorships, absolute monarchies and guerrilla states, countries who believe that acts of terrorism, kidnapping, murder and suicide bombing is a G-d-given right - in fact a mitzvah.

Their sympathies and support have always been with every terrorist organisation and despot, and have a penchant for anarchy over democracy - their blind support of

violent dictatorships, even at United Nations conferences, attest to their continuing belief that Zionism is founded on the suppression of Arabs, and the illegal "occupation" of the Holy Land.

Being intellectually "challenged", they continually ignore historical facts - or probably don't know them - in pursuit of an agenda that includes the belief that anything "white" is not right, hence the "ethnic cleansing" in our own country in the name of employment equity and black economic empowerment - a direct result of the mass immigration of this country's treasured talents.

Their outdated Stalinist ideologies are rooted in the pogroms of eastern Europe, where the reac-

tionary forces of mob-rule found it necessary to violently suppress individual rights in favour of party-political ideologies, beliefs that culminated in the mass murder and mutilation in Hitler's "final solution".

This reactionary behaviour, extremely violent in nature, can clearly be seen in the xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals who have tried to make South Africa their homes. These innocent victims have been raped, mutilated and burnt to death, all in the name of what? It's definitely not in the name of peace or reconciliation!

**Mark Wade**  
Durban

**DIFFERENT TAKE ON WHO IS A JEW**

THANK YOU for opening the subject on who is a Jew. My understanding of who is a Jew is very different from Rabbi Yossy Goldman's view. This is it: When Israel was living in Egypt under suppression of Ramses 2 and G-d sent the plagues to release the Hebrews, the final plague got them out, but it was not just the sons of Israel who left, it was a vast mixed company who went with them too ("A mixed multitude also went up with them" - Exodus 12:38).

What does the rabbi think happened to that "mixed" company after they reached Sinai? Why did they leave with the Hebrews, as they were then known, if they

were not even Jews?

The "m'gi'lat rut" I think answers this very nicely;

"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your G-d my G-d. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the L-rd deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (Ruth 1:16-17 NIV).

Ruth was not born a Jew, she was a Moabitess! Moab was a nation that worshipped other gods and Israel was commanded in the Torah not to marry or mix

with the ways of nations that did not keep the Torah "or you may become like them". Did anyone know that Ruth was the great-great-grandmother of King David? Nobody will deny that David was a Jew. I think the Rabbi knows the point I am trying to make.

Stop this senseless argument and let's focus on being "good Jews together". You are a Jew because if you follow Torah you are bound by it and to it, by G-d who gave Torah at Sinai (and of your own free will).

**Eben Louis Britz**  
(by email)



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## COMMUNITY COLUMNS



## ABOVE BOARD

Zev Krengel,  
National Chairman

*A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies*

A FEW years ago, the Board became extensively involved in assisting South African victims of the South-East Asian tsunami disaster. This was a time of national crisis, and we believed that it was one of the occasions when we needed to go beyond our mandate of focusing primarily on Jewish needs in order to make a meaningful contribution towards resolving it.

Back then, I was very proud of the way our Jewish community rose to the occasion. I am just as proud, if not more, over how it is doing so now, when a new and far more serious crisis has descended on our society.

Unlike the tsunami, whose ill effects were solely humanitarian, the dreadful xenophobic violence that is causing so much suffering and has so tarnished the international image of our young democracy, is both a humanitarian and a human rights concern.

It was vital for the Board, as the representative voice of South African Jewry, to act on each aspect of the situation. The first thing we did was to address the former problem, issuing a call for material aid for the victims to the Jewish community at large. Only once these efforts were underway did we speak out on the moral dimension of the situation.

Our press release describes the targeting of innocent people solely because of

## LETTERS

### CAN ANYONE HELP BETINA LERNER?

MY NAME is Betina Lerner. I am Jewish and live in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

I am studying my family's genealogy and discovered that some of my relatives went during the Second World War from Germany - Wiesenau - to South Africa. They are related to Irma Ganz, born on November 14, 1910 in Wiesenau.

Irma whose family lived there for more than 300 years, died in Auschwitz in 1943. Some of Irma's relatives survived and from about 1940-1945 moved to South Africa.

Irma was married to my uncle Walter Kahn who died in Dachau in 1945.

Irma's father and brother were Michael Ganz who was born on January 14, 1871 and Friederich Markus Ganz, born on December 23, 1907 in Wiesenau, Germany and died on June 14, 1989 in Johannesburg.

If you have any information about Irma's relatives please contact me, Betina Lerner, at betinalerner@terra.com.br, (55-11) 8105-8865, Sao Paulo - SP Brazil.

### LOOKING FOR FRIENDS OR RELATIVES OF LUCY WALTERS

CAN ANYONE help trace relatives or friends of Lucy Geise (now Walters), a Holocaust survivor?

The rabbi of the synagogue in Cardiff was told of a Holocaust survivor in a nearby hospital. She is a bit of a mystery and has no known relatives, says Jean Evans.

I understand she probably met and married a non-Jewish serviceman when the camps were liberated. She lived in Barry, South Wales, but with no Jewish connection. She is in a psychiatric ward with some dementia we are not sure HOW much.

However, there are supposed to be relatives in South Africa.

If you know or recognise the name of Holocaust survivor Lucy Geise (now Walters) or have any information, please write direct to Jean Evans: israelpeaceforum@btconnect.com

## Tribute to our Jewish community

their origins as "criminal, racist acts that strike at the very heart of the tolerant, peaceful and democratic society that South Africans are striving to build".

It further compares the plight of the victims to what has happened to the Jewish people so often in their history.

It has been a depressing and disturbing time, but I want to pay tribute to our incredible Jewish community. Witnessing how deeply Jewish organisations and individuals have empathised with the plight of the victims and the level of generosity that has resulted, has truly been a heart-warming experience.

Our storerooms have been full and we

have managed to date to send over 30 bakkie and carloads filled to capacity with food, blankets and other necessities to refugee shelters around Johannesburg.

With the generosity of our donors, businesses and individuals, we have been able to purchase exactly what is needed on the ground, such as baby formula, nappies and cleaning materials. Volunteers on the ground have ensured that we could identify exactly what items are needed in specific areas so that our aid has been focused and meaningful.

I would like to thank each and every individual who has in any way con-

tributed to alleviating the suffering of the victims of xenophobia. In particular, I commend the staff of the Board, led by example by our director, Wendy Kahn, and the dedicated volunteers of the Union of Jewish Women, Habonim Dror, SAUJS and the United Sisterhood.

The way our Jewish community has responded to the needs of their fellow human beings in need, has been a true Kiddush Hashem.

But there is still much more that needs to be done. Sadly, the crisis is far from over, and we will need your continued support to ensure that our Jewish community sees its part through to the end.

\* For information on how to contribute, please contact the SAJBD on (011) 645-2523.

## Responsible living with Mutual & Federal

### HOME IMPROVEMENTS GIVE A NEW LOOK TO INSURANCE COVER

#### MOKAEDI DILOTSOTLHE

Families can easily become absorbed in home improvement or renovation projects and forget about important aspects of insurance associated with such projects.

What most people do not realise is that when you change the look of your home you also change the "look" of your insurance cover.

The new office-studio, kitchen extension or remodelled interior, will almost certainly increase the extent of your financial risk should you experience fire, storm damage or other events affecting the fabric of your home.

If you purchased your own building materials, you will be well aware that costs have risen significantly in the last few years. Prices have increased for most building materials from a bag of cement to a packet of nails. Therefore, your recent building work adds to the overall extent of your risk exposure.

In view of this, you should increase the replacement cost of the structure of your home in your insurance policy.

Some homeowners assume that the recent softening of the residential property market means that there is less need to review their house insurance; however that is not the case. Insured values are driven by replacement costs and not by market factors.

The insured value considers the buildings, improvements and fixed items such as boundary walls. The land value is specifically excluded.

The premiums paid on your house insurance provide a specific amount of financial cover. If the insured value is



**Mokaedi Dilotsotlhe**  
GM, Strategy and Marketing,  
Mutual & Federal

underestimated, an insurer is only required to make a pro-rata restitution in the event of a claim.

To give a simple example: If your home improvements and general construction inflation drive up replacement costs from R400 000 to R800 000, but you make no adjustment to your previous insured value of R400 000, you will become personally liable for the shortfall as an insurer is only obliged to meet half of any claim you may have.

It is therefore important to undertake a thorough valuation review once you have completed your home improvement

project or if you have not done a review recently. It is advisable to use the services of a professional in that regard; the financial institution that may have advanced your home improvement loan can also provide guidance.

Once you have completed the valuation you should then contact your financial adviser or broker to update your records and provide advice on adjusting your insurance cover.

The ultimate responsibility of maintaining appropriate cover, rests with you as the owner. When you stand back to admire your new-look home, remember that you also have to review the replacement value of your house and update your insurance.

**Mokaedi Dilotsotlhe is General Manager for Strategy and Marketing at leading short-term insurer Mutual & Federal.**



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**Review and update your insurance regularly to avoid under-insurance**



# RAZR2 - it's got all the bells and whistles

IT'S BLACK; it's sleek and has (literally) a very low profile. Its stainless steel chassis and toughened glass offer protection to its valuable contents against all but the most severe accidents. Its sound, video and gaming systems, can keep a passenger occupied for hours.

It's a very sharp mobile communication device that includes a digital camera - still and video, internet access with e-mail, web and file transfer functionality, Bluetooth and Sudoku.

This Motorola RAZR2 is a very smart phone. You can give it voice commands instead of pushing keys and switch it to aeroplane mode if you want to use it while in a 747, without interfering with the avionics.

The file organising options are comprehensive. You can categorise the music you have stored in memory by: type of music, composer, artists, albums, what you've recently played, and you can create your own play lists.

I copied a classic piece of heavy rock onto the phone and set it up as my ringtone. It sounded kind of tinny when I phoned myself, but when I listened through the headphones it was the Judas Priest I know and love.

A young member of my family had me



## TALKING TECH

Barry Bilewitz

receiving songs and photos faster than you can say Bluetooth and because the transfer is digital, there is no loss in sound quality.

The camera at two megapixels, is a bit down on specifications, but does the job.

The package comes with a pair of CDs for your computer, to help you manage your music on the RAZR2 and equip you with a nifty set of tools to manage file synchronisation between your laptop/PC and cellphone.

If you're connected to the Net when loading these programmes, they will automatically check the Motorola website for updates and download them onto your computer.

Synchronising contacts, calendar (diary) and tasks from Outlook is a breeze. The Motorola Phone Tools program written by Avanquest, presents an easy-to-follow wizard on the PC's screen and all you have to do is select options with the mouse and click.

Synchronisation can be manual or automated whenever a connection to your computer is made, or at a selected date and time. Parameters let you choose whether independent changes on data on the phone or in Microsoft Outlook on your computer, take priority. Editing contact information is a little less user-friendly on the RAZR2.

Displaying the contact name on the line below "Editing Contact" would be quite useful - especially if there has been an interruption in your editing process. You can, however, edit the phone's data through the software on the PC.

The Motorola Phone Tools programme also enables you to back-up phone data to the PC, but you cannot select the directory that your data is saved to.

This suite of tools comes with a comprehensive Multimedia Studio facility to edit and transfer music, images and video, including MMS.

I immediately transferred a picture of Big Ben from my computer to the phone and set it up as wallpaper. Cropping and applying fade to a piece of music and using it as my ringtone was a piece of cake. Creating and sending an MMS took a little longer, but was just as easy.

A friend from New York was out here

recently, for a family birthday celebration. At dinner she waxed lyrical about the new cellphone her husband had bought her. While in the US she used a CDMA sim card in the phone.

When she got here she popped in a pay-as-you-go GSM sim card and could start using the unit immediately - no hassle.. After dessert, she whipped out her RAZR2 gleaming in elegant silver. I smiled admiringly and kept my review unit hidden in case she liked the black one better.



# Identifying Simone, our own unspoilt celebrity



Simone Abramson sports the gold medal she won at the Beijing Youth Science Creation Competition recently.

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

WHEN SIMONE Abramson addresses an audience including (former US Vice President) Al Gore and 200 scientists from 110 countries around the world at the Globe Conference here next month, it will be all in a day's work for this 17-year-old grade 11 Herzlia High School learner.

For since inventing a method of identification last year, she has been living the life of a celebrity, garnering awards and granting media interviews, with a public relations team at her disposal.

As part of the 11-member international delegation to compete at the Beijing Youth Science Creation Competition held at the end of March, she was awarded a gold medal, which was first prize for "excellent performance". Earlier, her invention had been judged "Best Female Project" at both the national and regional South African Science Expos, also gaining her gold medals.

Abramson's research involved photographing the area behind the eyeball - the fundus - on which she discovered that there were certain landmarks that stayed constant throughout life. But the distance between these varied from individ-

ual to individual.

From these measurements she created formulae which led to a 12-number sequence or fundus identification number for the individual. A computer programme that she developed is then used to check that every such number is unique.

One advantage of this method is that, if an accident victim has no identification on him or her and is unconscious or dead, his eye could be photographed for this purpose. Another is that a simple scratch or sore on one's finger can alter a fingerprint, making this more traditional method of identification unreliable.

An excessive intake of cannabis and caffeine can have the same effect, she says, and criminals will fade their fingerprints to avoid being caught. "The fundus cannot be changed and is therefore more reliable than the other techniques, 95 per cent of which can be changed.

"It can also work for children of any age. Most other biometric identification methods - such as facial and voice recognition - can only work with children over the age of 12 because they are not developed (until then).

"Photographs (of the fundus) can be taken at birth and remain in the database

until death." Abramson feels this will discourage criminals, an attractive proposition in our crime-riddled society.

"Can you imagine flying overseas, going to a club, driving in your car, all without your ID, passport or licence?" she asks. "Well, with my method that is possible."

As one of Mark Shuttleworth's 13 Hip2B2 brand ambassadors - who promote mathematics, science, technology, entrepreneurship and inventions to learners - she is currently involved in a project on alien vegetation. It is on this topic that she will be addressing the Globe Conference.

After finishing school, Abramson plans to study civil engineering for which she has already been granted a bursary.

She has been nominated for the title of Shoprite Checkers Woman of the Year (to be judged in July) in the science and technology category, the youngest nominee this year.

In addition to her academic excellence, Abramson plays tennis, squash and cricket and received the Maccabi Sportswoman of the Year as well as the Best All-rounder award at her school's prize-giving last year. She is also a trained medic.

# Lipschitz talks on health and happiness

RITA LEWIS

SOUTH AFRICAN-born Dr David Lipschitz who now hails from Little Rock, Arkansas in the US, is back in South Africa for a short visit during which time he will give a talk on a "Prescription for a Long, Happy and Independent Life".

A former student of Wits Medical School, Lipschitz is now a world-renowned geriatrician. Using decades of clinical experience and scientific research, he has developed a strong personal philosophy for life long health - the two main principles of which he believes are health and happiness.

Using his wealth of knowledge and goal of educating the public about ageing, he has lectured both nationally and internationally on how to empower people to live longer and happier lives.

He recently completed a 26 part TV

series entitled "Ageing with Dr David" which received widespread acclaim and he received numerous awards for his leadership in geriatric care.

In 2002 he wrote a book, *Breaking the Rules of Ageing* and his news column "Long Life Health" is published every Sunday.

His talk, which is a must for all those 'getting on a bit' will be under the auspices of the Jewish Women's Benevolent Society, will be held at Beyachad on Sunday, June 8 at 09:30 for 10:00.

Tickets are R100. Contact JWBS on (011) 485-5232 or Jennifer on (011) 883-2440/082-445-8850 or June on 083-380-8432.

**Geriatrician Dr David Lipschitz from Little Rock, Arkansas, US who will be talking on a "Prescription for a Long, Happy and Independent Life".**



## AROUND THE WORLD

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### TURKEY HOPES FOR DIRECT ISRAEL-SYRIA TALKS

ANKARA - Turkey, which is mediating peace between Israel and Syria, has voiced hope for direct talks between the two old foes.

"A common ground is now being formed and that common ground is considered to be satisfactory by both sides," Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan told reporters on Tuesday.

"If meaningful and concrete developments take place, it will be possible at that time to have direct meetings between the two sides," he said, but cautioned: "We are at the very beginning of this process and it is not going to be an easy one."

Israeli and Syrian envoys this month began exchanging messages using Turkish go-betweens at an Istanbul hotel.

Ankara with both Jerusalem and Damascus and wants to avert future Israeli-Syrian hostilities for the sake of regional stability. (JTA)



# Madeleine who survived Nazi persecution, turns 90

Back: Martin Heyman, Stephen Heitner, Nikki Heyman, Rene Heitner, Madeleine Lopato and Ryan Heitner. Front: Yvonne Heitner, Kelly Heyman and Dean Heyman.



RENE HEITNER  
PHOTOGRAPH: LARRY NUSSBAUM

ON SHAVUOT, 90 years ago, Madeleine Migdal was born in Poland. Pogroms forced her family to flee to Brussels where she lived and survived the terrible years of the Holocaust.

She spent the war years in hiding by moving and changing her identity constantly. With the help of friends she protected her mother and her son. Her helpers were awarded the Yad Vashem Medal of Honour for Righteous Gentiles at a ceremony at the Israeli Embassy in Brussels 1982.

Only Madeleine, her mother and her son, Rene, survived the war. They eventually settled in South Africa.

Madeleine has had the honour of lighting a memorial candle at Yom Hashoah.

In South Africa Madeleine battled through the loss of three husbands and her mother.

Despite the financial challenges she faced, she managed to educate her son through university. She is a selfless person always putting her family's needs before her own. Madeleine is regarded by all for her generosity, kindness and charity.

At the age of 80 she taught herself to use the computer and wrote her memoirs which were published in her biography *Breathing Through Buttonholes*.

On May 25 she celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by her family. Her joy was completed by the arrival of two of her grandchildren from America and Israel. Also present were her granddaughter and two of her five great-grandchildren.

# The story of Kevin Friedman and Ponahalo

LIONEL SLIER

DE BEERS wanted a special piece of jewellery made to launch their black economic empowerment (BEE) tie-up. It was to be called "Ponahalo", the Venda word for "vision", describing De Beers' confidence in the future. The end result was a necklace of well over US\$100 million.

And who better to commission than Kevin Friedman, scion of one of the best-known jewellery firms ever to have operated in Johannesburg. Kevin's jewellery pedigree is immaculate.

His grandfather, Jack, was, one of the earliest and best-known manufacturing jewellers in the country. It is obviously in the genes because Kevin's father, Frank, and aunts were also involved in jewellery manufacturing. Now Frank's son Kevin has distinguished himself in the field. At the age of 15 Kevin won a diamond design award in an international competition.

Kevin Friedman told his audience at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre about his latest commission. "From Mine to Red Carpet", his talk was called.

Friedman showed slides describing the route that the jewellery took from the unearthing of the centrepiece diamond, found at the Venezia mine near Messina in the Northern Province, to the public display at the Cannes Film Festival.

The open cast mine is 34 hectares in extent and the "blue ground" where the diamonds can be located, was a very small area indeed.

He told of a diamond weighing 316,70 carats, picked up by one of the workers, Simon Maphanga. This was given the name "Ponahalo" and it was two perfect octahedrons joined at their tables, a true rare find and not only because of the size.

De Beers took the stone to Antwerp in Belgium where amazingly it was stolen! However Interpol, however, located the stone in Frankfurt, Germany and the thieves are

now sitting in jail.

The diamonds were then processed and the finished result was a 100 carat emerald cut, a 70 carat emerald cut and two pear cuts of 14 carats and 5 carats each and Friedman was commissioned to design a piece of jewellery. He wanted an African theme. Besides the diamonds he wanted to use turquoise, pearls, sardonyx, crystals, amethyst beads, agates, and bronze bangles with an African influence.

He found a blue topaz that looked like an elephant's head which he decided to use; he wanted to integrate traditional African themes and colours, including Shangaan imagery, Sotho pots and necklace designs. In fact he wanted to project nine African cultures with the Venda most important as it was on their land that the stone was found. The final piece had to be dramatic.

As there were no restrictions on what he could do, he wanted to express the heart of the Venda kingdom, found in their embroidery and symmetrical jewellery. Different levels of colours created a conflict and he wanted to imitate that.

He also noticed that Venda was the only culture, which had, what he called a "satellite dish", worn behind the neck. Also, safety pins played a major part in Venda cultural currency and he wanted to duplicate this in some way.

The diamonds had been certified at the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) in New York, with the larger stones "Colour L" and purities between VS2 and SI 1, and also 12,48 carats of "small" with "Colour J".

"Colour L" indicated some warmth in the stones; the purities were considered good. Friedman explained that the smaller stones usually did not hold colour. "L" showed a slight presence of yellow.

Friedman said they were then sent resin models of the major diamonds to use to design the jewellery. He worked together with Swiss-born jeweller, Kurt Donau, in

their workshop in Johannesburg and time was of an essence as the launch date in Cannes was looming. They had to unite the beads with the 267 safety pins and they did this in four days.

The pins were all made in India and then chrome plated in the UK. Also there were 326 small diamonds that weighed about 96 carats, which had to be set. From concept drawing to finished piece took four weeks!

The jewellery was sent to New York where the larger diamonds were set and this also included a 5 carat rough diamond which had been lasered off the original stone. In New York the setting of the stones into the jewellery was done by laser.

"You can imagine the security risks that were involved," said Friedman. "There was always a security guard in front and one behind and one hovering around somewhere."

Eventually the finished necklace was shown at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and that is where the red carpet comes in. Also there was an F1 Ferrari as part of the display. The finished necklace was valued at US\$120 million.

Friedman said the "Ponahalo" was shown in South Africa at a launch at Spier Wine



The famous Ponahalo diamond necklace.

Estate at Paarl, but the Minister of Energy "forgot" to invite the press!

The necklace was featured in the 2008 *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition. The diamonds had been engraved by what is called the "Forever Mark" - a number is engraved on the girdle (side) of the stone and this records that the diamond did not come from a conflict area. The size of the engraving is one-twentieth of a micron. This identification process is big in Asia and will reach Europe and the US this year.

The necklace belongs to De Beers and The Steinmetz Organisation and can be viewed on the De Beers website.

## Progression of the human character

"COUNTING THE Days to Revelation", an intimate documentary which explores the 49-day period known as the Omer, will be broadcast on SABC 2, on Sunday June 8, at 09:00

This Jewish special tells the story of the progression of the human character

through the eyes of two religious Jews, who embark on a conscious journey towards self-perfection.

The documentary sheds light on the importance of Shavuot, the goal towards which its characters strive to make themselves worthy of receiving Hashem's Torah.

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## YOUTH TALK

Shelley Elk jewishreport@yahoo.com

# Jewish youth (and young at heart) embrace Lag B'Omer



Herzlia Pre-Primary learners gathered around a bonfire. (PHOTOGRAPH: MELISSA BRAITHEWAITE)



Learners at KDPL's market day held. (PHOTOGRAPH: JUDY WINER)



King David Victory Park Pre-Primary School. (PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDA ROMAIN)



Michaela Kretzmer and Aliyah Ezekow of Ohr Somayach Sandton Nursery School, enjoying a ride on Rainbow, the horse at Drakes Farmyard. (PHOTOGRAPH: TOVA GOLDSTEIN)

COMPILED BY SHELLEY ELK

JOHANNESBURG youth warmed themselves around roaring fires, on Lag B'Omer at Yeshiva College campus, the forest at Great-Park Shul, and Ohr Somayach Shul in Glenhazel, while Lag B'Omer celebrations heated up in Cape Town at the Marais Road Shul, and Herzlia Schools.

Just after sunset, a red fire truck arrived at the Yeshiva College campus which had the excited children clamouring to get inside. Others were lifted on top of the engine and had children of all ages enthralled.

At Great-Park, where Rabbi Dovid Hazdan greeted guests with a warm cup of soup, and also manned the Mitzvah Wall, youth enjoyed complimentary popcorn, candy floss, rides, swings and jumping castles, while some were brave enough to learn how to use a bow and arrow.

"There was a marvellous diversity of people that lent their logos and support including Chabad, Bnei Akiva and Aish Hatorah, and others from the different synagogues, shuls and schools," Rabbi Hazdan told the Jewish Report.

KDPL had a Lag B'Omer market day with a difference. Michelle Kaplan said: "The theme was Israel, as is our whole school design for this term and every grade 7 pupil was involved in organising a stall of games with prizes and activities for this day. There were three stations: knitting, market day and a Maccabi sports morning.

A very big thank you to all the grade 7s and their teachers for "the best day of our year". Said Kaplan. The grade 5s made the shekels for the day and each two rand was changed for one shekel at Bank Leumi.

Lots of fun accompanied Torah Aacademy festivities, where the Boys' High learners made a bonfire in the school grounds, while the Primary and Nursery School children were treated to performances on the sports field by Rubber Man contortionist and the African Tyger acrobats.

KDS Primary learners made potato faces for Lag B'Omer, said Adele Shapiro, while marshmallows and songs celebrated Lag B'Omer at KDVP Pre-Primary. Lynda Romain, principal of KDVP Pre-Primary, said "the children celebrated Shabbat around the bonfire, toasted marshmallows and sang songs. A fun and delicious morning was had by everyone."

Nadine Hurwitz said: "Ohr Somayach Sandton's Nursery School visited Drake Farmyard for Lag B'Omer, as part of developing the 'whole child' and is considered of the highest importance at the school."

"Although the Torah environment is one of the most important aspects of the school, this is also combined with secular themes in the curriculum, to ensure a balance in all areas of the child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development," says Ohr Somayach Sandton director, Tova Goldstein.

At the Lag B'Omer excursion to Drakes Farmyard the kids rode a pony, fed the rabbits, guinea pigs and tortoises, jumped on the trampolines, climbed the jungle gyms and enjoyed a delicious picnic in the winter sun.

In a fun-filled Lag B'Omer in Cape Town, Rabbi Levi Silman of the Marais Road Shul in Sea Point said: "It was Lag B'Omer with a difference, with music by Ivor Joffe and members of the shul choir, comedy with Tracy Klass, and Saul Kaplan of Jipsy who brought a game for all."

At Herzlia Pre-Primary, in Cape Town "the children celebrated Lag B'Omer with a difference as they braaied bananas in their skins, made bows and arrows and painted rainbow eggs. A great time was had by all," said Jos Horwitz, early childhood director of United Hebrew Schools.



A musical group from Torah Academy Boys' High School entertains peers. (PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNE BELLING)



David King, Levi Silman, David Swil and Leon von Zwicklicz of the Marais Road Shul, in Sea Point. (PHOTOGRAPH: LEAH SILMAN)



Learners from Yeshiva College climbed into the fire truck, at the school. (PHOTOGRAPH: SHELLEY ELK)



KDS Primary School learners seen here with their Lag B'Omer potato face creations. Back, from left: Taya Horwitz, Marc Ungar, Aimee Burger and Tayla Parker. Front: Idan Barak, Adam Weinberg and Ryan Bloch. (PHOTOGRAPH: ADELE SHAPIRO)

## Nourishment for bruised bodies

GABI LIFSHITZ  
(VICE BNEI AKIVA JOHANNESBURG)  
PHOTOGRAPH: SHELLEY ELK

BNEI AKIVA made about 7 000 sandwiches last Sunday at their "Sandwich drive".

We had an overwhelming number of people in the community and of the different youth movements helping us. At any given time we had 200 people.

The sandwiches were delivered to the Jeppe Police Station to be distributed to the displaced victims of xenophobic attacks. Volunteers took the sandwiches and the "overflow" to other police stations where "safe havens" had been established.



Youth gathered around a bonfire at the Great-Park Shul forest. (PHOTOGRAPH: SHELLEY ELK)



## YOUTH TALK

Shelley Elk jewishreport@yahoo.com

# March of the Living - an affirmation of life

RENE POZNIAK (JEWISH STUDIES, KDL)  
HOWARD SOMMERFELD (KDL LEARNER)

STRAIGHT AFTER Pesach, after a briefing seminar equipping us for the experience, 25 South Africans flew to Poland and then on to Israel, to show solidarity, with 11 000 Jewish youth from 60 countries on a March for the Living, commemorating those who were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War.

We explored our roots where once had been home to such a wealth of Jewish life, culture and learning, a place whose population of 3,3 million Jews, has been reduced to between 10 000 and 20 000.

We toured four of the six death camps, making the sheer evil of them palpable. A number of survivors accompanied us, and shared their experiences with us. Being probably the last generation who will have the privilege of meeting these people personally, the experience was extremely special.

We marched from Auschwitz to Birkenau, knowing that if Hitler could see us, he would know he had failed! We were still here! A week later, we marched through the Old City of Jerusalem to the Kotel, again affirming our vibrant survival.

Having the opportunity to experience and juxtapose the two most memorable events in modern Jewish history, one the worst, the Holocaust, and one the best, the creation of the State of Israel - and especially on its 60th anniversary - was an experience never to be forgotten.

If Jewish continuity has been identified as the greatest challenge to Jewish survival, then experiences such as these are a rare opportunity. A journey such as this is designed to educate and to make you feel - something that is extremely difficult to achieve in a classroom.

Howard Sommerfeld, a participant wrote: Standing on Ben Yehuda Street in the mid-

dle of Jerusalem, celebrating Independence Day surrounded by 20 000 Israelis, any thought of a security threat is remote. I stand there wondering why 60 years of independence calls for such a lavish celebration - what is the importance of a Jewish State?

A few days prior to this exhibition of patriotism, I found myself standing on the same soil where 1,2 million prisoners stood every day for up to 12 hours at role call - Auschwitz soil, a place where one would immediately picture horror, pain, suffering and emptiness.

I am astonished to feel a bright ray of sun shining upon my face. A short distance away I am again astounded to find a single, magnificent bright yellow flower sprouting from the ground in between two train tracks. The exact train tracks used to transport human beings, 3 000 at a time, like cattle to the slaughterhouse.

This distinct and disturbing contrast poses a question which burns with a desire to be answered: How can there be a presence of sheer beauty in a place where millions died for no better reason than one man's utter lust for power?

I lift my head from the flower to find a person wrapped in the warmth of the blue and white flag of a country like no other - Israel.

Israel is my flower among the train tracks to Auschwitz; Israel is the warm sun shining upon my face, the triumph among the tragedy, a safe haven where Jews no longer have to fear the possibility of becoming a mere number.

Just as the contrast of the beauty in Auschwitz uplifted the gloomy atmosphere of the death factories in Poland, so too has Israel uplifted the gloom of the Holocaust.

For me, Israel has ensured I have a place to call home. For me, Israel has ensured that the words "Never Again", are no longer merely an empty statement.



## Semi-finalists for y-idols meet in Johannesburg

OWN CORRESPONDENT  
PHOTOGRAPH: GLEN KIER

FINALLY! The names of the Jewish y-idols singing competition semi-finalists - for singers between the ages of 14 and 24 - have been announced.

Top left: Ryan Isakov, Natasha Millar (just in front of him), Gia Jacobs, Courtney Fuhr, Jayde Kafel and Danya Amoils. In the middle: Dean Levinrad, Ryan Peimer and Justine Shear. In front of Ryan is Dana Samowitz. Front: Glen Kier and Ariel Brest. Missing from photo is Dan de Combes.

Tickets are selling fast for the semi-final show on Sunday August 31 at the Victory Theatre in Houghton, at 19:30. Tickets are 50 each. Call Helen on 083-272-8541 or Nadine 082-891-8252, or e-mail hel@netactive.co.za.

Round one in Johannesburg on March 2 and in Cape Town on April 7 was a great

success; the preliminary round in Cape Town last weekend lived up to its expectations and the show in the Victory Theatre on August 31 is bound to be a sizzler! This is a show not to be missed.

The whole competition was very ably steered by Helen Heldenmuth and Nadine Lazarus, who really burned the midnight oil. It took place under the auspices of SAJACT (The South African Jewish Arts and Culture Trust which focuses on bringing Jewish arts and culture to the Jewish community.

The role of SAJACT is to find, nurture and support talented Jewish people and help them to reach their potential. It provides a platform for all Jewish artistes of all disciplines, to expose and promote their talent - in this case singers.

The y-idols show created the ideal platform to our Jewish youth to perform and share their singing talent.

## A fun evening with a very good cause

ROMY SALANT  
PHOTOGRAPH: MICHELLE ALPERT

THE ORT quiz held at the King David Linksfield Primary School was a great success with good food, a relaxed atmosphere and a little friendly competition.

The Johannesburg Women's ORT (JWO) fundraiser took off with a great start. Each table worked as a team, eagerly competing to answer the 10 questions in record time.

There were seven rounds, each round representing a different category from food and wine; Africa; sport and recreation; literature, film, art and music; Yiddishkeit; general knowledge and the sixty second dash.

Andrew Levy, the quiz master, formally recited the questions and the participants thoughtfully hurried to complete the correct answers in the given time. Spontaneous questions were also asked at interludes between the categories, where individuals who correctly answered the questions, received prizes.

To refresh the competitors, a light traditional Israeli supper of pita, falafel, humus and tachina were served with a plentiful supply of drinks to be enjoyed throughout the evening.

The most exciting round was definitely the "sixty second dash" where Levy called out a question every six seconds, without repeats, and the teams had to work together to quickly scribble down the answers at record speed.

Each table seemed to truly enjoy the night's event, with the occasional humorous joke and laughter breaking the competitive tension. ORT is all about giving and to extend this notion a raffle was run, where the three winners were rewarded for their

generosity with gifts.

Though the focus of the eve was the quiz, it was not on winning but rather on competing for the same cause, to raise money for the organisation.

Michael Sieff, national director of ORT SA explains: "ORT SA believes that education is the key to address inequalities and our extensive range of training courses and projects empower historically disadvantaged individuals across southern Africa. We continue to operate as a firmly committed, well-established, Jewish-led, non-profit, public-benefit organisation."

ORT SA is involved with educating and empowering South Africans and proactive communities. It is a voluntary organisation in South Africa that focuses on development through education and skills enhancement.

All the quiz winners received a medal as a keepsake and a floating trophy.



Back, from left: John Spiro, Penny Hochveld, Eskel Jawitz, Louise and Philip Altbeker and Steve Hochveld. Front: Yvonne Jawitz, Betty and Herbert Rajak and Monica Spiro.



Participants from KDL who went on the March of the Living.

## Tots give clothing, food to hate victims

STORY: NADINE HURWITZ  
PHOTOGRAPH: NICOLE HOFFMAN

AS THE horrific xenophobic attacks hit townships throughout Gauteng, the broader South African community, in particular the Jewish community at large, rallied to calls for help by donating money, clothing and foodstuffs to the unfortunate victims of these attacks.

Ohr Somayach Sandton Nursery School contributed to these donations. In a call for assistance, the nursery school parent body collated a substantial amount of clothing and foodstuff in just two days.

Tova Goldstein, school Director, commented on the horrific situation facing their country. "Our children and parent body have been amazing and are appreciative that they have been able to make a small difference to the victims' lives."



Ohr Somayach Sandton Nursery School kids together with the collection for the victims of xenophobia.



## WHAT'S ON

Shelley Elk carro@global.co.za

**NOTE:** Deadline for all entries is 12:00 on the Friday prior to publication.

**Key to organisations, venues, contact details and cost:**

- The Jewish National Fund (JNF) Choir, Beyachad, 2 Elray St, Raedene. Contact Crystal Kaplan. 083-376-5999.
- The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society (JWBS) - Sandringham Gardens, 85 George Avenue Sandringham 2192. Contact Carolyn Sabbagh. (011) 485-5232.
- The Jewish Outlook Team. Contact Ryan Cane, Support line: 27 76 215 8600; e-mail info@jewishoutlook.org.za; website http://www.jewishoutlook.org.za
- Nechama Bereavement Counselling Centre - Room A304, 3rd Floor, hospital wing, Sandringham Gardens, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham, 2192. Contact (011) 640-1322.
- New Friendship Ladies Group - A group for single women - contact Lucille (011) 791-5226 or 082-927-5786.
- ORT and ORTJET South Africa - 44 Central Street, Cnr 10th Ave, Houghton. Contact (011) 728-7154.
- Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre (RCHCC) and Great Park Shul, Johannesburg. Contact Hazel, (011) 728-8088 or Rene Sidley (011) 728-8378. Cost usually R50, including refreshments.
- Second Innings, Johannesburg - Jewish Community Services - Donald Gordon Centre, 85 George Avenue Sandringham. Contact Grecia Gabriel, (011) 532-9616.
- The Israel Centre. Contact Debbie (011) 645-2560.
- The Simcha Friendship and Cultural Circle (SFCC), Johannesburg - Sandton Shul. Contact Sylvia Shull, (011) 783-5600.
- The United Sisterhood, 38 Oxford Road Parktown. Contact Helen (011) 646-2409. website: http://www.unitedsisterhood.co.za
- Society of Israel Philately (SIP) - daniels@wbx.oc.za. Contact Maurice (011) 485-2293.
- South African Zionist Federation (SAZF), Johannesburg - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Contact Froma, (011) 645-2505.
- South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Jhb) - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Contact (011) 645-2500 or (011) 645-2523.
- United Zionist Luncheon Club (UZLC), Johannesburg - Our Parents Home. Contact Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.
- Union of Jewish Women (UJW), Johannesburg - 1 Oak Street Houghton. Contact (011) 648-1053. Cost R10 for the Friendship Luncheon Club.
- Union of Jewish Women (UJW), Cape Town - (021) 434-9555, e-mail: ujwvescape@new.co.za
- WIZO Johannesburg - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street Raedene. Contact Joyce Chodos (011) 645-2548 or Sandy Kramer (011) 645-2515.
- Bikkur Cholim - Jewish Society for Visiting the Sick, 7A Chester Road, Greenside East, Johannesburg. Joy Gafin (011) 447-6689.
- Tiyulim (Jewish Outdoor Club) - Contact Greg 082-959-9026 or Martin 082-965-7419.
- King David Schools' Foundation. King David Alumni

info@kdsf.org (011) 480-4723.

- CAJE - College of Adult Jewish Education, Sydenham Highlands North Shul (011) 640-5021.
- JAFFA - Jewish Accommodation for Fellow Aged. (012) 346-2007/8.
- SAIJE - Sandton Adult Institute of Jewish Education, Sandton Shul (011) 883-4210. E-mail: saije@sandton-shul.co.za.

*Tiyulim will be going on 702's Walk the Talk on July 27. Booking is open until June 18 at (011) 270-2702. www.702.co.za or contact Greg 082-959-9026.*

**Today, Friday (May 30)**

- UZLC is hosting Zara Jackson talking about "Seeds of wheat".

**Saturday evening (May 31)**

- WIZO Tsabar branch will be screening an Israeli film, "Melach Ha'aretz" (English subtitles) at 20:00 at Beyachad. All welcome. Nava Gonen (011) 786-4727.

**Sunday (June 1)**

- Second Innings is hosting Clem Sunter, chairman of Anglo American Chairman's Fund, talking on "China's game - the dragon in Africa" at 10:00 for 10:30 at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres.

- WIZO Aviv Reshet, is hosting a fundraising "No limit Texax Hold 'em" poker tournament, at 10:00 at the HOD. Donation: R800 before May 10, R1 000 thereafter. Bookings e-mail wizopoker@yahoo.com or Martine De'Agular 082-880-2090 or Ruth Shapiro-Lewis 082-885-8423. For corporate sponsorships contact Jackie (011) 384-8000.

- King David Schools' Foundation and the Samantha Amy Brest Endowment Fund are hosting an inspirational mom and daughter brunch with guest speaker Judy Alter, 10:00 for 10:30 at 38B Adrienne Street Sandown. R150 pp donation. Proceeds to assisting deserving matric girls at the King David High Schools in their preparations for their matric dance. Contact Felicité Brest on 082-333-7961.

- Jaffa morning market from 09:00 to 12:00. Stalls, bric-a-brac, mini-tombola, raffle, arts and crafts, deli, Judaica and more.

- Action in Motherhood (AIM) features Mashi Lipskar "Spiritual antenatal classes" - including Jewish customs of pregnancy and labour, choosing a name, bris and pidyon haben from 09:30 to 12:00 at Chabad House of Savoy. Cost R100. Bookings Esti 084-623-6554.

**Monday (June 2)**

- SIP - New issues and quiz, courtesy of South African Agent of Israel Philatelic Services, at 19:30 Waverley Shul boardroom. Entry free. Refreshments.

- UJW is hosting Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein at 09:30.

- WIZO Johannesburg and SAZF celebrate Yom Yerushalayim at Beyachad at 09:30. Israeli speaker, entertainment and video of liberation of Jerusalem, June 1967. Details and bookings, Joyce (011) 645-2548.

**Tuesday (June 3)**

- UJW is hosting Estelle Sher, presenting "A taste of Rachmaninov" at 09:45 for 10:00. Cost R20. At 301 Eaton Place, 15 Kernick Avenue, Melrose North.

- WIZO Cyrdlene card day - 09:00 - 13:00 and 14:00 - 17:00 at Beyachad. R60 includes tea. Bookings Crystal (011) 885-2557. All welcome.

**Wednesday (June 4)**

- SFCC is hosting Prof Franco Guidozzi on "Dilemma of de ladies", weight control, menopause, hormone replacement? At 10:00 at the Sandton Shul.

- WIZO Edgar dine and decor morning - innovative ideas in decor by Marc Hirschowitz, and the latest food trends, with Delores Fouche. At 09:30 at 3 Bel Air, 2nd Avenue, corner Boundary Road, Inanda. Cost R120. Bookings Zee 083-377-5644 or (011) 783-3185. Marion Brivik on 083-326-3791. All welcome.

- UJW, Cape Town is hosting Molly Seftel - "My story chapter I". At 10:00 for 10:30 in Stonehaven. Entrance R12. Enquiries (021) 434-9555.

**Friday (June 6)**

- UZLC hosts Jack Shapiro talking about "Highlights of the Sinai Campaign - 1956".

**Sunday (June 8)**

- Second Innings is hosting architect Brian Altschuler - "Connections and corners - the architecture of Wilhelm Pabst" at 10:00 for 10:30 at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres.

- JWB is hosting Dr David Lipschitz, geriatrician from Arkansas, US talking on "A prescription for a long, happy and independent life", 09:30 for 10:00 at Beyachad. Limited seating. Cost R100 includes tea. Jennifer (011) 883-2440/082-445-8850 June (011) 880-4102

- Allen Berkowitz presents a "Relationship transforming interactive seminar," couples and singles, "How to know who is right for you" at 10:30 to 12:45 at Old Tzirei Tzion Shul, Yeshiva College Campus. Cost R120. RSVP 082-458-5539.

**Wednesday (June 11)**

- SFCC is hosting Rabbi Michael Katz who will speak on a subject of topical interest at 10:00 at the Sandton Shul.

**Thursday (June 12)**

- BZA WIZO/WPZC hosts a piano recital by Orian

Shikun from WIZO Ma'alot conservatory, at the resident hotel, Bantry Bay at 20:00.

- RCHCC will have a panel discussion at 19:30. Mendel Kaplan, Rabbi Laurence Perez and David Saks will discuss and comment on "The Jews in South Africa" followed by a response from the authors Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain. The discussion will then be open to the floor. Booking essential. Admission free. Refreshments will be served.

**Sunday (June 15)**

- Second Innings is hosting Evelyn Green and Prof Russel Lurie on "Tradition - a journey of Jewish life through song" at 10:00 for 10:30 at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres.

- The Friendship Forum for Holocaust Survivors, Second Generation and others affected by the Holocaust, will be hosting a panel discussion - "Do memories matter?" Panellists and Survivors String Ensemble will play Jewish music. Tea, refreshments. Our Parents Home Auditorium, cr Spring and High Roads, Gardens at 14:30.

**Wednesday (June 18)**

- Second Innings is going on a two hour guided tour of the Hollard Art Gallery. Meet at the Oxford Shul parking at 09:00, departure 09:15. Cost R80, includes tour, tea and scones. Annette (011) 485-1640 before 18:00 for bookings.

- SFCC is going on an outing to the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Bea Katz will talk about "The history of the gallery". Cost R30 includes transport. Refreshments at your expense. Meet at 10:00 at the Sandton Shul.

**Sunday (June 22)**

- Second Innings is hosting attorney Mike Judin on "Hey folks, you're spending my inheritance" at 10:00 for 10:30 at Beyachad.

- SAZF invites you to their 60km cycle ride for Israel. Registration at 07:00. Donation R60. Starting and finishing at Protea Park, corner Kranz and Tregoning Streets, Linksfield. Proceeds to victims of terror. Registration at www.sazionfed.co.za or lisa@beyachad.co.za or (011) 645-2512; or eli@beyachad.co.za at (011) 645-2551.

**Monday (June 23)**

- UJW Johannesburg is hosting Prof Adam Habib, deputy vice chancellor, research and innovation at University of Johannesburg, who will talk on "The role of religion in a post-9/11 world", at 09:30.

**Wednesday (June 25)**

- JWB Gresswold is having a booksale at Balfour Park.

- SFCC is having Israeli folk dancing lessons with Ora at 10:00 at the Sandton Shul.

## THE BRIDGE LOUNGE by Jeff Sapire

ONE OF the most enjoyable aspects of bridge is bidding a hand well to a great contract, and then playing it accurately. In golfing terms, it would be like hitting a beautiful drive, then an excellent 2nd close to the pin, and then holing the putt for a birdie.

Over North's 3D overcall South's 3S was forward-going and forcing. 4C was a cue bid agreeing spades, as were 4D and 4H. 4NT was Keycard Blackwood and 5D showed 0 or 3 aces (the king of trumps is one of the 5 aces).

5NT asked for kings and North made an excellent decision to jump to 7 spades on the basis of the long diamond suit - with South having shown the ace with the 4D cue bid he expected the suit to produce 5 or 6 tricks.

Declarer won the opening lead and saw that the contract depended on the diamonds being no worse than 3-2. The question was whether something could be done if the diamonds were 4-1 (without a singleton jack)?

Declarer drew two rounds of trumps with the A-Q and then cashed the A-Q of diamonds. They did break 4-1, but the hand with the singleton diamond had no more trumps, so he now ruffed a club, cashed the king of diamonds and ruffed a diamond in hand. He drew the last trump, crossed to the table with the heart ace, and cashed the two winning diamonds. The 13 tricks were - 5 spades in hand, heart ace, 3 top diamonds, club ace, club ruff in dummy, and the

West dealer, neither vul

NORTH			
♠ K73			
♥ A7			
♦ K108432			
♣ A			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 96	♠ 1054	♠ 1054	♠ 1054
♥ 1062	♥ KQ93	♥ KQ93	♥ KQ93
♦ 6	♦ J975	♦ J975	♦ J975
♣ KQ109843	♣ 75	♣ 75	♣ 75
SOUTH			
♠ AQJ82			
♥ 854			
♦ AQ			
♣ J62			

South	West	North	East
3S	P	4C	P
4D	P	4H	P
4NT	P	5D	P
5NT	P	7S	All pass
Opening lead: CK			

last two established diamonds.

What, you may ask, if the third diamond was ruffed? The answer is that if the diamonds are 4-1 you were not making the hand anyway if you drew all the trumps.

There's only one entry in dummy to set up the diamonds, so you cannot get back there. On top of this, even if you had an extra entry, there would only be 12 tricks. So the "safe play", as it were, was to test the diamonds after two rounds of trumps.

## CROSSWORD NO 72

BY LEAH SIMON

**ACROSS:**

- Catholic spiritual leader (4)
- Perfects - well, almost - for school monitors (8)
- Sea-locked land that I will find, we hear (4)
- Everyone in debt - and permitting it (8)
- What to sing at the retirement function? (4, 1, 3, 4)
- Southerner lying about it being one by one (6)
- Soft illumination causes the predicament (6)
- Not true about the property - that's the situation (3, 2, 3, 4)
- Curb the others in the shower (8)
- Make a fuss about Penny in Eastern Cape elephant reserve (4)
- Collective members of the board? (5, 3)
- Los Angeles gets two points for regulations (4)

**DOWN:**

- Being prudish, got up for flower (8)
- In place, but upset by big-billed bird (7)
- Passes on team races (6)
- Is he game? Yes - beautifully! (10)
- Committee leader would give an arm or a leg for the scale (5)
- Season of the wise? (4)
- How handymen are summoned? (4, 2, 4)
- Do suit us, somehow, being scholarly (8)
- R1 000 for personal assistant? No, for dad's dad (7)
- First easterner to create conflict (6)
- Is Susan with the children? Shortly! (5)
- Boy found in fire ricochet (4)

**SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 71**

**ACROSS:**

- Race; 3. Sing song; 8. Ipso; 9. No bounds; 11. Ready, aim, fire; 13. Amazon; 14. Plaice; 17. Bafana Bafana; 20. Attained; 21. Shoe; 22. Backchat; 23. Bent.

**DOWN:**

- Railroad; 2. Cassava; 4. Iconic; 5. Goodfellas; 6. Inner; 7. Gash; 10. Pyromaniac; 12. Decadent; 15. Ivanhoe; 16. Camera; 18. Antic; 19. Lamb.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8		9				
		10				
11						12
13				14	15	
				16		
	17	18				
19						
20					21	
22						23



# Community Active Protection now in Victory Park



Personnel of Victory Park CAP pose in front of one of their vehicles.

AS ESCALATING crime continues to violate the lives of people across South Africa, residents in many of Johannesburg's northern suburbs have discovered that the private security model alone is not enough to keep them safe.

While boomed roads and security guards serve a purpose, private security is more effective when it operates alongside a system that safeguards the public and communal spaces of a given area. Victory Park in Johannesburg is the latest suburb to embrace such a system.

The Community Active Protection (CAP) solution which utilises a mix of early identification, observation, intelligence-gathering, surveillance and mobile patrols is currently already operational in seven areas of Johannesburg, according to a media release. CAP's track record provides strong evidence of a significant decrease in criminal activity; in some suburbs crime has

diminished by as much as 90 per cent.

A year ago, the residents of Victory Park elected a CAP committee and mandated it with the task of initiating a CAP security system. After raising the necessary start-up capital from residents, a security service provider was appointed and on March 22 2008, the wheels of the first tactical vehicle were set in motion. CAP, as its name suggests, combines professional security expertise with the proactive involvement of residents, who volunteer for block watch patrols and report any suspicious activity or persons to a central control room, which immediately notifies the dedicated CAP vehicle in the area.

Victory Park CAP Chairman Jonathan Gimpel says: "The most notable difference between CAP and other existing security initiatives is that it is owned, managed and run by the residents in the Victory Park community."

Essentially the concept of CAP is about bringing together all the people living and working in an area and mobilising them to stand as one in an effort to combat crime.

With over 1 000 people in Victory Park, it certainly appears that the suburb has the concerted "people power" to keep it largely crime free.

## Abuse in all forms spares no-one, despite denial

ALISON GOLDBERG

"DOMESTIC ABUSE, child abuse and abuse of elderly people, occurs in all groups of people regardless of religion, age, social class or level of education. There are reported instances of abuse in Jewish families in all countries and within all sectors of the religion."

This quote comes from the Johannesburg Jewish Helping Hand's (Chevrah Kadisha's) pamphlet on its wide-ranging family abuse services and was the subject of its conference last week hosting rabbonim, social workers, educators and psychologists from diverse backgrounds.

The conference was held on its campus at Golden Acres and the objective was to discuss pathways to healing in family abuse situations.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein congratulated Jewish Community Services for bringing this important issue to the fore, for not sweeping it under the carpet and for acting against the denial that exists.

In exploring how to approach this issue, he proposed that one of the ways to deal with it was to nurture a culture of emotional health in the community. Acknowledging that anger was inherently a part of the human condition, he proposed that Jews should draw values from their rich tradition and that those values should form the basis of programmes, such as within the Jewish schools.

"A number of values can be drawn from our own rich Torah tradition," he said.

The first was sensitivity wherein we had to be careful to ensure that we didn't harm

with our words. Verbal abuse was defined as any word which caused pain or disappointment.

Examples ranged from reminding a convert that she or he had converted, to asking the price of an item in a store with no intent to buy, only to raise and dash the hopes of the salesperson.

Other character traits that should be aspired to were to be refined, humble and slow to anger. The subject of abuse raised the issue of self-transcendence: "I am a person but there are other people around." This was the gateway to the culture of giving and just as the Chevrah Kadisha was a giving institute, a giving person became a better member of the community.

"It is said that is easier to go through the entire Talmud than to change one character trait. The issue at hand is for each individual to take responsibility to all his or her actions."

The last value he mentioned was self-respect and that all human beings had to take responsibility for that. It was important to teach children that no-one had the right to be disrespectful to them as we were all created in the image of G-d.

The way to change a society was from the inside out, such as with the individual. Human beings were works-in-progress and the mitzvah was to get up even if one had fallen seven times.

A theme that was repeated by several speakers was that even though gender equality was enshrined in our Constitution and a great deal was said about it, society had to "catch up" and become comfortable with it. It was said

that many men had become insecure due to the shifts in gender inequality and when this was combined with other factors, they might see the woman in their lives as a threat, and behave abusively towards her.

Although there were cases of women abusing men, the vast majority of domestic abuse found women as the recipient of the abuse.

Professor Philippa Kruger of the Wits Law Clinic reminded the audience that it was only as recent as 1993 that rape was outlawed in marriage and until the fifties a man was entitled to chastise his wife. Similarly, Act 116 of 1998 introduced a protection order to provide speedy relief to "partners" having a relationship of any duration.

To the mix of speakers was added members of MURAL (Men Understanding Respect and Love) led by its co-founder and former abuser, Bearnard O'Riain and two other former abusers. Judging from audience response, the expansion of this group now consisting of 16 men meeting fortnightly, was quite possible.

The necessity of dealing with the "offender" was the subject of Johannesburg Child Welfare Society assistant director, Aileen Langley who in her talk on child abuse and the paucity of residential venues for medium to long term care in South Africa, compared it to the United Kingdom.

Tina Sideris, a clinical psychologist, said the key to understanding the violent relationship between a man and a woman was that violence represented the inability of the abuser to control the other, more

specifically, the inability to change those around to be more like us and exposed the crisis in accepting "partners" as independent others.

Social worker Dr Sheri Hanson highlighted the difficulty in linking women and child abuse treatment and stressed, as did other speakers, the necessity of treating the whole family as the client and to integrate feminist theory and child-centred theory, or more simply, to adopt a generalist approach in counselling.

The Chevrah Kadisha offers both treatment facilities for abused children as well as for abused women, and also services for men who abuse others; a youth prevention programme called "Love Shouldn't Hurt", which was conducted with counsellors at the King David Schools earlier this year and refuge for elderly members of a family.

Group manager of social services, Brenda Solarsh, summarised the several "do's" needed, such as that the abuser needed as much help and compassion as those being abused.

She also praised the narrative therapy approach by professionals as exemplified by the late Michael White, whereby the therapist invited his or her clients to take responsibility and share power.

Social worker Tessa Hochfeld warned therapists in the audience that couples counselling was not recommended. She did not prescribe any specific therapeutic approach, but emphasised that whatever approach was used, it had to be combined with a pro-feminist perspective which would assist in understanding the wider social context, aspects of which contributed to the maintenance of abuse.

## Breast cancer needn't be a death knell

SANDY SHER

THE FEAR of breast cancer existed in all women; some are even too frightened to discuss it openly, and yet they were confronted by this disease on a regular basis, well-known plastic surgeon, Dr Gereth Edwards told a Second Innings meeting at Golden Acres recently. He particularly focused on reconstruction.

Sharing a podium with Dr Edwards was Rachel Bramson\* who recalled her harrowing experience of dealing with breast cancer and other critical illnesses. She has written a book entitled *My Miracle Comeback*, about her journey from darkness to light and from trauma to peace.

Said Dr Edwards: "Many years ago when a woman was diagnosed with breast cancer nobody talked about it, and the entire breast was usually surgically removed.

"The rehabilitation process, both physically and mentally, hardly existed and these poor women literally resorted to any

method of filling their bras, even to the point of using birdseed."

In 1963 the first silicone breast prostheses were constructed. They were poorly made and problems occurred. "In the early '80s a massive lawsuit against the manufacturers hit the headlines in the United States. The silicone prostheses were subsequently taken off the market.

"After many years of extensive research the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) finally declared silicone safe to be used in the human body," said Edwards.

In-depth anatomy of the breast was undertaken by professionals as to the placement of silicone, as well as reconstruction work by surgeons.

Many possibilities of tissue that could be taken from other parts of the body were looked at; these included the Latissimus Dorsi, the back muscle that lies below the shoulder. Skin, fat and muscle could also be taken from the abdomen, the back and the buttocks.

"If taken from the stomach, a bonus

could be a nice flat tummy," quipped Edwards.

The question of hereditary breast cancer was raised. "This is when there is a family history of multiple blood relatives who have had breast cancer.

"The pattern strongly suggests BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutation which explains a large number of these cancers. The genetic basis is now understood and in many cases women can reduce the risk by a mastectomy by a surgeon only removing the nipple and breast tissue.

"This procedure reduces the risk of death by 89 per cent and good cosmetic results can be achieved, while at the same time avoiding chemotherapy and radiation," said Edwards, adding: "A 30-year study has established that relatively small tumours don't need the extreme surgery of having a mastectomy. Some of these tumours are as big as a grain of rice.

"Hormone blocking medication is also prescribed, usually for a period of five years," he said. Breast reconstruction was



Dr Gereth Edwards during his talk at the Second Innings meeting.

definitely recommended. "You all have the right to look human under your clothes," he stressed.

Proceeds from the sale of Rachel Bramson's book go to the Cansa Association of SA. Copies may be ordered by phoning their toll-free number 0800 226622 or 083-308-7911.

\* Not her real name.



# When 2 choirs meld in harmonious goodwill

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
RITA LEWIS

WITH THE horrific and tragic xenophobia sweeping through many parts of South Africa, it is almost inconceivable to think that anyone would be brave enough to visit any of the townships where there might be hotspots of trouble.

Not so the 26 or so members of the Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir - including their chairman Russel Lurie and accompanist, Evelyn Green - who all insisted on keeping their appointment with the Imilongi KaNtu Choral Society in Soweto, where they were to hold a combined practice session for their forthcoming concert.

The concert to be held at the Linder Auditorium in Parktown on August 26, will be the second time the two choirs have sung together, the last time being some eight years ago to standing ovations.

They will be accompanied by a five piece ensemble; arrangements have been done by Green and renowned conductor George Mxagana will conduct most of the concert.

Lurie said the two choirs had "got together to share what we love most - music. We are building bridges between colours."

He said that working together had inspired his choir to reach new heights.

The decision to include Imilongi into the programme at the Linder Auditorium, is part of the JJMC's efforts to revitalise the choir's image.

The recent inclusion of several "younger" singers to swell the ranks, is part of this rejuvenation programme. The younger members are Warren Klass, Gary Aberman, Marc Shapiro, Dean Berzen and Danny Nochumson - four of them are still at school - and Nochumson is a university student.

All of them are presently gaining a lot of experience and exposure as they all sing in their shul choirs - Shapiro, Aberman and Klass in the Pine Street Shul choir, Berzen in the Edenvale Shul choir and Nochumson at Linksfield.

Prior to compiling the programme for the JJMC's concert, Lurie said he had been contacted by Mxagana who recalled their previous most successful combined concert and came up with the

suggestion that they hold another concert together.

Lurie said the timing was perfect and he had told Mxagana that everyone thought it was a really great idea, especially as it was "in keeping with reconciliation, integration and good relations".

There was, however, one problem and that was that the Imilongi women would have to be left out, as halachically, men and women are not allowed to sing together.

Mxagana agreed and in an effort to learn more about Jewish customs and synagogic music and song, he paid a visit to Waverley Shul one Shabbat, listening to the choir "which crystallised his thoughts on doing this concert with us".

The practice session for the two choirs - under the baton of Mxagana - was held at the Funda Community Centre in Soweto.

Mxagana is a patient perfectionist, bringing emphasis to note values and ensuring that a tight, precise rhythm was kept throughout. His choir members are disciplined, motivated and highly professional.

He repeated phrases when asked to do so, listened to comments from members of both choirs and co-ordinated the choir with the music, with the accompanist and with himself.

Under Mxagana's leadership and musical guidance, Imilongi which was founded in 1983, has reached the superb standard that it has. It sang at the inauguration ceremony of former President Nelson Mandela and has performed to packed houses in Israel, the US, Europe and in the UK.

The beneficiaries of the concert will be the CSO and Takalani, a home for some 800 underprivileged people. Advertisements from the community (which run from a brick size for just R30 to a full page for R3 500) are presently being accepted for insertion into the glossy commemorative brochure. Those interested in advertising, should contact Green on (011) 728-5570 or 082-704-2322.

As this concert will be a costly exercise, sponsorship is also being sought and this is being dealt with by Lurie on (011) 888-4757.

Tickets for the concert will be available from Computicket at the beginning of July.



Imilongi's George Mxagana turns the music score for the Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir's accompanist, Evelyn Green while the choir's chairman, Russel Lurie looks on.



Members of the two choirs rehearse together. At the back are the female members of the Imilongi KaNtu Choral Society who will not be singing at the concert due to halachic restrictions.

# Some lean years ahead in the ME - Benjamin

LIONEL SLIER

THE CURRENT Israel-Palestinian situation was untenable, with the 2008 strategy a failure, University of the Witwatersrand political scientist, Larry Benjamin told the Union of Jewish Women in Johannesburg last week. His take on the Middle East situation is rather gloomy, yet very sober, with not much optimism for the near future.

"There has been fleeting moments of rekindled peace hopes. (Former Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon's reality was that Israel needed a Palestinian state even more than did the Palestinians. Israel has the firepower but the Palestinians have the numbers and 20, 30 years down the line, the Jews will be in a minority in a democratic state. Rather have two states side by side."

On the failure of the 2008 strategy, Benjamin added: "Sharon's vision has disintegrated. Israel left Gaza, now Sderot and Ashkelon are bombarded by rockets. The Israeli army will go back into Gaza. (Israeli Prime Minister Ehud) Olmert is a weak leader and has personal problems.

"There is still the Intifada; there are still the settlements. Hamas trounced Fatah in a democratic election and there is a low-scale civil war in Gaza.

"There can be no peace unless Hamas has a change of heart. They have a stronghold on Gaza. Hamas, looking at the demographics say: 'We can wait this out.'"

These had been seven bad years, he said, using the theme he had chosen for his talk, namely Joseph's interpretation of

Pharaoh's dream of seven fat and seven lean years.

"But," he added, "there is a glimmer of hope. There are messages between Jerusalem and Damascus (in Syria), but there are the issues of Golan and Israel's water supplies.

"Yet Syria supplies Hezbollah and it could pull the plug on Hezbollah if Israel maybe gives back part of Golan. It is a flickering hope. Seven bad years here too."

Looking at the Middle East broadly seven years ago, Benjamin said, "the oil price was US\$23. Today there is global concern about Iran. In 2001 there was a moderate reformist regime there. In Iraq the weapon inspectors had been expelled and there were fears that Saddam Hussein was replenishing his weapons stocks.

"The Kurds in the north had been put down and Iraq was stable. The situation between Israel and Palestine was not good. Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon but tanks had been operating in Gaza and in the West Bank. But the Second Intifada was raging.

"Lebanon was still recovering from the debilitating civil war (1975-1989). But it was making a comeback; there was a sort of peace, both religious and political. And 30 000 Syrian troops were there to impose peace.

"The price of oil was stable, but today, well, we won't talk about oil. Iraq has had seven bad years. One good thing is that a dictator has gone. When his statue was torn down in 2003 there were hopes for a democratic Iraq.

"There are two narratives for Iraq today. They do have freedom of religion, a free press and they have had two reasonably fair elections, political parties and their own Constitution. It could be the birth pangs of democracy.

"The other narrative is of the multiple insurgencies and a de facto civil war between the radical Shi'ites and radical Sunnis. Also al-Qaida now has a presence which they did not have before. Saddam Hussein kept a hold. The country is in a mess; it is fractured and the United States is the enemy.

"The last seven years for Iraq have seen both good and bad. The country's future has been dismembered."

On Iran he said that seven years back it had fallen into the hands of hard-liners. A Council of Guardians vetted the Islamic credentials of Members of Parliament and circumscribed the non-Islamists.

Under Mahmoud Achmadinejad Iran's foreign policy had hardened with its threat to wipe Israel off the map and calling America "The Great Satan".

"With its nuclear programme it is challenging the status quo. If it is for generating electricity as they say, then why hide it? The obvious answer is that they are enriching uranium to make nuclear weapons. They have a right to enrich uranium, they claim. With the oil price at US\$124, sanctions will not hurt them," said Benjamin.

"Iran is stirring things up. It is supporting Hamas and Hezbollah. The 2006 war in



Lebanon was a proxy war; it wasn't Israel against Hezbollah - it was the United States against Iran. Shi'ite fundamentalism is on the rise and Iran will derail any peace (plan)."

About Lebanon, Benjamin said the situation was dire. It was on a precipice sliding back into civil war. But it would be a different one; it would be the Sunnis and the Christians against Hezbollah who were pro-Syria and pro-Iran.

"Prime Minister Fouad Siniora wanted to show Hezbollah that it couldn't be the government. But there is no president; they have tried 18 times to elect one. The country is sliding into chaos."

Benjamin said September 11 2001 had been the start of seven bad years. The attacks by al-Qaida had boosted the morale of fundamentalist Islam. It had shown that the West could be attacked.

Al-Qaida offered an ideological home and it was now in all countries in the West, "including South Africa", Benjamin remarked. Al-Qaida was now a top down organisation; "it has become a franchise; it is still a potent force".

So, looking at the Middle East, Lebanon was on the boil; Iran was pursuing a nuclear programme; in Iraq hopes had not been fulfilled; between Israel and Palestine the key issues of 20 years ago were no clearer now.

Benjamin concluded: "I am not optimistic. I don't predict seven good years."



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## sport



Matthew Garrun, captain Jonathan Fine, who has been selected for the Area A side and Adam Gray (Area B side) on attack for King David High School Victory Park.

# Avraham Grant is sacked by Chelsea

LONDON - With a ruthlessness dizzying even by the standards of modern professional soccer, Israeli coach Avraham Grant was sacked last Saturday by Chelsea, just three days after he had taken the team to within a penalty kick of winning the European Champions League, the most prized competition in European club football, the *Jerusalem Post* reports.

Grant's dismissal culminates eight months of incessant rumour-mongering since he was surprisingly given the job last September by the club's billionaire Russian-Jewish owner, Roman Abramovich.

Although Grant had coached Israel's national team and achieved considerable success in Israeli club soccer, many commentators and fans argued that he was woefully ill-equipped for the task of managing one of the most prestigious and richest clubs in the world.

Dignified but dour in his months at the club, Grant, 53, went some way towards silencing those critics by bringing Chelsea to the brink of success in three competitions, but ultimately failed in them all.

His side went down to Tottenham Hotspurs in the final of the Carling Cup in February. Then, although Chelsea was in contention until the very last day of the season, it narrowly lost out to Manchester United in England's Premier League. And finally, last week Wednesday night in the pouring rain of Moscow, Grant's team was second-best to Manchester United again, losing out on penalties, 6-5, in the Champions League final.

Chelsea had been the better side for much of last week Wednesday's match, hitting the post and the crossbar in attacks that could have decided the game. The team nosed ahead when the game went to penalties, and captain John Terry only had to score to secure the title. But he slipped on the rain-drenched turf and put his shot wide.

And when Nicolas Anelka, Grant's most expensive signing, subsequently missed his penalty, after a rather pedestrian effort, Manchester United had triumphed.

Some of the defining images of what has now proved Grant's brief tenure at Chelsea saw the coach hugging and comforting the tearful Terry in the rain on the pitch after the bitter defeat, with his suit jacket and hair turning sodden, before the players went to receive their losers' medals.

Grant threw his own medal into the crowd of Chelsea supporters - supporters who had never really taken him to their hearts, who missed their previous, charismatic manager Jose Mourinho, and who doubted that Grant was doing more than merely stewarding the collection of world-class players Mourinho had assembled and led to a series of English domestic successes.

Grant would undoubtedly have known that his job was hanging by a thread, and that it would be severed by Abramovich if he could not deliver the Champions League.



Avraham Grant



Roman Abramovich



John Terry

In the semi-final, played on Holocaust Remembrance Day, Grant sank to his knees in an apparent prayer of gratitude after Chelsea defeated Liverpool to reach the final.

The coach was reported to have taken his leave of the Chelsea players last weekend, while the details of his contract termination were finalised. The blow of his dismissal will be thoroughly cushioned by a pay-off reported to be in the region of \$10 million.

Grant is also said to be confident that his relative success at Chelsea will provoke a stream of new job offers.

Abramovich is reported to have been "embarrassed" by Chelsea's failure in his home capital of Moscow, and moved swiftly to dispense with Grant, even though the two were said to be friends.

Still, while the Russian oligarch may be ruthless in his choice, and retention, of managers, there is no shortage of would-be successors to Grant.

The former Barcelona manager Frank Rijkaard, Inter Milan's Roberto Mancini and the national team coach of Russia, Guus Hiddink, are all said to be possible candidates.

Most intriguingly, the man who Grant succeeded at Chelsea, the Abramovich-ousted Mourinho, may also be back in the frame. Abramovich reportedly gave Mourinho a \$4m-plus present of a limited edition Ferrari sports car in February, at the time of the Carling Cup defeat.

In an interview that appeared only hours before Grant's dismissal, Mourinho essentially depicted Grant as "a loser". Told by *The Observer* that Grant felt he had overseen a good season at Chelsea - taking the side to a Champions League final, which Mourinho never managed - Mourinho responded that he considered Chelsea's year to have been "a very bad one because in football 'almost' means defeat and Chelsea almost won the Carling Cup, almost won the Champions League and almost won the Premier League. Almost is nothing.

"After two titles per season for the last three years," Mourinho went on, referring to his period in charge, "there were zero titles this season, which in my philosophy means a really bad season. Maybe in the philosophy of a loser this was a great season, which I respect."

Grant was also attacked by Anelka, who missed the last penalty last week Wednesday and blamed the coach for sending him into the game as a late substitute without enough time to warm up properly.

"I was on the bench for 110 minutes and suddenly I am asked to play, not even a minute after I was sent out to warm up," Anelka complained.

For his part, Grant was making no immediate comment, possibly as part of the terms of his financial settlement.

Sky News predicted that "a bigger name and a bigger personality" would take his place - an observation that left unanswered the question that has hovered over Grant's entire tenure at Chelsea: Why did Abramovich appoint him in the first place?

# KDVP shines in the sporting arena

JACK MILNER

IT IS half way through the year and King David High School Victory Park has a lot to cheer about in the sporting arena.

"In a number of cases our results so far have been the best ever at the school," said proud sports master Darren Jordaan.

The school's under-14 cricket team remains unbeaten so far this year and there has been success as well in the swimming pool, on the tennis courts and netball courts, as well as on the rugby field.

In swimming the school won the "A" League of division two, which is a league for small schools. Eleven of the swimmers made Prestige while Stacy Lazarus was selected to swim for Central Gauteng.

In tennis the boys' team, spearheaded by Adam Gordon and Brent Fineberg, won their division in League 2 Green.

In netball Jessica Friedman and Cayla Sebba went to regional trials with Cayla making the under-15 Gauteng squad.

But perhaps it is First XV rugby team

that has pride of place. They have played 13 matches this year and have won 12 and lost only one.

"They have been very competitive this year and they are looking very good. Never have we had a first rugby team that has produced this level of results," said Jordaan.

"We started with a 15-0 beating of Highlands North, who were reputed to be the best co-ed school in that bracket.

"We have only had seven tries scored against us the entire season."

Victory Park has scored wins against Sandringham, Redhill and an especially heartening 23-13 victory over Linden Hoërskool.

Their only loss came on a tour to Cape Town where, after trouncing Herzlia, they played a friendly against Milnerton and went down 7-14.

Two of their players, lock Jonathan Fine and eighthman Adam Gray, made area teams with Jonathan getting A team status and Adam getting into the B team.

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