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Friday, 25 February 2011 / 21 Adar I, 5771

Volume 15 Number 7

New Zealand giant quake kills Israeli, destroys Chabad House

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A 'miracle' as Chabad's car floats down

It was time for Chabad's Miracle Drive again. The function this year was stunning with its glitz and glamour. Some 2 000 people converged on the Sandton Convention Centre. Three lucky winners became proud owners of a Nissan Micra. There was a host of other mouth-watering prizes as well.
(PHOTOGRAPH: RITA LEWIS) SEE PAGE 6



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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

On six days work may be done

ACCORDING TO Rashi the reminder about the prohibition of creative labour on Shabbat in the opening verses (Exodus 35:1-3) of this week's parshah, precedes the description of the building of the Tabernacle to teach us that even the construction of the sanctuary, important as it was, did not override Shabbat.

Indeed the Tannaim determine the 39 categories of activity that are forbidden to be done on Shabbat from the juxtaposition of the texts concerning Shabbat observance and the gifts of the Israelites towards the sanctuary.

The Or HaHayyim expressed the importance of Shabbat by describing it as the nefesh kiyum ha-olam, "the soul of the existence of the universe", without which there would not be the six days of labour.

Indeed, Jewish tradition dictates that Shabbat be made the focus of the workday week. Thus the only day of the week that has a name in Hebrew, is Shabbat, the workdays are known as the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth day from Shabbat.



PARSHAT VAYAKHEL

Rabbi Malcolm Matitiani
Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation

Friday is also known as Erev Shabbat, the "eve of Shabbat". The very names, and thus the very essence, of the days of the week, are dependent on the existence of Shabbat. Similarly the whole of creation revolves around Shabbat, which is portrayed in the Torah as the climax of creation (Genesis 2:2-3).

Shabbat, as a sign of the covenant, is the focal point of creation and should be the centre of a Jew's life. Since the construction of the ancient wilderness sanctuary was a replication on the part of the Children of Israel of the Creation of the World, it was a logical conclusion that building should cease on Shabbat.

By refraining from creative activity, we acknowledge G-d as the Supreme Creator and we take the

time to renew our relationship with the Divine and to review our accomplishments of the past week.

It is fascinating that all Jews, observant and unobservant, are aware of the prohibition to engage in creative activities on Shabbat but very few realise that there is a positive commandment to create on the six other days of the week: "Six days you shall labour and do all your work" (Exodus 20:9).

Not only are we expected to emulate G-d by refraining from creative activity on Shabbat, but we are also obligated to engage in creative activity on the six other days of the week.

Such activity need not necessarily be physical pursuits, but could also take the form of intellectual pursuits.

The word for creative labour that is forbidden on Shabbat is Melacha which is related to Malach, meaning "messenger" or "angel". Thus when we work creatively for the betterment of the world and ourselves, we do G-d's will by being messengers of G-d through channelling our talents

SHABBAT TIMES

February 25/21 Adar 1
February 26/22 Adar 1

Vayakhel

Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:14	Johannesburg
18:07	20:01	Cape Town
18:15	19:06	Durban
18:20	19:24	Bloemfontein
18:00	19:33	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:22	East London

for tikkun olam, "mending the world".

As people of the covenant we are obliged to work six days of the week for the betterment of the world in order to bring about the Messianic era which the rabbis referred to as yom shekulo Shabbat, "a time that is all Shabbat".

Only when we conduct ourselves during the week in the spirit of Shabbat, making the concept of Shabbat harmony a focus of our lives, will we relate to others and the world on a higher spiritual and intellectual plane.

Such sanctification of life would bring nearer the time when the ideal of the Messianic era would become a reality.

Real Kabbalah, stand up...

ALISON GOLDBERG
PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

RECLAIMING Kabbalah from the charlatanism of non-authentic practitioners worldwide, has become an imperative for rabbis and genuine scholars of Jewish mysticism alike.

The Centre for Adult Jewish Education and Women of the World (CAJE and WoW) joined forces late last year to help debunk the fraudsters and draw distinctions between real Kabbalah and some popular variations that clearly deviate from the classic forms of true Torah.

A BBC-TV exposé by John Sweeney, on the increasingly popular Kabbalah Centre which boasts celebrity adherents such as pop star Madonna and, more recently, supermodel Naomi Campbell.

The group's substantial revenue appears to come from sales of volumes of their own editions of the classic Kabbalah source, The Zohar; bottled water claimed to have curative powers, even for cancer; and red string bracelets to ward off the evil eye.

Sweeney leaves viewers with the distinct impression that the group is more mercenary than mystical. One scene in the film shows a Rosh Hashanah gathering in a hotel in Tel Aviv attended by Madonna, with congregants standing, clapping and shouting at a screen to counter radiation from Chernobyl. Rabbis in the UK have denounced it as a dangerous cult.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul, who is also president of the SA Rabbinical Association, offered the 200-strong audience sources of study of the Kabbalah, saying he understood its attraction, the desire to transcend the mundane and the need for something more fulfilling than just making a buck, but that it had to be studied in the right way.

Wishing to distance himself from the spectacle of deviationist impostors, noted South African scholar Rabbi Levy Wineberg (pictured), rosh yeshiva of the Rabbinical Seminary in Pretoria and translator of two volumes on the Tanya, pointed out that G-d's name was mentioned only once in the film.

"These other movements are divorced both from G-d and Judaism. But we could not debunk the bogus 'teachings' without knowing what is authentic. The answer is education," he said.

"The Zohar's poetic, vivid imagery makes for a fascinating Midrashic commentary on the Torah, even without the



esoteric, mystical material.

"Kabbalah has been likened to an orchard ('pardes' in Hebrew) of exotic fruit, as distinct from the 'meat and potatoes' fare of halacha. But the metaphor of the orchard also conveys the idea that it is organic and cannot be detached from its source, the Torah itself, without withering

and dying. It cannot be disengaged from the search for Hashem and Yiddishkeit.

"Thanks to Hassidus, which teaches the joy of Judaism and has made mystical Judaism more accessible, our understanding of Kabbalah has expanded since the founding of the Hassidic movement by the Baal Shem Tov over 300 years ago. We need only avail ourselves of shiurim on the subject, both live and recorded. We have the real thing."

Both rabbis made reference to the account of the delving into the Kabbalah by four great 2nd century Talmudic sages. Only Rabbi Akiva emerged undamaged by the experience.

"But what was once considered dangerous is no longer so," said Rabbi Wineberg. "We live daily with intangible, invisible realities, from the code behind computer wizardry to microbes, to radio frequencies that open garage doors and TVs.

"We are far more capable than were earlier generations of dealing with the intangible 'worlds' and 'sefirot' (G-dly powers) that are the stuff of Kabbalah.

"Kabbalah is revealed in the context of the time when it is meant to be taught. Thus, in the 16th century, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Arizal, explained creation through the concept of Tzimzum or 'retreat': For created beings to exist, the Arizal taught, G-d made 'space' for them by exiling His overwhelming presence from the world, just as all communication requires us to 'exile' ourselves to allow space for the other.

"Now, consider who was the Arizal's audience: a constellation of sages in Sefad and Tiberias who had been expelled from Spain in 1492 after 700 years and were experiencing a profound, sense of exile.

"Likewise, today we can readily employ the terminology of Kabbalah to understand the hierarchy of the spiritual world. We can relate to the fact that G-dliness is all around us, that physical things are only the tip of the iceberg and that our souls have powers that endow us with unimaginable abilities to bring us closer and closer to Him.

"We only need to be aware of which portals to open," Rabbi Wineberg concluded.



Librarian Norma Shulman emptying shelves in the Beyachad Library.

Beyachad Library reduced to boxes

ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER

TALKING FROM a non-operational library comprising "thousands and thousands" of books removed from their shelves, Marcia Parness, chairman of the Johannesburg Jewish Resource Centre, housed at Beyachad in Raedene, Johannesburg, articulated her frustration. "We were told to shrink the library by 50 per cent, so that Beyachad could let 50 per cent of the space commercially.

"So, we're in the process of packing up the library into boxes in order to shrink it, and we have been in this process for a month, so far," she added. "The library is in a state of limbo. All the bound volumes and expensive reference books have already been relocated into storage.

"We're working with about 800 boxes at the moment. The Audio-Visual Library is still operational; books are not accessible at all.

"If all those lovely people who wrote such supportive letters at the time of the announcement of the possible demise of the library were able to help us more tangibly, perhaps we would not be in such a situation.

"What I cannot understand is how the community does not realise the value of what we have here. As opposed to the Cape Town community, who have really made their resource centre a space of value and dignity in the community."

Said Gerald Leissner, chairman of Beyachad: "Everything is under control. They are busy downsizing the library according to plan. They are trying to raise the funds in order to implement the next step in making the resource centre professional and functional. Generally the project is moving ahead as anticipated."

En route to a meeting with architect Lewis Levin where he was presenting potential drawings for a redesigned space, Parness added: "It is our dream for the future, but not something that we can accomplish without sponsorship."

• Readers who are interested in helping the library may contact Marcia Parness on (011) 645-2500 Mondays to Thursdays.

New Zealand giant quake kills Israeli, destroys Chabad House

DAN GOLDBERG
CHRISTCHURCH

FOR THE Jewish community, the devastating earthquake that hit New Zealand struck close to home.

An Israeli backpacker is believed to be among the 75 people killed in Tuesday's quake, and the destruction in Christchurch on the country's South Island included the city's Chabad house. Another Christchurch synagogue reportedly suffered damage but was not destroyed.

The Israeli, who was not immediately named by Israeli Embassy officials, was in a car with three other Israelis when a building collapsed on them during the 6.3-magnitude earthquake that ripped through the city around lunchtime, according to Rabbi Shmuel Friedman, a Chabad rabbi in Christchurch.

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, the son of a Jewish refugee who escaped Europe to England on the eve of the Holocaust, said the quake could turn out to be his nation's "darkest day".

Israel offered to send food and medicine to help. With hundreds of Israeli backpackers visiting New Zealand each year, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said there could be up to 150 Israelis in Christchurch.

With phone lines down and power lines cut, communications have been limited. Wellington-based David Zwartz, a former president of the New Zealand Jewish Council, said he received a text message from Bettina Wallace, the immediate past president



The Chabad House in Christchurch, New Zealand, before it was devastated by an earthquake on Feb. 21, 2011, had the city's only kosher cafe.

of Canterbury Hebrew Congregation, the main synagogue in the region.

The text message read: "Shul damaged but fixable."

Friedman, a New York native who came to Christchurch three months ago to do Jewish outreach work, was inside the offices of the Chabad Centre with an Israeli backpacker when the first tremor jolted the city just before 13:00 local time.

"All of a sudden walls, ceilings started coming in on us, the shake was shifting us side to side," Friedman said.

"We just ran. I have no idea, no idea how we managed to get out of there," he said. "There were many people in the street in panic and shock; it was not a pretty scene. There were people running out of buildings, a lot of screaming, damage, smoke."

Amid the chaos, Friedman was unable to assess the damage to the building but said it was unlikely to

have survived the many aftershocks. Later in the day, Chabad announced that the building, which also housed the city's only kosher cafe, had been toppled.

The body of the Israeli who was killed in the quake could not be retrieved immediately.

"The body is still in the car where the building collapsed," Friedman said on Tuesday. "Emergency crews are still working on people who can be saved."

Rabbi Mendel Goldstein, the chief rabbi of Chabad in New Zealand, said he had spoken to Shemi Tzur, Israel's ambassador in New Zealand, and Yuval Rotem, Israel's ambassador in Canberra, Australia.

Goldstein said he was frantically fielding calls and e-mails from worried parents in Israel. Tzur has asked all Israeli nationals to leave the devastated city, which has been declared a disaster zone.

"We've asked them to take a car and drive as far away from here as possible," he was reported as saying.

Friedman said many of the Israelis helped in the rescue effort.

"A group went in to help evacuate people in buildings which were collapsing; they were experienced from the army," he said.

Tuesday's quake came less than six months after the last tremor rocked the city last September, which was higher in magnitude but did less damage.

Of New Zealand's 7 000 Jews, about 2 000 live in Christchurch, with the majority in Auckland and Wellington on the North Island. (JTA)

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

SEATTLE COUNTY DOES NOT HAVE TO RUN ISRAEL 'WAR CRIMES' AD

SEATTLE - A federal judge in Seattle has ruled that King County, Washington, did not violate the First Amendment rights of a pro-Palestinian group when it refused to run an Israel "War Crimes" ad campaign.

Judge Richard Jones on February 18 denied a request to force the Metro Transit system to run the ads.

"Because King County's policy and practice indicates that it consistently applied content restrictions on advertising to further its purpose of using its property to provide orderly and safe public transportation, the forum at issue is a limited public forum," the judge wrote in his ruling.

Because it is a limited public forum, the acceptance of ads by the Metro Transit system is not subject to First Amendment protections, according to the ruling.

The Seattle Mideast Awareness Campaign and the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington filed a lawsuit in US District Court in Seattle in January charging that King County violated the campaign's First Amendment rights. The suit asked the court to order the county to place the ad for four weeks on the sides of 12 buses, as the Metro Transit system and its ad agency originally agreed to do.

The Seattle Midwest Awareness Campaign had paid \$1 794 to place the advertisements on 12 buses beginning last December 27 - the second anniversary of the day Israel entered Gaza to stop rocket attacks on its southern communities. The ads feature a group of children looking at a demolished building under the heading "Israeli War Crimes: Your tax dollars at work".

Three days before the ad was supposed to start running, King County executive, Dow Constantine, ordered the Metro Transit system to reject the ad as well as any other new non-commercial advertising.

The acceptance of the ad had generated thousands of responses by phone, fax and e-mail, many from out of the county and state, according to reports. (JTA)

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YAD AHARON MICHAEL TZIDOKAH FOOD FUND



Abe and Anita Abrahamson pictured together in September 2005, at the 75th anniversary of the founding of Habonim in South Africa. (PHOTO: FILE)

Tireless worker for Jewish community Anita Abrahamson, passes on

RITA LEWIS

THE WOMAN who was known to her entire family as Gaga and as a caring, dignified lady to everyone else who came into contact with her, Anita Abrahamson, died in Johannesburg last week Thursday after a prolonged illness.

Anita who was born in (the then) Rhodesia to Sam and Becky Rabinowitz, married the Hon Abe Abrahamson - who was also born in Rhodesia - on July 3, 1946 and they were happily married for over 63 years.

Abe died almost a year to the month prior to her death - on March 13, 2010.

During their years together in Bulawayo, Abe was a former Rhodesian Cabinet minister, while Anita was the anchor that held the family together.

The couple were the centre of the Jewish social and community life in Rhodesia.

Although always having been happy in Rhodesia and the new Zimbabwe, the couple did not really enjoy the "empty nest syndrome" after their children had left to go to university in South Africa.

At the time they had parents who had come from Eastern Europe, still living in the country and both Abe and Anita felt obligated to stay in the country while their parents were still alive.

When the time was right to leave, there were hints of rising anti-Semitism and the Abrahamsons soon left their home in Bulawayo to move and settle in South Africa where Abe had various business interests.

During their lifetimes the Hon Abe and Anita were staunch Zionists, and it was logical that the couple should find their outlets and interests continuing in this field.

Abe moved on to become a stalwart of the South African Jewish community, joining among other things, the South African Zionist Federation of

which he later became life president.

Always interested in keeping up with what was going on in the community, he became chairman of the board of directors of SA Jewish Report.

On his death, this position was taken up by Stan Kaplan.

After settling in South Africa, Anita joined the Oaklands branch of WIZO, South Africa's largest women's organisation, which empowers women to identify with the State of Israel through education, pragmatic commitment and support of WIZO's beneficiaries and special projects.

It was through WIZO that she met her lifelong friend Mushe Kirsh who said: "Anita's passing has been very hard.

"We had a very special friendship. We did not need to be artificial with each other or simulate our sincerity.

"We worked together very well and enjoyed our friendship - as did our husbands with each other."

Mushe was not Anita's only friend for she was a popular and tireless worker and was, for many years, one of WIZO's most successful national campaign conveners.

She will be sadly missed, especially by her three children, Irene, Lawrence and Martin, eight grandchildren and the 11 great-grandchildren she leaves behind.

Oxford Shul's Rabbi Yossy Chaikin officiated at both the funeral of the Hon Abe and his wife Anita.

Geoff Sifrin, editor of the SA Jewish Report, said he had received the news of Anita's death "with great sadness".

He added: "Abe, who was a major guiding force in the newspaper since its founding in 1998, passed away in 2010 and Anita was always a keen supporter of the paper. The Jewish Report, its staff and directors extend our heartfelt condolences to the Abrahamson family."

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

DUTCH PARLIAMENT TO CONSIDER SHECHITAH BAN BILL

AMSTERDAM - A bill that would ban kosher slaughter is set to be presented to the Dutch Parliament.

If the legislation passes, it would make Holland the first European Union country to ban shechitah, according to the European Jewish Congress.

Shechitah is permissible under European law and to ban it goes against the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which clearly states that there is freedom of religious practice.

The EJC on February 18 called on Dutch politicians to vote against the bill.

"Holland has always presented itself as an accepting society and a ban on a central part of Jewish identity would mean that Dutch

politicians are turning their backs on the tolerant Holland that we admire," EJC President Moshe Kantor said in a statement.

"While the legislation was drafted ostensibly because of animal rights concerns, it is a slippery slope to populism, extremism and anti-Semitism," Kantor added. "We call on Dutch politicians to carefully consider the ramifications of this bill and what it could do to Jewish life in Holland."

The European Union Council in December 2010 rejected a controversial kosher meat labelling requirement as part of its new food information regulation, that would have required that all meat and meat products

that are kosher slaughtered to be pejoratively labelled as "meat from slaughter without stunning".

A controversial ban on kosher slaughter put in place by New Zealand's agriculture minister was partially reversed last November amid allegations that his decision was taken to appease Muslim countries that have lucrative trade relations with New Zealand. The ban on kosher slaughter of poultry was suspended, while the ban on beef remains.

The amendment to the Commercial Slaughter Code mandates that all animals for commercial slaughter must first be stunned, which is forbidden in shechitah. (JTA)

STOP DISPLAYING RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, COURT ORDERS CAB DRIVER

TORONTO - A Jewish taxi driver in Montreal may not display religious artefacts and other objects in his cab, a Quebec court has ruled.

Arieh Perecowicz, 66, a taxi driver for 44 years, lost his much-publicised case on February 17 when a municipal court upheld several fines against him for having too many personal and religious objects in his car. He was ordered to pay \$1 300, which included about \$600 for court costs.

Perecowicz argued that he was

comforted by having articles of his Jewish faith in the car, including photos of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe and two mezuzahs affixed to the car frame between the front and back doors.

His decorations at times have included photos of his wife and daughter, small Canadian and Israeli flags, and a Remembrance Day poppy.

Over the years, Montreal Taxi Bureau authorities fined Perecowicz eight times under a bylaw that bans any "object or inscription that is not required for the

taxi to be in service".

Perecowicz argued that the bylaw violated his freedom of expression.

He has changed cars and now has three small images of the Lubavitcher Rebbe that he says are not visible from the back seat and the two mezuzahs.

Perecowicz does not plan to remove the personal effects from his cab, and told the Montreal Gazette that he would appeal the ruling "all the way to the Supreme Court, if I have to". (JTA)

DERSHOWITZ JOINS WIKILEAKS TEAM AS ADVISER

WASHINGTON - Harvard academic Professor Alan Dershowitz has joined an effort to keep US authorities from reviewing Twitter accounts related to the WikiLeaks case.

The US Justice Department in December subpoenaed the social network site to obtain communications between the documents leaks site and its followers.

WikiLeaks, which solicits inside information from govern-

ments and corporations, last year obtained a massive cache of internal US State Department exchanges. A number of the exchanges have led to strained diplomatic relations.

Dershowitz, one of the premier US constitutional lawyers and a passionate defender of Israel, said his role would be restricted to the Twitter matter.

"I'm currently in this case because I believe that to protect

the First Amendment, we need to protect new electronic media vigorously," he told Politico this week after a news release from WikiLeaks announced his hiring.

Dershowitz told CNN that he was acting as an adviser to the team of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, but not as his lawyer.

Hearings on the matter began this week in a court in Alexandria, Virginia. (JTA)

OSLO ORDERS ISRAELI EMBASSY TO MOVE

OSLO - The city of Oslo, Norway, has ordered the Israeli embassy to relocate to a new site within a year.

The embassy is a security threat to local residents and its stringent security measures dis-

rupt their quality of life, the Israeli daily newspaper Yediot Achronot reported.

Michael Eligal, Israel's ambassador to Oslo, reportedly has informed the Foreign Ministry that he is having trouble finding

an alternative site for the embassy because no one wants to sell property to the Israeli Embassy, according to the newspaper.

The city of Oslo also required the US Embassy to relocate to a suburban neighbourhood. (JTA)

Frank Julian Rabson - leader of distinction

ISAAC REZNIK

IT IS with deep sorrow that I write this obituary for the late Frank Rabson (pictured) zt"l, who passed away two weeks ago, after a short illness.

Rabson was a senior partner of Kessel Feinstein (now known as Grant Thornton), an esteemed firm of chartered accountants. He was a partner of long standing, having been with the firm for 50 years.

Rabson was much more than an accountant; he was widely respected for his role in Jewish communal affairs.

Rabson was educated at Parktown Boys' High School in Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand University. He was a committed and respect member of the Johannesburg Jewish community. He served on the council of the United Hebrew Congregation for 18 years, culminating in his election as president in 1980.



He was chairman of the accountants committee of the Israeli United Appeal, a trustee of the United Hebrew Congregation Pension Fund and a member of the Keren Hayesod Wills and Bequests Committee of the IUA.

He said that being on the UCF Allocations Committee could be an unpleasant task, but systems had to be devised where by the committee evaluated each beneficiary on its financial affairs and balance sheets to determine how funds were to be distributed.

Rabson also received many requests for religious donations - no easy task - but always attempted to give of his best.

Rabson was a member of the Oxford Synagogue since its inception; his late mother (of blessed memory) was a founder member of the Oxford Synagogue. He served as treasurer of the Oxford Syna-

agogue for many years, and also sang in the choir.

At the 67th AGM of the United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg, as outgoing president, Rabson and his wife Shirley were made honorary life members in recognition of Rabson's outstanding service.

Two weeks before his passing, Rabson and Shirley celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

I had the privilege of interviewing Rabson a few weeks prior to his passing, on Chai FM on "The Art of the Cantor" with his grandson Daniel Rabson. It was one of the most moving interviews, which I will treasure for many years to come.

Rabson was a devoted husband father, grandfather and father-in-law and is survived by his wife Shirley, children Malcolm, Sharon and Kenneth, daughters-in-law, son-in-law, brother Arthur (USA) and nine grandchildren.

May his memory be for a blessing.

UJ delegation visits BGU

ALISON GOLDBERG

SOUTH AFRICAN Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev recently hosted a "fact-finding" mission from the University of Johannesburg to show the visitors from South Africa what BGU is about and to use the visit as a platform for co-operation between the two academic institutions after demands in South Africa last year for UJ to sever ties with BGU.

Brenda Stern, executive director of the SAABGU took a UJ delegation on a visit to BGU.

Following concerted efforts by a minority on UJ's campus to terminate the BGU/UJ projects on water reclamation as part of an academic boycott campaign, relationships between the two universities have been strained. Israel is an expert in the field of water reclamation.

This was an opportunity for UJ to explore the excellence apparent in every aspect of BGU, and to establish personal and effective working relationships with their BGU counterparts. Most importantly, it allowed the senior leadership of UJ to see with their own eyes, hear with their own ears and think

with their own minds about the reality of BGU and its activities.

The UJ delegation met with a range of different academics across faculties, including established research partners at the Zuckerberg Water Institute, as well as the Student Leadership Council.

They were particularly impressed by the calibre of thoughtful, mature and dedicated students at BGU.

SAABGU welcomed the commitment of UJ's executive to discuss events "face to face" with BGU's executive and to agree common principles for the BGU/UJ partnership henceforth.

The threat of an academic boycott, however, still remains at UJ as a minority of die-hard BDS campaigners is actively pursuing the boycott campaign.

Stern said SAABGU was committed to dispelling "myths and prejudice" they propagated "and ensuring that when the UJ Senate meets again in March, to consider this issue, it will be a considered, informed, academically robust position that prevails based on academic freedom".

• For further information, please contact Brenda Stern on brendamstern@gmail.com.



Brenda Stern, executive director, SAABGU; Prof Thad Metz, department of philosophy; Prof Adam Habib, deputy vice-chancellor, research and innovation; Prof Rivka Carmi, president, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; Prof Ihron Rensburg, UJ vice-chancellor; Amos Drory, vice-president, external relations, BGU; Lisa Klein, SAABGU and Kerry Swift, executive director for institutional advancement, UJ.

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South Africa and Israel – A shared tomorrow

SOCIAL SCENE

Rita Lewis jont@global.co.za



MC and comedian, Nik Rabinowitz; Rabbi Michael Katz; Miracle Drive Chairman Robbie Brozin; 3rd prize winner of a new Nissan Micra: Jonathan Novick; Johan Kleynhans from Nissan SA; Larry Lipschitz; Rabbi Dovid Masinter; Miracle Drive president and Meyer Kahn.



MC Nik Rabinowitz with Wayne Merris from Chivas Regal.



Colin Datnow with Wendy and Winkie Ringo.

Chabad again puts the miracle into Miracle Drive

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

GO TO the Sandton Convention Centre and find yourself one of almost 2 000 people – each one hoping to be the winner of just one of the fantastic prizes, including three brand new cars in Chabad House's glitzy Miracle Drive function.

Look around you and see a top-brand bottle of whisky on every table. Listen to the increasing beat of the four drummers and look skywards and see amid the flashing lights and curling smoke, a bronze Nissan car slowly dropping down – and you know beyond any shadow of a doubt that this is a Chabad function with no equal.

One wonders: Is there any other function that can carry off such spectacular feats year after year? And it is not just the fantastic prizes which are up for grabs, but the entertainment is also top-drawer.

This year's first three winners are Cape Town's R Goldstein, Len Levy and Jonathan Novick who each won a Nissan Micra.

Comedian Nik Rabinowitz had the gathering wrapped around his little finger as he joked and

adlibbed throughout the evening, keeping everyone in fits of laughter with his wit, quick repartee and adlibbing.

Then there were the 1st Project, a group of four highly polished professional drummers who rose to the challenge of beating their drums to a total crescendo as the Nissan Micra – the only one in South Africa – floated down from beneath the folds of material of a circular dome especially constructed for the occasion.

Getting away from the usual type of entertainment for this kind of function, Ilana Yahav was especially brought out to show off her magical talent of making realistic and most beautiful pictures on a sheet of glass by moving, adding and reshaping sand into different depths and shapes, all the while relating vignettes of her life and incidents which her hands would turn into reality.

This eagerly awaited function, a highlight on the annual Jewish social calendar, is Chabad House's major fundraiser and the revenue from it is used for Chabad House's many projects which include its learning programmes for the elderly, drug rehabilitation and a new entrepreneurial project.



Danny Helphon, Robbie Brozin, Alan Helphon and Kerry Helphon with the R200 000 cheque from Atlas Finance for Miracle Drive.



Myra and Walter Serebro.



Evette and Kovi Chen.



Marian Ginsburg with auditor Brian Bank.

COMMUNITY BUZZ

LIONEL SLIER

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lionel.slier@absamail.co.za

BANGKOK. THAILAND

South African Alexander Shani Krebs is in Bangwang prison, having been found guilty of trying to smuggle drugs out of Thailand.

Krebs was born in 1960 and, at some stage, was sent to Arcadia Children's Home. He matriculated from King David Victory Park with a distinction in art in 1977.

In 1994 he was caught smuggling drugs out of Thailand and would have been sentenced to death, but he pleaded guilty and he was sentenced to 100 years in jail. His sentence was later reduced to 40 years.

Krebs will be in his middle-seventies when he is finally released. Eleven South Africans are imprisoned here for drug smuggling; ironically their prison is called the Bangkok Hilton or the Big Tiger, because "it eats inmates alive".

For these South Africans currently incarcerated for drug trafficking, life behind bars means, literally, life.

Here, murderers, rapists and drug traffickers, are serving life sentences or awaiting death by lethal injection – 7 000 prisoners with a ratio of 50 inmates to one warden.

Krebs has been incarcerated there for the last 16 years, after being caught at Bangkok Airport with two kg heroin hidden in his luggage. He still insists he did not know what he was carrying.

Life as a free man ended for Krebs on April 26 1994, a day before Nelson Mandela brought visible freedom to South Africa.

MUIZENBERG

From Hyman Jocum:

"The first triple-storey building constructed in Muizenberg appeared in 1897. It was a Venetian style house designed for Clifford Knight of the local shipping firm, Thompson, Watson and Company.

"The architect, George Rawsome, had travelled widely across Europe and based his design on that of a Venetian Renaissance palazzo. Knight may have found the palazzo too large for him, because 16 years later he moved to Pendennis in Camp Road. This house is today the clubhouse of the South Peninsula Bowling Club.

"Knight's palazzo was taken over by Colonel Leversohn in 1929 when he opened a private Jewish school for boys in Knight's Villa – also known as Stone House.

"A much smaller double-storey school for Jewish day girls was opened closer to St James. Both these schools survived until the end of 1941 and were probably among the first Jewish day schools, known as Hillel College to be established in South Africa."

• An error in the Jewish Report of February 4 gives the location of the Jewish girls' day school as Stone House, but this is actually the location of the Boys' School.

LONDON/JOHANNESBURG

Whitechapel in the East End of London was home to many early Jewish immigrants to Britain (rather as Doornfontein was to early Jewish immigrants to this country).

The hard East End was an area, especially for a Jewish boy, where fists spoke louder than words.

One of these boys was Abraham Cohen and at the turn of the 20th century, there could well have been a dozen or even two dozen Jews by that name in the area.

Cohen earned money by fighting at fun fairs, taking on any comer for the princely sum of five shillings. However, he was an excellent fighter, more than a boxer and became the middleweight champion of Great Britain at the turn of the century. But he dreamed of greater things.

He knew about Barney Barnato, also a product of Whitechapel, also a fair-ground fighter who had gone to South Africa and made a fortune in the diamond fields of Kimberley.

Barnato, whose surname was actually Isaacs, had become a legend in the East End and not least for the story that he would light his cigars with burning five pound notes.

Cohen decided that this was the route that he wanted to take. He had also heard that boxing promoters on the Rand were prepared to pay good money for skilled fighters.

Cohen arrived in Johannesburg and soon became well known in boxing circles. He changed his name to Jewey Cooke, after all, if his idol Barnato could do so, then he could as well.

He had two memorable 20 round bouts which he won and soon became a favourite among the rough types who attended boxing matches on the Rand.

Benjamin Bennett wrote: "Though he ranked high as a boxer, he was a man of little principle and less character. He had been convicted of assault and, between bouts, was a sponger and a billiard saloon lounge who had no scruples about how he made his money."

To be continued.

THE ATLAS SCHMALTZ DIET (CONTINUED)

From Frank Friedman:

"Then there are grebenes, pieces of chicken skin, deep fried in schmaltz, onions and salt until crispy brown. This makes a great appetiser for the next cardiologist convention.

"Another favourite – and I am sure that your children will love it – is pe'tcha (jellied calves feet). Simply chop up some cows feet with your hockmesser (hand-chopper), add some meat, onions, lots of garlic, salt and pepper, cook for five hours and let it sit overnight.

"There's also a nice chicken fricassee (stew) using the heart, gorgle (neck), pipick (stomach, a great delicacy given to the favourite child), a fleegle (wing) or two, some ayelach (little premature eggs) and other various chicken innards, in a broth of schmaltz, water, paprika etc.

"We all have knishes (filled dough) and the eternal question: 'Will that be liver, beef or potatoes and fried onions or all three?'

"Other time-tested favourites are kishkeh and its poor cousin, helzel, (chicken or goose neck). Kishkeh is the gut of the cow, bought by the foot at the kosher butcher. It is turned inside out, scalded and scraped.

"One end is sown up and a mixture of flour, schmaltz, onions, eggs, salt, pepper, etc is spooned into the open end and squished down until it is full. The other end is sewn and the whole thing is boiled. Yummy."

To be continued.

GERMANY

The 2006 Football World Cup was a bit of a bore. Until, as Ghana played the Czech Republic, Ghana defender, John Pantsil celebrated both his team's goals by whipping out an Israeli flag and waving it with joy.

He played for Israeli club Hapoel Tel Aviv and wanted to say thanks to the great nation that had made him so happy and to the Israeli fans who had travelled to Germany to support him.

As modern hypocrites around the world erupted with fury at Pantil's gesture, he smiled: "Everyone was very proud of me for bringing happiness to Israel."

From: "Not In My Name" by Julie Burchill and Chas Newby-Warden.

Published by Virgin Books 2009.

• Julie Burchill explains: "This book takes its name from the shameful, selfish slogan used by that movement. 'Not in my Name'. The marchers' hypocrisy was stark; they used Britain's democracy and freedom of speech to angrily oppose the bringing of those very values to the Iraqi people."



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OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Jewish Report

New wind or historical blip in the Mideast?

WATCHING THE dominoes fall in North Africa and the Middle East, as “gatvol” citizens throw out dictatorship after dictatorship, South Africa seems, in comparison, a quiet, stable place. It is “impossible” for it to happen in our democratic country, said President Jacob Zuma recently after the Tunisian “domino” fell.

Who would have expected a month ago that despots like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya would totter on the brink of being toppled after four decades in power? At the time of writing, he was vowing he would not forfeit power and would die in Libya as a martyr. But the whole world could see his days were numbered. The long-time leaders of Yemen and Bahrain face similar ends.

It is inspiring when ordinary people - Arabs, in this case - put fear aside to overthrow their oppressors. The uprisings have created a paradigm shift and must leave the autocrats of North Korea, China and others wondering about their own fate, particularly given that the Internet, cell-phones, etc, mean the events cannot be hidden from their citizens.

Leaders accustomed to shooting agitators are finding their armies identifying with the people, rather than obeying orders to act against them. Egyptian soldiers parked their tanks in the middle of the masses in Tahrir Square, but assured them they would not harm them. Two Libyan pilots ordered to fire on protesters refused and flew their planes to Malta, where they asked for asylum.

Is this new wind in the Arab and Muslim world a rule-changing watershed? Is this their French Revolution - their “liberty, equality, fraternity”? Has the populace become sophisticated enough to say: “We don’t want this tyranny anymore”? Or is it a momentary historical blip?

It has been said democracy is not the natural human condition, but an aberration which comes and goes from time to time between authoritarian regimes of one sort or another.

Comfortable citizens of long-established Western democracies might dispute this. But if radical Islamists gained control of the uprisings, would Egyptian and Tunisian citizens allow themselves to be subjected to theocratic Sharia-based rule where they may be worse off than before? Or refuse?

In 1979 the Shah of Iran - a “benign” dictator - was removed in a popular uprising and then replaced by the notorious fundamentalist ayatollahs.

America, the world’s superpower with major interests in the Middle East - and Middle East stability - was caught with its pants down. Who could have predicted the current events?

It needed just a spark, which was provided by a fruit and vegetable vendor in Tunisia who refused to allow the authorities to shut him down when his wheelbarrow with fruit was confiscated through arrogant red tape. He doused himself with paint thinners, set himself alight and died some 18 days later - and became a symbol of the desire for freedom of all Tunisians.

Could Iran go the same way? If Mubarak and probably Gaddafi, why not Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? Why not a new Iranian revolution, this time leading to democracy and openness - maybe even openness to Israel?

There is a message for us in South Africa, notwithstanding our democracy and fine Constitution. When enough ordinary South Africans reach the “gatvol” stage, they could rise up here again, ignited by some unexpected spark - the struggle against apartheid is within recent memory - and say: “Enough of the plundering of the country through corruption and nepotism!”

Massive poverty, lack of service delivery and staggeringly high unemployment, with many well-connected cadres becoming filthy rich sushi-eaters overnight, could spark revolt, despite Jacob Zuma’s assurances about it being “impossible”.

Whatever happens from here on, the events in Egypt, Tunisia (and Libya?) constitute a glorious historical moment, despite the cynics - or realists? - who believe it can only turn out bad in the end. People power triumphing against seemingly intractable dictatorships.

The only stable entity in the region now is Israel. Is it naive to hope the chaos in Arab and Muslim countries will lead not only to them becoming free in their own democracies, but also opening up to meaningful contact with Israel?

Pardon me, your halo is slipping...

“HALO” IS a term often used when illustrating a certain form of reality manipulation, one that has always been with us but which seems to have become especially pervasive in modern times.

Here I refer to how many within the liberal-left camp assume for themselves an aura of complacent, self-regarding moral righteousness that serves to blind others and even more so, themselves, to the hypocrisy, double standards, logical inconsistencies and, underneath all of that, plain prejudice that in reality underpins their beliefs.

André Gide described the true hypocrite as being “one who ceases to perceive his deception, the one who lies with sincerity”.

That would apply to all kinds of hypocrites, but it would seem to me to be particularly apt when applied to the hypocrisy of the left. There is something especially rigid and hide-bound about the smug self-righteousness that manifests in this quarter. Along with this comes a related inability to engage in any real process of self-reflection.

This is the mindset that the organisation NGO Watch must continually battle against when exposing how the real agendas of certain self-styled human rights bodies grossly contradict the impeccably correct moral principles on which they claim to base their beliefs.

In reality, what such organisations are engaging in, is a relentless campaign to demonise Israel (and to a lesser extent, other Western democracies), in every conceivable way. NGO Watch reveals time and again how often the most basic principles of fair play - impartiality, hearing the other side, verifying the truth of damning accusations before accepting them - are shamelessly jettisoned by these groupings.

However, because of what NGO Watch has termed “The Halo Effect”, actually getting the broader public to pay any heed to this evidence is an uphill and often fruitless struggle.

Understanding this also helps to show just how very ill-conceived was the petition campaign against Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. Attacking Mr Justice Richard Goldstone instead of



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

focusing exclusively on exposing the intrinsic injustice of the investigation he chaired, similarly backfired.

Then there is the curious fact that the status of “human rights activist” has for some reason come to be regarded as the near-exclusive monopoly of particular ideological camps, invariably those to the left of the spectrum.

This struck me most forcefully a few years ago, when a self-styled “human rights delegation” visited the West Bank and afterwards went on a countrywide series of public meetings and media engagements to report back on all the shock-horror dreadfulness of what they had seen.

Again, one saw the “Halo Effect” in operation as their status as “human rights activists” was constantly invoked to emphasise their impeccable moral credentials, and therefore their reliability.

Positioned, by contrast, as the villains of the piece, was the Jewish establishment. The none-too subtle implication was that its spokesbodies - in the main, this meant the SA Jewish Board of Deputies - were cast in the role of verkrampte defenders of Israeli apartheid against those brave individuals who dared to “Speak Truth to Power”.

The outrageousness of this sleight of hand becomes apparent when one remembers that the SAJBD combats anti-Semitism, upholds Jewish civil rights, has made significant input into human rights-related law in South Africa (such as with the Constitutional prohibitions against hate speech) and on various occasions - the multifaceted xenophobia relief campaign it ran two years ago is a good example - has involved itself effectively on behalf of victims of human rights abuse beyond the confines of the Jewish community.

My colleagues and I are as much

“human rights activists” as are those 23 individuals who visited “Occupied Palestine”, yet it is they who are accorded an exclusive monopoly of that status.

The “Halo Effect” applies to countries as well. In the post-colonial era, societies previously under colonial domination have been accorded a certain privileged stature in the international arena while guilt-ridden white former colonial powers have correspondingly been held to a different and higher standard.

The upshot has been a consistent unwillingness to hold openly tyrannical regimes accountable for their actions on the grounds that they were once colonised.

This mindset persists to this day, even though it has long been the case that most of the world’s former colonial powers - the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal - are solidly democratic whereas of the previously colonised territories, all but a bare handful have been oppressive dictatorships virtually from the outset.

That these in addition have come to dominate the ranks of bodies like the UN Human Rights Council, pretty much says it all about how grossly subverted the whole international justice system has become.

In light of all the hypocritical posturing, it is always refreshing to discover that by no means everyone has been fooled, and especially when it is from within the liberal-left camp itself that the emperor’s nakedness is proclaimed.

Among the leading UK columnists who have braved the hissing rage of their erstwhile leftist colleagues by laying bare their inconsistencies, are Julie Burchill and Chas Newkey-Burden.

Please note that these are not former liberal-leftists who saw the light and became conservatives. Rather, it was their very commitment to genuine liberal principles that led them to confront those who brazenly betray those principles while pretending to be upholding them.

It reminds us that Israel and Jews have nothing to fear from a liberalism that lives up to its name.

Booming housing market in Israel stokes fears of bubble



Apartment blocks in the historic Bauhaus district of central Tel Aviv close to the beachfront promenade.

DINA KRAFT
TEL AVIV

SOON AFTER Leora’s second child was born and she and her husband began looking for a larger home, Israel’s new real estate reality smacked them in the face.

Though the couple had bought a two-bedroom apartment in Tel Aviv six years earlier that had appreciated to \$650 000, more than triple what they paid, they still found themselves priced out of the local market. One apartment in a basement underneath a parking lot was listed at \$468 000.

They are now planning to move to the coastal town of Pardes Hanna, about an hour’s drive north of Tel Aviv, where prices also have climbed significantly but where they can still find a house with a garden for the same price as the apartments they saw in Tel Aviv.

“Ordinary, hard-working people cannot live in the city, and when they do they sacrifice a lot to be here,” said Leora*. “It also feels so out of touch with political realities here: Where does it cost a half-million dollars to be a prime target for nuclear weapons controlled by a madman?”

Israel has become a leader in the global real estate market, with prices soaring in recent years, particularly in the densely populated centre of the country that includes Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

But with the high prices have come a great challenge for families seeking housing in major urban centres. Although there are income disparities, the average Israeli family earns about \$2 000 per month.

“The affordability on the demand side is almost unbearable, and this has been consistent for almost two years now,” said Danny Ben-Shahar, a real estate expert in the department of architecture and urban planning at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

Continued on page 9

OPINION AND ANALYSIS - FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Women abuse: Has anything changed?

RAY WOLDER
SHALOM BAYIT COMMITTEE

ALMOST EVERY day we read in the media, hear on radio, view on television news, about a mother, murdered by her husband or partner, or brutally assaulted by her boyfriend.

These crimes are not limited to local events but are happening all over the world. They are events viewed with horror and disgust yet they continue unabated.

Women over the centuries have always been victims in internecine and inter-tribal conflict. Rape of women and children by so-called "warriors" is a weapon of war. Rape and murder of women is particularly rife today in under-developed countries where internal conflict is rife.

Men misuse women who unwittingly fall prey to the "nefarious designs" of an abusive partner and then seek to get out of this violent marriage or relationship.

In Israel, many women are victims of abusive men who spitefully refuse to give the "get", compulsory in Jewish law, in order to be free, leaving the woman "chained" to this marriage against her will.

These agunot are probably the most abused and discriminated of all women in the world! The stranglehold of this ancient law, practised by Orthodox Jews, creates difficulty among many Jewish women who cannot come to terms with this. Are women bullied because the law generally favours the man?

This March kicks off the International Year of the Agunah. The International Council of Jewish Women, WIZO (Israel) and Orthodox Emunah (Israel), constantly fight for the rights of agunot.

Abuse of the rights of any human being is wrong, not only of agunot, who may wait 20 years for their release. That's total abuse and discrimination!

How do we define discrimination and abuse? Is it abuse when a young 18 year old closeted female allows her parents to arrange a marriage when she has hardly any experience of life?

With eyes wide open but culturally com-



elled to accept, is this an abuse of her rights? Is the woman who sadly dies giving birth to her ninth or tenth child considered an abused woman - even knowing that this female's body is not structured to procreate so many times?

If her culture precludes her from expressing her opinion, is this abuse? If the biblical injunction "be fruitful and multiply" is valued above the woman's life, is that not a form of abuse?

The problems of domestic violence faced by many women on a daily basis are not confined to South Africa, but are found in developed and undeveloped countries all over the world.

Poverty, cultural norms, unemployment and xenophobia are elements leading to abuse and violence.

Societies which prevent women from being educated present discrimination of the worst kind. Lack of education leaves women in ignorance, without skills or resources; her growth is curtailed and without self-confidence and should she want to leave a violent marriage and fend for herself, she would be severely handicapped.

Trafficking of women and children in this modern age has grown into a worldwide industry. Girl children are sold as sex slaves, toys for men, or to walk the streets as prostitutes for pimps who maltreat and abuse them.

What future is there for young girls sold by parents to elderly men as wives, so that the father has one mouth less to feed? Girls? Just another commodity of saleable goods!

What has changed for the female in the 21st century? Is she better off? Perhaps if she lives in the developed world, is educated and employed. But will she ever be free of the stigma of being a woman? Will she forever have to endure the fact that she is considered a lesser mortal?

Will this Jewish woman always have to listen to men in prayer say: "Thank you to the A-mighty for not being born a woman!" Not exactly a delicately subliminal message, but more of an "in your face" slap!

In South Africa, organisations such as Shalom Bayit and Jewish Community Services continue to fight for the rights of maltreated, abused and discriminated women in all communities.

Their doors are open to assist in a discreet and confidential manner those in need of help. Abused women are beginning to realise there is help out there.

If women continue to press for change, are archaic laws relevant in an (ever) advancing technological age? Do those on the outside of certain cultures and beliefs have the right to "interfere" or "meddle" and call for change?

Do men truly want a change of attitude and behaviour towards women and are they honestly willing to work towards this end?

These important issues need to be addressed in a sensitive manner. This debate is open to reasonable, honest, soul-searching argument and not intended to offend, undermine anyone or a member of any community.

At the moment the debate on "Gender Discrimination, Women and Child Abuse" carries on in New York at gatherings on human rights attended by women's organisations worldwide.

Gender discrimination, female and child abuse, trafficking, are of international interest and developed countries are waking up to this scourge which is escalating out of control in North and Central Africa, East, Asia and South America.

South Africa, be alert, let's nip it in the bud!

Booming housing market...

Continued from page 8

The soaring housing prices also have sparked fears that Israel is in the midst of a housing bubble.

In the interests of stabilising the housing market, the government has begun taking steps to cool it. The Bank of Israel is raising interest rates and minimum mortgage down-payments to 30 per cent. The government has pledged to build additional housing to increase supply. And the Knesset has approved several changes in real estate tax laws aimed at curbing investor demand.

Shay Lipman, a real estate analyst at IBI Ltd, an investment house in Tel Aviv, says the state's ownership of 92 per cent of

Israel's land is a major factor in the housing shortage.

Foreign buyers of real estate in Israel, particularly Diaspora Jews from the United States, England and France, have helped fuel demand and lifted prices, especially in the luxury market.

Israelis, too, are buying. In Israel, a country approximately the size of New Jersey, real estate long has been considered a safe investment. And with the world economic downturn wreaking havoc with stock markets, local investors have poured even more money into real estate.

Chaim Kaufman, a veteran real estate agent whose offices in central Tel Aviv face Rabin Square, sees the deeply rooted desire

to buy apartments as part of the culture in Israel. Some 70 per cent of Israelis own their homes, a relatively high figure compared with other nations.

"Historically, Jews were wanderers and so there is this need among people here to buy," said Kaufman, formerly the president of the real estate brokers association in Israel.

"Often you will see relatives and parents contributing money so adult children can buy a home," he said. "As for the Diaspora Jews, buying here gives them the feeling that they are being good Zionists and helping Israel."

It's also helped themselves, he noted. "Real estate here," Kaufman said, "has proven itself to be an exceptional investment." (JTA)

* Names have been changed.

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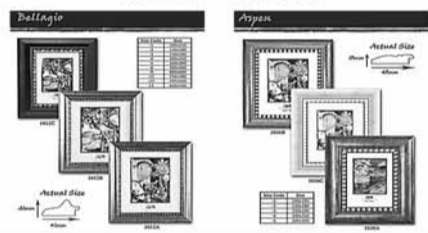
Representatives of Carmel School and the Perth Jewish Community will be available in Johannesburg 28 March - 1 April for confidential, private meetings

Please email Leith Flinkier to register your interest or for further information:
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Dance Factory (and other venues, Newtown, Johannesburg): Dance Umbrella 2011 until March 6; highlights includes works by Mark Hawkins; Carolyn Holden of La Rose Dance Company; and Standard Bank Young Artist Mamela Nyamza. Call 082-632-9561 or see www.artslink.co.za/arts.

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TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Get in step with this year's Dance Umbrella

ROBYN SASSEN

IT'S THE time of year when contemporary dance gets the spotlight. Dance Umbrella has for 23 years been the Johannesburg platform for what's hot in the discipline, and the historical launching pad for many of the ilk of - now Berlin-based - Robyn Orlin or Paris-resident Steven Cohen.

This year's Dance Umbrella, thanks to less funding, is slimmer than its predecessors. It extends over 10 days instead of two weeks; this doesn't reflect the critical value of its highlights.

Mark Hawkins makes a comeback after 17 years, with "Hotel", commissioned by Moving Into Dance. Choreographed to music by Philip Miller, it promises to be eclectic and beautiful as only Hawkins does it.

Also on the programme are works by PJ Sabbagha, Redha, Mamela Nyamza and Sello Pesa, as well as choreographer Jamila Rodrigues from Cape Town with "Every Time I Stumble".

"The work is about real life stories from five women I met while I was in Transkei," Rodrigues, who is currently enrolled for a masters degree in choreography at the University of Cape Town, explains.

"The idea of the piece starts on a bus that has an accident; suddenly these women are all alone and have to face each other."

Rodrigues is Jewish by virtue of her mother's identity, "But even my mother is mixed Arabic and Jewish," she explains. "I was raised in Angola, then grew up in Portugal... My dad is Brazilian... it's confusing, but it gives me the choice to decide where and who I am each day," she grins.

Another work to anticipate is Baxter-commis-

sioned "Who Will I Leave My Voice To?", by South Africa's doyenne of Spanish dance, Carolyn Holden, founder of La Rosa Dance Company. As the title denotes, it's about succession.

Four months ago, 48-year-old Holden adopted a 10-month-old foundling. "This work began after Child Welfare confirmed I would be adopting her. Having a child in my life for the first time got me thinking about life and how it passes.

I choreographed the work on a dancer 20 years younger than me - Nicole Kleinhans - and another, 20 years older - Veronica Williams - who's just retired from her own flamenco school.

"It made me think about what it is to be 67 and have something valid to say. And it's made me think about having my own valuable ideas at 22. They are both me," she adds, casting her mind back 20 years, when she formed La Rosa.

"The older woman looks back with sadness, regret, but also with power," she adds.

Holden was seduced by flamenco when she was 10. "My mother took me to a show at the Nico Malan Theatre. It was 1972. After curtain call, I told her this is what I will be doing for the rest of my life. My mother, who was my ballet teacher, insisted I do my ballet elementary exams first, and this is what I did.

"The music, singing and rhythm of flamenco made my heart soar. It wasn't easy: I looked wrong. I was blonde. I was not pretty enough. It was a battle, but battles do not frighten me."

Holden, who acknowledges her Jewish heritage from her maternal grandmother, is attuned to how culture resonates with her dancers. One of the company's stars is Beth Shapiro. "She came to our company hungry to be taught to be professional, in 2004. She worked really hard."



Nicole Kleinhans and Veronica Williams in Carolyn Holden's "Who Will I Leave My Voice To?" (PHOTOGRAPH: MARK WESSELS)

Seven years later, she was one of the critical lynchpins in "Sentimientos" the company's recent sell-out season at Montecasino.

Holden is upbeat about the future. La Rosa was on Dance Umbrella in 1990 and 1991; it's five years since last they were in Johannesburg. "We decided to just come this year, even though we couldn't really afford it."

Dance Umbrella runs until March 6 at UJ Arts Centre, Auckland Park; Wits Theatre Complex, Braamfontein; Goethe on Main, Johannesburg and Dance Factory, Newtown. Call 082-632-9561 or see www.artslink.co.za/arts.

Tabakov's crisp, alert playing lauded

Concert: Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (Linder)

Conductor: Emil Tabakov

Soloist: Georgi Anichenko, cello

Programme: Music by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven

REVIEWED BY PAUL BOEKKOOI

IT SO often happens that conductor A takes a piece at a brisk tempo and the result is exhilarating, while conductor B, performing it at exactly the same tempo, sounds fatigued. It could just be that the former had a more relaxing, mellower, more refined approach, where one hears more of a sense of shape and flow in the phrasing.

Conductor B's performance might have an unmistakable brisker feeling, which must have to do with a certain bluntness of attack, bordering at times on cudgelling.

Opening with the Semiramide Overture by Rossini during the previous week's JPO concert which was hard-driven and ran out of breath, Emil Tabakov in his second concert

gave us Mozart's Impresario Overture which absorbed hefty energy transfusions well without ever becoming skittish.

Georgi Anichenko, last year's first prize winner in the 'cello section of Unisa's International String Competition, was the soloist in Haydn's 'Cello Concerto in D major, Hob VIIb:2. It is essentially "romantic" in concept, with a particularly leisurely tempo in the Allegro moderato first movement, but thankfully without a too liberal use of rubato. The work as a whole was shaped with affection and the elaborate solo part was played with the bravura and virtuosity it demands.

It was perhaps Anichenko's gravely eloquent performance of the Adagio which lingered in one's mind the longest, but in the opening movement it was also Haydn's slow harmonic rhythms, mingling elegance, animation and just the right degree of expressive freedom, that added to the enjoyment. Even the Rondo, marked Allegro, which can be a lumbering bore, danced with a lithe, airy grace.

With Anichenko a sense of direction and crystal-clear articulation ruled. This was a clean, rig-

orously disciplined performance of highly idiomatic sense and sensibility. Collectively orchestras seldom reflect the same energetic levels as a soloist. The JPO slumbered along, especially in the Adagio.

Also questionable was that an orchestra with the ideal number for performing works by Haydn and Mozart, was also used for Beethoven's Symphony No 4. With these numbers the JPO could reflect most aspects of the Apollonian loveliness of the work, but not its Dionysiac drive.

Perhaps the first movement's introductory Adagio could have sounded more mysterious (helped by a marginally slower pace), while the second movement, also Adagio, seemed a trifle too bland because Tabakov did not sufficiently underline the conflict between its melodic and rhythmic components. One should also add a familiar complaint: One wishes the JPO could be persuaded to place its violins in opposite sides. Such antiphonal divisions enrich the listening experience.

With the exposition repeats of both outer movements observed, Tabakov generally elicited beautifully crisp, alert and rhythmically incisive playing in these faster sections.



FELDMAN ON FILM

Peter Feldman

PICK OF THE WEEK

The Fighter

Cast: Christian Bale, Mark Wahlberg, Melissa Leo, Amy Adams
Director: David O Russell

Boxing as a subject has a long and illustrious screen history. Films from the popular "Rocky" series, through "Raging Bull", to "Somebody Up There Likes Me", "Ali", "The Champ" and "Million Dollar Baby", have all left a mark and garnered critical praise.

So, when a film like "The Fighter" ambles into town, the question arises: What new material can this production offer its audiences?

The answer: A great deal in both punch and power, a scenario the Oscars recognised when announcing its nominees, including ones for best picture and best director.

Mark Wahlberg, getting another chance to display his fine physique, portrays a true-life American boxer, "Irish" Micky Ward, who has been a boxer for a long time but has little to show for his dogged persistence. Each loss seems inevitable. But he refuses to discard his dream of being a light welter-weight champion and to achieve this goal he has the full support of his family. But that's not necessarily a good thing.

His trainer and half-brother is a former boxer Dicky Ecklund (Christian Bale) who finds immense delight in telling everyone that he once knocked down boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard. The claim is debatable. However, the big thing is that Dicky is a drug addict, not the sort of person you really want in your corner.

Adding to Micky's woefully complex situation is Alice (the Oscar-nominated Melissa

Leo), his frightening motor-mouth mother who insists on controlling every facet of his career even though it's going nowhere. Dealing with his relatives and preparing for his next fight leaves Micky little time for the lovely Charlene (the Oscar nominated Amy Adams), a tough-talking bartender who's also an expert at tough love.

Working from a screenplay by Scott Silver, Paul Tamasy and Eric Johnson, director David O Russell ("Three Kings") produces a film that is strong on mood and character, an exhilarating fight-flick with a host of believable entities and flawless performances from its cast.

The film is vital, gritty and, at times, weirdly funny, a story told with honesty and an acute understanding of the psychology of boxing.

The acting is of the highest calibre; the two females Melissa Leo and Amy Adams and, of course, Christian Bale are all simply superb. Bale gives an impassioned, persuasive and raw portrayal where shafts of genuine humour can still be found in a deeply tragic character.

This is a KO of a film.

TAPESTRY - ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Noble intentions don't disguise flimsy characterisation

The Tenth Song by Naomi Ragen
(Pan Macmillan, R195)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

WHAT HAPPENS when an eminently successful Jewish American investment consultant finds himself unwittingly implicated in a financial scandal which makes global headlines?

For Adam Samuels, the first of many devastating repercussions is the knock taken by his credibility. He stands accused not only of misdirecting money, but of channelling it into a terrorist organisation.

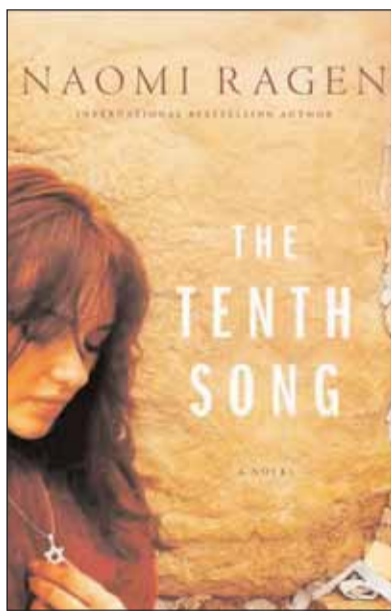
From a highly respected professional, living an enviable life with a gracious, accomplished wife, three intelligent, high-achieving children and all the trappings of success, he is suddenly vilified into a criminal, even before his arraignment, and lifelong friends and business associates suddenly cross the street rather than talk to him. His rabbi visits the Samuels home, not to offer moral support, but to implore the family to refrain from coming to the synagogue, to spare the congregation embarrassment.

The next blow is to his wife and children, particularly his younger daughter, Kayla, a final-year student at the Harvard Law School with every prospect of a stellar career ahead of her.

The news of Adam Samuels' predicament - coming from all sides, including the press and the Internet - immediately diminishes her chances of finding a job at a reputable law firm. Moreover, her fiancé, Seth - a nice Jewish boy from a highly visible family - is appalled by the scandal surrounding her family and insists she distance herself from them.

It is all too much for Kayla. The indictment of her father, the disaffection of her future husband and the increasingly complex web of family and friends claiming either her allegiance or her denial drives her into a state of collapse. Desperate, she boards a plane and flees to Israel - with just the clothes on her back - and seeks a new life for herself.

This she finds remarkably quickly. A commune of young people living near Ein Gedi quickly recruits her and Kayla duly finds herself working on an archaeolog-



ical dig by day and attending the spiritual enrichment lectures of the group's guru, Rav Natan, each evening.

These discourses assist her to unravel the many contradictory strands knotting up her life and regain clarity of both soul and purpose. And, needless to say, a new love interest pops up too - how could he not? - to illuminate the difference between a real man and her fickle, over-ambitious fiancé back home.

Alarmed, her mother, Abigail, arrives, intending to persuade her to return to her commitments in the US - only to discover that Kayla's new lifestyle is not a misadventure, but a path with much to offer those in need of answers.

"No matter how dark our lives may be," says Rav Natan, "one need never despair. You feel there is no G-d, and this belief is the source of anger, depression, destructiveness.

"But in that fog, in the lowest depths, that is where He is waiting for you... If G-d told you to jump off a cliff and promised to catch you, would you jump?... Of course you would. G-d can ask you to do the impossible, because it is impossible for you, not for Him.

"When we are faced with such an ordeal, we should not ask if it's possible for us to overcome it; we must ask if it's necessary. If the answer is 'yes', and you are willing to make that leap, then He will catch you. But you have to make the first move. You have to lift up your feet. You cannot see who you

are meant to become from where you are standing now."

Ragen's book is, in essence, an indictment of the almost obsessively mercenary nature of American society, particularly its Jewish elite. The unstable foundations on which their allegiances are premised, the rapidity with which friends abandon and betray each other, the cynicism of students choosing university subjects for their commercial, rather than their intellectual, worth - all these, for Ragen, are symptomatic of a deeper underlying malaise: the hollowness of modern human beings seeking fulfilment where none is to be had.

It is not the first time Ragen has delivered a scathing criticism of superficial Jewish US values. And, to be sure, her sentiments are apposite: there is much to be deplored in a society driven by acquisitiveness, appearance and rivalry. But for all its noble intentions, the novel has such paucity of imagination and such flimsy characterisation (especially in its males) that it seems Ragen spent a minimum of time fleshing her central message out with believable, engaging material.

Her writing, too, while tolerable in its narrative passages, collapses too often, particularly in the love scenes, where Ragen verges on Barbara Cartland (or, worse, a poster from the 1950s kibbutz youth tourism movement).

From the strapping, green-eyed, tousle-haired young hero to his curly-locked, curvaceous, beautiful girlfriend and the fresh-faced, robust, singing crowd of young commune-dwellers wielding their shovels under the blue Israeli sky, we have the full gallery of stereotypes.

Back home in Boston, Abigail and Adam picnic on an idyllic river bank with a hamper of sandwiches and a volume of Thoreau. "Do you want corned beef or chicken?" she asks him.

"Chicken, my love... Ah, you are such a romantic, my love," he says. Then, having read aloud from the book, they "sit quietly, watching the clouds swim by in the cold blue sky, reaching out for each other's hands". Please!

The verdict? A book with worthy motives, confounded by poor planning, paper-thin credibility and dubious execution.

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IT IS TIME FOR HONESTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

DURING THE Second World War, the German war machine made full use of its propaganda arm, run by Joseph Goebbels

During his tenure, his policy was: "It is the absolute right of the State to supervise the formation of public opinion."

After the war, various Arab governments in the Middle East and in North Africa, took this message to heart. By manipulating the media and by brainwashing their own populations, they were able to cling to power for decades. And if nepotism or corruption was exposed, it was always someone else's fault.

Israel was blamed, the US was blamed, even the Crusaders were blamed. Even some two weeks ago, the Mubarak regime in Egypt blamed "foreign interests" for the unrest in Cairo.

But in today's internet age, the truth is more

'NEXT STEP' MAY BE TOTAL WAR AGAINST EUROPE, ISRAEL

MR JUSTICE Dennis Davis cherry-picks modern history to prove his point that Israel and the Jews should admonish themselves as being the cause of conflict in the Middle East and should drop their guard and eagerly embrace whatever force that is still to emerge as a "people's revolution" sweeps through the Middle East.

Points in question:

1. Davis is quick to point out the RSA success story but fails to mention the situation regarding our closest neighbour, Zimbabwe, where an eloquent pro-Western-speaking leader duped the West into supporting a one-off free and fair election that gave rise to a brutal dictator, who has clung to power for more than 30 years, thumbing his nose at the processes Davis stands for.

2. Davis fails to mention the type of "democracy" that has emerged in the Middle East, namely the Iranian regime, an Islamic fundamentalist dictatorship that came about in a manner not dissimilar to what we are seeing sweeping the ME today.

3. Davis reduces the hardcore fundamentalist party called the Muslim Brotherhood to being a mere "bogyman" ploy by those standing in the way of democracy. Has he completely forgotten what this organisation is capable of? Like the assassination of President Anwar Sadat for signing a peace agreement with Israel or the formation of Al Qaida that brought us 9/11?

4. Would Davis enlighten us as to how he determined that the Palestinians have abandoned their "right of return" and "east Jerusalem as their capital" - the thorns that have for decades prevented a meaningful

robust and more resilient. Fewer and fewer people are willing to blindly toe the "party line".

The people of Egypt understood that the revolution was home-grown. Eventually, the government of Egypt understood this as well. It was a painful lesson, but a lesson that needed to be learned.

Unfortunately, not everyone has learned this lesson. Some regimes still cling to the reprehensible strategy of blaming "the other". Iran has, for example, blamed Israel for the drug problems in Iran.

How pathetic. It is time for governments in the Middle East to stop spreading lies and disinformation and to start acknowledging their own failings.

**Michael Renan
Cape Town**

negotiation for peace to take place? Would he point out where the Palestinians have ever been ready to compromise anything for peace?

Everyone hopes that the people of the Middle East will one day achieve a level of democracy equal to, if not better than, that found in Western countries, which includes Israel. If being cautious of what is afoot in Egypt and other ME countries, given the covert nature and training Iran provides organisations such as Hezbollah and Hamas, then there's the timely and co-incidental presence of large Iranian supply vessels in the "theatre of operation", despite the fact that Syria, a long time ally of Iran is not under threat while the rest of the pro-Western ME burns.

If this makes me a rabid rightist - like (Alan) Dershowitz and (Avigdor) Lieberman - then by feigning ignorance and amnesia (as you have demonstrated by the omissions in your column) to the potential for other types of fascist regimes to emerge in this area, then it makes you someone who has been duped.

When the dust settles and it is time for these democratic nations to hold their second elections and accept the will of the people (in about four years' time) I sincerely hope that you are completely right in what you presented in your column and that I am completely wrong.

Because, if I am right it will be far too late to do anything and then what will be the next step? Total war against Europe, Israel?

**Stanley Eliasov
Johannesburg**

LEAKED 'PALESTINIAN PAPERS' EXPOSE OUR BANKRUPT LEADERSHIP

AS THE events in Egypt unfolded last week the international TV networks reported that Saeb Erekat the Palestinian chief negotiator, had resigned his position, given the recent "Palestinian Papers" exposé by TV station Al Jazeera.

The "leaks" reported were an indictment on the Palestinian Authority's alleged far-reaching concessions given to Israel in 2008. This report cited the Palestinian negotiators "selling" their constituents short by conceding what was alleged in the "Papers".

While Erekat has condemned the "Papers", he has admitted that they were leaked from his unit and he has claimed responsibility for the leaks.

Some of the concessions alleged, included proposals that only a handful of the millions of Palestinian refugees be allowed to return. It also suggested unprecedented compromises on the division of Jerusalem and its holy sites and that Kadima's leaders refused to compromise on even the most basic issues, and many more.

While my stand and unrelenting support for Israel has been well documented, these revelations must raise more than an eyebrow as we have been led to believe that it is our Palestinian "partners" who were uncompromising.

I now argue that if what was reported in the "Palestinian Papers" bears a modicum of truth, and the fact that Erekat resigned as a result must add some credibility to this, why did Kadima not take these proposals to their logical conclusions?

There is obviously much more to this than what we read about but again - are these "reports" merely a thumb suck or is there an element of truth and if so, how can we as sup-

porters of Israel "right or wrong", have any confidence in any government given what was reported?

Politics is indeed a dirty business but when party interests and personal ambitions are put before the people you represent, then the moral bankruptcy of our leadership need to be exposed.

The tragedy of Israel today is the total lack of unity among its people where every possible selfish agenda is placed before the national interest is a manifestation of the fragmentation we witness today in the Jewish world at large.

I well remember just prior to the Six Day War how this same Jewish world were so totally united against the very real threat of Israel's annihilation. Today we face an even greater existential threat, not only to Israel but to the Jewish world as a whole, while we witness an ever increasing crescendo of anti-Semitic diatribe gaining momentum, and what are our Jewish leadership doing? Promoting their own agendas as if this threat doesn't exist.

We are experiencing a phenomenon never seen before - groups with overwhelming support among our brothers and sisters not only vehemently criticising Israel, but much worse. This is playing into the hands of our enemies and legitimising their case against Israel and to a very subtle degree the Jewish people?

What is it going to take to wake us up to the threat facing us today, another Holocaust? By then it will be too late!

**Allan Wolman
Norwood, Johannesburg**

This letter has been slightly shortened. - Editor

WARM - AND NOSTALGIC - REMEMBRANCES OF THE EDENVALE SHUL

IT WAS with a feeling of mixed nostalgia and sadness that I read the article regarding the Edenvale Shul in your paper.

Well do I remember the intimate atmosphere and warmth extended to a callow youth. My late father, Woolf Kaicener, owned Edenvale Pharmacy and my late mother, Thelma had a baby shop called the White Pussycat, at the top of Van Riebeeck Avenue, though we lived in Bramley Gardens.

So, Fridays and some Saturdays, depending on whether my father was at work, I used to attend the shul. In 1980 I was barmitzvahed there, subsequently a choir member and a regular Shabbos attendee until I stopped going to shul for personal reasons, which I was not, sadly, to get to grips with and return to the fold for the intervening 30 years, until recently when I moved to the West Rand and became an active part of the vibrant Krugersdorp Hebrew community.

This return is also a testimony to the tenaciousness of the membership in wel-

coming and integrating me seamlessly after such a hiatus - and the reason why I now read your excellent newspaper.

I recall that even in those years, it was difficult some Fridays to make a minyan in Edenvale and in the days before cell-phones one could obviously not make calls to find people at the last minute. We therefore occasionally had to use the apparently now-defunct ruling that nine adult men plus the Torah make 10.

It is a shame that the shul faces financial issues and in the case of an occurrence of this nature, the broader community should get involved to prevent its closure.

It would be appreciated if you could publish a bank account number where contributions could be sent to, as it may well be that there are other former congregants who would also assist. I, for one, will certainly send money towards the alleviation of Edenvale's financial issues.

**Jonathan Kaicener
Noordheuwel, Krugersdorp**

'TWENTY SECOND STUN' IS HALACHICALLY UNJUSTIFIABLE

IN THE Jewish Report of February 11, Dr Elisa Galgut pointed out some of the cruelties involved with factory farming.

Several years ago I was involved in a court case in Israel when animal welfare organisations wanted to ban the farming with ducks and geese for the production of foie gras. Young birds were force-fed three times a day through a funnel forced down their throats into the stomach.

The birds that survived were slaughtered by a schochet after 25 to 30 days and the enlarged and diseased livers - up to eight times normal size - were sold locally and exported to France.

I was able to prove that the enlarged livers were abnormal and were not kosher, and that the method was cruel and against Judaic principles. The production of foie gras was banned in 2007.

Presently there is a problem in South

African abattoirs where according to the Beth Din cattle can only be stunned with a stun gun 20 seconds after their throats have been cut by a schochet. All other cattle are stunned before their throats are cut so that they don't feel pain.

This ruling by the Beth Din of the 20 seconds before the stun, cannot be justified halachically on religious grounds by the Torah or Talmud, yet the Beth Din insists that for cattle to be certified as kosher in South Africa, the 20 seconds delay before stunning is essential for the meat to be certified as kosher.

Stunning the animals immediately or a few seconds after the ritual cut, would be more acceptable and less stressful for the animals.

**Dr Hymie Ebedes
Pretoria**

GLOBAL JIHADISTS SHOUT LOUDEST FOR ISRAEL'S DEMISE

IT IS interesting to note that the very people who want the total destruction of Israel, accuse that country of being an "apartheid state", call for international boycotts and want its government and soldiers jailed for "war crimes", are the very same people who are terrorising the world with a global jihad.

Whether it's South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa or the United States, their intention is to murder as many innocent civilians as possible.

Fortunately, from Tunisia to Iran, the civilian populations of these Arab and Persian Muslim countries have begun to revolt against their despotic rulers, governments who disallow any form of democracy and opposition to their regimes and prefer to subdue their people with barbaric

legislation.

The Media Review Network (MRN) and Palestinian Solidarity Alliance (PSA), who are such vocal critics of Israel, Judaism and Jews, are fortunate enough to operate out of South Africa where the ANC and its alliance partners blindly support their cause, as they do with the military juntas in Cuba, Burma, North Korea, Sudan, Zimbabwe and others worldwide.

Jews around the world can be proud that they support the ideals of sovereign and peaceful democracies, and do not support international terrorism where men, women and children are murdered, mutilated and maimed.

**Mark Wade
Johannesburg**

'ARROGANCE' OF COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP STICKS IN CRAW

WHEN I read of the shenanigans of our communal leadership (SA Jewish Board of Deputies) in Gauteng, I want to laugh and cry at our so-called elected leadership, elected by cliques and not voters.

The arrogance and disrespect shown to voters with whom they disagree, reminds me of the famous book, Jew vs Jew, about unnecessary hatred between fellow Jews which destroyed the second Temple.

Our leadership is showing disrespect and arrogance to constructive criticism which they ignore to their detriment.

Here are a few examples: The disgusting criticism and treatment of the Israeli Ambassador in South Africa and disrespect to different streams of Judaism, such as Progressive Judaism and here I refer to the SA Zionist Federation's leaders.

This leadership is of the same ilk and have only heard of the word majority decision and never will appreciate that minority points of view are valid and should (also) be considered.

Even our Beth Din not only listens to

minority opinions but records them for posterity, should they wish to amend some of their earlier decisions.

I get the impression that some of the leadership are better at fighting fellow Jews than anti-Semites.

Let me quote from a famous address delivered by Oliver Cromwell in Parliament in 1653: "You have sat too long here for any good you may have done. Depart I say and let us have done with you. In G-d's name - Go."

And I quote from George Bernard Shaw: "There are more fools in the world than wise men and when the fools start to shoot, the wise men cannot be heard."

When the kitchen gets too hot, I suggest you get out. Ultimately, your voters will vote with their feet!

With great respect to all our leadership, I am aware of the challenges that await them and wish them strength and courage to accept criticism as an attempt to improve their performance.

**Simon Jocum
Camps Bay, Cape Town**

LETTERS

WHEN JUDAISM WAS A FULL-FLEDGED PROSELYTISING RELIGION

SONJA BULKIN has written an important letter objecting to my assertion that Jews should seek converts. In so doing, Bulkin has given a voice to the other side of the debate, for which I am grateful.

However, one must keep in mind that in ancient times, Judaism actually was a full-fledged proselytising religion, and this fact is attested to in the works of many ancient historians, including Tacitus and Juvenal, who were hostile to Judaism. Also, the few anti-conversion Talmudic passages are far outweighed by pro-conversion ones.

The policy change came when the Roman Empire became Christian and Emperor Theodosius criminalised conversion to Judaism. For someone to convert to Judaism or for Jews to accept or seek converts, became punishable by death in the Christian world and the Muslims adopted the same policy.

This is the origin of the Jewish opposition toward seeking converts and thus has a foreign attitude been ingrained into our psyche.

It is for this reason that we are a small, weak people in constant danger of assimilation and posing an easy target for our enemies. It is also why, instead of hearing the Israeli and Palestinian sides of the Israeli-Arab conflict, both of which are legitimate, most of the world ignores us completely.

The situation in the Middle East has repercussions for the small, isolated Jewish communities worldwide, who are vulnerable to aggression. Being constantly on the losing side of history, we see a small but steady stream of self-hating Jews, who pick on their own people to ingratiate themselves with the bullies.

A pro-conversion agenda would greatly even the playing field and would also help to stave off an extra problem that South African Jewry especially faces: the threat of genetic inbreeding.

While it may be true that the local Beth Din constantly grills and investigates prospective converts so that only the fewest get through, this policy is completely unnecessary, and is not followed by all Orthodox batei din worldwide.

The only necessity is to ensure that the candidate is making an informed, truthful decision. Besides, the Beth Din's opinion is not the only one: it is the final authority only for its own constituent communities. Other Jewish groups, with other outlooks, fall outside its purview, the most prominent local example being the Progressive community.

Jews have the potential to become a growing, populous, and diverse nation with a great deal of clout, if this is what we so choose.

Or we can continue with the status quo as a tiny, weak people subject to the fickle whims of political circumstance. The choice is between future empowerment or more of the same. Which will it be?

Jared Joel
Sydenham, Johannesburg

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



A column of the South African Zionist Federation

47th SA Zionist Conference

OVER THE past five years, the stature and activities of the South African Zionist Federation have consolidated the position of the organisation as the pre-eminent Zionist body in the country.

We have, since the 2006 Conference and before, provided outstanding education and entertainment to the community, in areas including politics, history, culture and archaeology.

Our involvement with the Zionist youth groups and the aliyah department, and our close relationship with the Israel Centre, have seen aliyah figures continue to grow, and it is a source of great satisfaction to us to know that Israel is still today the country of choice for Jews who are leaving South Africa to make their homes elsewhere in the world.

In my last column I discussed the exciting opening gala event of the 47th SAZF Conference which will take place on Saturday evening March 26. It is advisable to book your seat now as there is a growing demand for places.

On Sunday March 27, the business of the Conference will be conducted; and we have invited delegates from all the major organisations around the country, as well as from the shuls and other bodies, to register by February 25.

We have a stimulating and challenging programme with excellent speakers and we also welcome observers who, although not entitled to vote, will otherwise be full participants.

Col Richard Kemp, who served in the British Army from 1977 to 2006, was commander of British Forces in Afghanistan and an infantry battalion commanding officer. He worked for the Joint Intelligence Committee and was involved in devising and developing government strategies and policies on counter-terrorism.

Col Kemp gave evidence at the UN Goldstone Commission, when he said: "During Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Defence Forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare."

"Israel did so while facing an enemy that deliberately positioned its military capability behind the human shield of the civilian population."

Regrettably, as we all know, his testimony did not form part of the final report. We are privileged to be able to host him at our Sunday Conference, and look forward to his address.

Paula Slier, who is well-known to all of us, has for the past six years been the Middle East bureau chief for "Russia Today". She is also international correspondent for e.tv and 702 news, and she writes and reports for several other outlets including the Jerusalem Post, Channel News Asia, Marie Claire and the Jewish Chronicle.

Formerly senior reporter and news-reader with the SABC, Paula has an almost unsurpassed knowledge of the Middle East and she too will be making a presentation at the Conference.

Other Sunday speakers are Dr Danny Lamm, president of the Executive Council of Australia and a man who wields much influence in Australia's Jewish community; and Steven McQueen who was some time ago deputy ambassador in Tel Aviv and is now the researcher for the ANC's Progressive Business Forum.

Bookings for both the gala opening event and the Conference proceedings, are essential. Contact details for Saturday night's bookings are (011) 645-2541 or sharon@beyachad.co.za; and for Sunday they are (011) 645-2505 or froma@beyachad.co.za

This column is paid for by the SAJF



ABOVE BOARD

Zev Krengel,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Will winds of change blow up a storm?

THESE ARE dramatic times for the Arab-speaking world, particularly in North Africa, but also in the Middle East.

Perhaps not since the populist revolts that accompanied the collapse of Communism some two decades ago have we seen so sustained and widespread a grass-roots challenge to authoritarian rule. What began as a successful overthrow of the ruling regime in Tunisia has had a knock-on effect, leading to the fall of the Mubarak regime in Egypt and, as I write, sustained popular opposition to the hitherto unchallenged Gaddafi dictatorship in Libya and against the government in Bahrain.

The sight of ordinary citizens standing up and declaring "Enough!" to those who have oppressed and brutalised them for so long, should touch a responsive chord with lovers of freedom everywhere.

It should particularly resonate in countries like our own, where in the still recent past a repressive government was successfully confronted by the people at large and replaced with democratic rule.

Instead of generating excitement and optimism, however, the broader response to the above events has been a great deal more ambiguous.

Indeed, many have assumed a "better the devil you know" approach, suggesting that bad as the current regimes are, what could end up replacing them could be a great deal worse.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution, which replaced a repressive but in relative terms fairly benign secular state with a - from a global point of view - destabilising and aggressive Islamist theocracy, is naturally something they regularly invoke.

Of course, we cannot know what the final outcome will be of the popular democratic forces that have been set in motion. That being said, however, we cannot deny that the very process of a citizenry confronting - not through terrorism or assassinations, but non-violent protest - the oppressive structures that have so long held them in thrall is in itself a positive one and consequently deserves our support.

Certainly, it is a process that should have the full backing of the United Nations, which claims so often to be committed to extending freedom and democracy to the world. Thus far dare I say, predictably? - the response from this quarter has been muted, at best.

We can at least take heart that the South African government, at a relatively early stage, came out strongly in support of those who removed Mubarak. This, its spokespeople described forthrightly as "a victory of the will of the people" that marked "the dawn of a new era of democracy in Egypt".

I believe that we ourselves need to be less hesitant and equivocal in our approach to the stirrings of democracy in the Arab world. Rather than fearing them as potential enemies, we should sympathise with the ordinary citizenry of those countries and wish them all success in their liberation struggle.

It is ultimately democracy that holds out the best prospects for peace, economic development and regional cooperation.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD

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Facts needed to counter the lies against Israel

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH: TORAH ACADEMY BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RABBI MOTTI HADAR

MICHELLE ROJAS-TAL (pictured) and Lior Meyer of the Israel advocacy group Stand With Us, accompanied Lisa Peretz, of the local Israel Centre, to the Torah Academy Boys' High School to speak about Israel advocacy.

The audiovisual presentation incorporated slides of Palestinian propaganda, including the likening of Israel to apartheid South Africa.

She revealed that one of the cartoonists had been honoured by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran with a reward of \$10 000 for his work.

Rojas-Tal told the boys that it was important to educate themselves and be able to answer the harsh criticism against Israel.

New Herzlian grade ones blessed under a tallis



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY STELLA LAZARUS

At the Herzlia Constantia grade one inauguration, Saul Kaplan, head of Jewish Life for all the Herzlia schools, blesses the new children under a large tallis which is held up by some of their new grade 6 buddies.

Supervised chavrusa learning at TA Boys' High

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNE BELLING

TORAH ACADEMY Boys' High School Mesivta has opened a beis midrash programme, offering a learning experience similar to that found in advanced yeshivot.

The learners are afforded the opportunity of supervised chavrusa learning which is important in terms of skills development and the promotion of independent learn-

ing. Material is prepared for the learners to master through their own efforts.

The sounds of Torah study permeate the beis midrash creating an exciting atmosphere of limmud Torah.

The programme has been introduced through the efforts of the principal, Rabbi Motti Hadar and teachers Rabbi Reuven Finkelstein and Rabbi Azriel Uzvolk. Pictured are learners Yaacov Blecher and Mendy Wineberg studying together.



YOUTH TALK Alison Goldberg youthsajr@global.co.za

Shari Weinstein is a worthy KDHPV Dux

MARGARET SOLOMONS
PHOTOGRAPH: Yael Gordon

SHARI WEINSTEIN was the 2010 Dux of King David High School Victory Park, receiving 8 distinctions in the IEB National Senior Certificate examinations.

Here she is pictured with her grandfather, Julius Weinstein, and parents, Tandi and Lewis Weinstein after receiving the award and addressing the school at the Grade 8 - 11 prize-giving.



Uplifting demonstration in honour of the Torah

OWN CORRESPONDENT.
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

LATE LAST year, the Yeshiva College Boys' High School in Johannesburg celebrated its annual end-of-year siyum.

This event celebrates the achievements of our learners, especially those who have made extracurricular efforts to learn and complete areas of Torah.

During 2010 we celebrated some very significant achievements - three boys completed two whole tractates of Gomorra Sukkah and Rosh Hashanah, which was learnt in a format of a page a day throughout the whole year, during their own time.

This is especially notable, since two of the learners were matriculants who managed, with all the pressure of exams and heavy workloads, to consistently attend the shiur. This speaks volumes about their dedication. The three boys were Yona Grawitzky, Ari Lewis and Rafi Stein (grade 11).

Ari Chipkin and Yariv Kohaly (matric

learner) completed Masechet Sukkah on their own.

There were also siyumim on chapters of Talmud by Yishai Abrams, on whole books of the Mishna by Rafi Stein and Yoni Lew, who completed five of the six and by Gilad Wasyng who completed the learning of the entire Tanach.

The event was graced with the presence of Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Avraham Tanzer; Associate Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Dov Tanzer; Managing Director Rabbi Laurence Perez; and all the other ramim.

After hearing inspirational words from Rav Tanzer and Rav Perez, all those making siyumim had a chance to publicly learn the last few lines of what they were busy with and then the traditional Kaddish was said.

This was followed by joyous dancing, accompanied by live music and a braai.

The evening was very well attended and all went home feeling that they had been part of an uplifting and joyous demonstration in honour of the Torah.



Yeshiva College learners together with Rabbi Laurence Perez, dancing in celebration

Mouthwatering sports challenge

STACY FLEISHMAN
PHOTOGRAPH: SHIRA TOLLMAN

KING DAVID Sandton Parent Teachers Association in conjunction with ChaiFM 101.9 is hosting a sports challenge involving KDVP, KDL, KDS and Yeshiva College.

King David Victory Park Primary is excited about our participation in the festival.

To maximise participation and excitement for sport, trials were held during school time.

In the picture: Joey de Aguiar.



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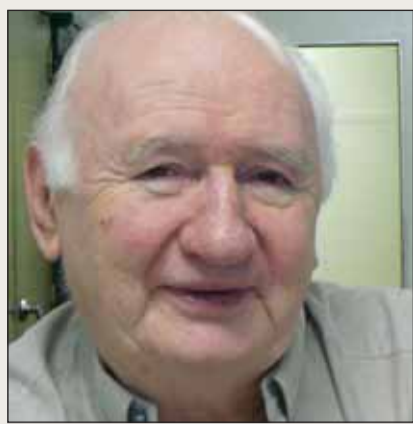
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Jack Dorfan.

Dorfan chosen for SA bridge team

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

JACK DORFAN of Pretoria has qualified to represent South Africa in the African series of the Bermuda Games at the senior bridge trials.

Dorfan has been a Springbok bridge player since he first qualified to play in the Bridge Olympics in 1976 in Monte Carlo with former Pretorian Lester Kalmin as his partner.

An all-round sportsman, Jack is a former tennis player and is also a regular bowler where he has been a member at Wingate Park Country Club since around 1951. He was president of the club in 1973.

Pollard: Gordon's play focuses on miscarriage of justice

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

IT CAME as quite a surprise to learn that Victor Gordon (pictured), chairman of the Pretoria Council of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, had written a play based on the Jewish American spy, Jonathan Pollard, much less that it had been chosen to be produced in Hebrew at the annual Monologue Play Festival in Tel Aviv. Gordon recently received an emailed copy of the Hebrew translation.

"Pollard's Trial", presented as the "trial that he never had" but staged in his imagination, will take place towards the end of April as a production of Tel Aviv's renowned Cameri Theatre. It is to be directed by Roy Horowitz, with Rami Baruch as Pollard.

Gordon has written a number of plays, is an artist of note and a long-time musician. He also recently took over the running of "Tararam", the South Africa-Israel Culture Fund.

The translation of his Pollard Trial had been undertaken by Shir Freibach, well known in Israel for her work as a translator of prose and drama, whose credits include translations into English of some of the plays of Hanoch Levin, regarded as Israel's greatest playwright.

Gordon first developed an interest in the plight of Jonathan Pollard after reading an article about his activities while Pollard was serving as a civilian Naval intelligence analyst. This gave Pollard access to classified material and enabled him to steal hundreds of highly sensitive documents which he passed on to Israel.

In most cases this was vital information America was obliged to supply Israel, under treaty, but which, for certain reasons, had been withheld. Following his arrest, Pollard entered into a plea-bargain with the prosecution, forgoing the option of a trial, but guaranteeing him a lesser sentence than life imprisonment. Pollard has now served 25 years.

With his interest piqued, Gordon read as many books about the subject as he could lay his hands on, as well as countless articles on the internet, before turning this into a stage play.

"My approach was to present Pollard's sentence as a miscarriage of justice, believing as I do that there is more than sufficient evidence of interference in the judicial process to warrant a review of his sentence.

Sadly, according to Gordon, a big question mark hangs over the way Israel has handled the Pollard situation, preferring to take a back seat in efforts to secure his release after 25 years. "The reasons are difficult to comprehend," says Gordon.



AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

JEWISH, ISRAELI FILMS HONOURED AT BERLIN FESTIVAL

BERLIN - An upbeat film about Europe's largest Jewish cemetery drew a major prize at the 61st annual Berlin International Film Festival.

Two Israeli films also earned awards at the festival, which ran from February 10 - 20.

"In Heaven Underground", a film about the vast Weissensee Jewish cemetery in former East Berlin, won the Panorama Audience Award for documentary films - a prize based on votes by thousands of theatergoers.

Non-Jewish filmmaker Britta Wauer created a portrait of the designated Unesco World Heritage site, including interviews with rabbis, Jews whose ancestors are buried there and Holocaust survivors whose teenage years were spent socialising there when other venues were forbidden.

The documentary "Lo Roim Alaich" (Invisible), an Israeli-German co-production directed by Michal Aviad, won the top documentary prize from the Ecumenical Jury. The film tells the story of two Israeli women, victims of a serial rapist, searching for the perpetrator. Wrapped into the story of their trauma is a political commentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Mabul", a film for children by Israeli director Guy Nattiv, won a second prize from the Children's Jury for films in the kindergarten-plus age group.

The Israeli-Canadian-German production tells the story of two brothers, one of whom suffers from autism. It is based on Nattiv's Berlin film festival Crystal Bear-winning 2002 short film of the same name.

Several films directed by Israelis were included in this year's festival, including "Odem", a British-Israeli co-production by Jonathan Sagall, entered in the top category, and "Bombay Beach", an American production by Israeli-born director Alma Har'el.

Israeli film pioneer Lia van Leer, 86, was honoured with a Camera Award at the festival.

An Iranian family-drama film, "Nader and Simin, A Separation", by director Asghar Farhadi, won the festival's top prize, the Golden Bear for the best film, as well as Silver Bears for best actor and best actress. (JTA)

At 92, Santa Pelham, with her daughters' help, to sing for ORT

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

WHEN SANTA Pelham and her family were refugees from the Nazis in France in the late 1930s, ORT trained her as a manicurist, provided her with French lessons and found her a job. So it is indeed poignant that the 92-year-old Capetonian will be singing at an ORT SA fundraiser at Johannesburg's Lyric Theatre on March 16, in a performance of the Yiddish Song Festival.

Despite her advanced years, she had no hesitation in accepting the invitation. "I was only too delighted!" she exclaims.

And adding to the excitement is the fact that she will be singing Chiribim Chiribom with her daughters Ruth, Naomi and Aviva doing the back-up for her. Opera star Aviva has, in fact, been a leading light at the Festival since its inception 10 years ago.

"ORT was out of this world - they were there for the Jewish people. I want everybody to know that," she stresses, referring to the war years.

When Santa's parents left Germany in 1933 after her father had been imprisoned and "beaten black and blue" by the Nazis, she remained behind to finish her final year of schooling. But, she adds: "Don't think for one moment that all the Germans were Nazis or had anti-Semitic feelings.

"There were many Germans with wonderful hearts and minds; there were plenty who wanted to help us, but my father had to leave because the fascists considered him a Communist - but he was no Communist."

Spain, the country that had expelled its Jews in 1492, was now the only one that was open to them. So her parents and two brothers made their way there, to be joined by Santa once she had finished school.

Once the Spanish Civil War started, however, the family fled to France and it was



Ninety-two-year-old Santa Pelham who is to perform with her daughters at the ORT SA fundraiser.

there that a relative of his had told her about a young man, Jack Pelham, who was living in then-Rhodesia. The woman encouraged her to write to him, saying he was "a wonderful guy".

Santa had been reluctant to do this; Jack sent his brother, living in France at the time, to meet her. "If I weren't married, I would marry her," he wrote to Jack afterwards.

"That was enough for Jack," she says. So it happened that in 1939, the 21-year-old Santa travelled to Rhodesia alone and married him 10 days after their first meeting.

"I left Europe, left my family, left everything I knew, to go and marry somebody I never saw in my life," she recounts.

"I did it for one reason - to get my family out. I thought: 'Okay, I won't be happy with him, but I'll be so nice to him that he won't (be able to) help liking me and I want him to bring my parents out.'"

"You know what happened to them? They went to Auschwitz - it was too late," she says of her parents' fate.

Despite her misgivings before the marriage and her misery on her wedding day, Santa now says: "He was a gentleman, my Jackie. You don't know what a mensch I married: honest, straightforward, intelligent... he was the most wonderful man."

• ORT Azey, the Yiddish Song Festival is at the Lyric Theatre, Ormonde on March 16 (011) 728-7145.

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DEATHS

ABRAHAMSON ANITA

Passed away peacefully on 17 February 2011.

A true lady and matriarch who dedicated herself to her family. An example to all who knew her. Forever in our hearts and sadly missed by her loving son Lawrence, daughter in law Karen, grandchildren Shaun & Andrea, Warren & Janine, and great grandchildren Max, Oli, Lilla and Seb

DEATHS

ABRAHAMSON ANITA (GAGA)

Dearly beloved and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and greatgrandmother passed away peacefully Thursday February 17 after a very long illness so bravely borne.

Her dedication and commitment to her family are an inspiration and example to all.

She touched the hearts of all who knew her.

Forever remembered and sadly missed by her children Martin & Sharon, grandchildren Talia, Adam, Darren, Daniela and Nicky and greatgrandchildren Suri & Mila

Abrahamson Anita Pearl

Our darling mum, grandmother & great grandmother passed away on 17 February after a long and brave struggle.

She was a wonderful caring and supportive wife, mother, grandmother & great grandmother. A truly proud and dignified lady finally at peace with her beloved Abe. She will be sorely missed and forever remembered by her loving daughter Irene, son in law Frank grandchildren Lauren & Kevin, Gary, Sharon & Laurence great grandchildren Jaron, Cari, Rachel, Daniel & Gideon

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Death regarded as a 'failure'

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY MOIRA SCHNEIDER CAPE TOWN



THE PRACTICE of medicine had become distorted, with death being regarded as a failure, Prof Solly Benatar (pictured) told a gathering of the Union of Jewish Women's adult education division.

Benatar, who is emeritus professor of medicine at UCT and founder of its Bioethics Centre, was talking on: "The limits of medicine: making end-of-life decisions".

Detailing "the complexities of modern life", he described today's medical interventions as sometimes being "obscene".

"People don't want to give up, they are living longer - this period of prolonged life is part of the price we pay for all the advances we have made.

Benatar spoke of a "sense of entitlement" and a lack of understanding of the limits of medicine.

In America, the expectations were so high in this regard that 35 per cent of all bankruptcies were health-related. "People sacrifice everything they've got because of the idea that it's their duty (to do so)."

Dealing with the situation where it is decided not to continue with treatment, Benatar spoke of the alteration of the relationship between doctor and patient, saying there had been a rise in demand from patients to have a say in their treatment and this was being increasingly respected.

"It is important for the dignity of a human

being to be able to say 'yes' or 'no' provided he is competent mentally," he noted, conceding: "We are not as sympathetic as we might be (to this)."

In addition, if treatment was futile, there was no obligation in medicine to carry it out. Though one did not need the permission of the family not to treat, it boiled down to helping them understand this would be pointless.

In the case of resource constraints, determining a patient's access to treatment Benatar said that limits had to be set in the public sector which had one tenth of the resources per patient of the private sector. Setting priorities in a legal and ethical way was "very, very difficult and required a lot of skill and negotiation. Even among doctors there's a diversity of views," he said.

Turning his attention to matters relating to euthanasia, Benatar said it was permissible to withhold treatment under certain circumstances and to withdraw treatment "if you're not getting anywhere after a week or 10 days". He also said sedation and pain relief towards the end of life was handled badly.

Doctors were reluctant to prescribe painkillers as they were afraid patients would become addicted. "You can give incremental doses of morphine provided the intention is to relieve pain, not one big shot to kill. This should be done more often."

Bemoaning the lack of palliative care institutions, he said these were designed to make people still feel worthwhile. "They are removed from the family, so are not a burden anymore," he said.

Valerie Mizrahi – woman scientist and mother

MOIRA SCHNEIDER CAPE TOWN



PHOTOGRAPH: KATHERINE TROUT

INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNISED scientist Prof Valerie Mizrahi (pictured), has been appointed director of the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine at UCT, the latest honour in a career littered with awards and accolades.

Mizrahi grew up in former Salisbury, Zimbabwe and studied at UCT, where she graduated with a PhD in chemistry in 1983.

She has strong Jewish roots, being a Sephardi whose family is from Rhodes Island. "I grew up with a very, very strong sense of Sephardi Jewish heritage in Zimbabwe, which had a very strong Sephardi community," she told Jewish Report.

"I grew up hearing Ladino, the Spanish that was spoken on Rhodes Island, and the food and the language became part of my culture. Everything about being a Sephardi Jew was and is very important to me - I've tried to give some of that sense to my daughters."

Her father, Morris, is in fact the honorary life president of the Johannesburg Sephardi Hebrew Congregation, with both parents being "hugely involved" in the shul.

As a scientist of international repute, Mizrahi could have had the world at her feet, yet she has chosen to remain in South Africa. "A key decision in my life to come back in 1989 was largely driven by family," she says of her return from the United States where she had completed a post-doctoral fellowship and worked at SmithKline and French Research and Development in Philadelphia.

"I knew I wanted to have children and I really wanted my kids to grow up with grandparents nearby and I have absolutely no regrets about that. As a scientist, I've got no regrets either because I think it comes down to a question of relative impact and I believe I was and am able to have more of that here than I could have had had I chosen to continue my career in the US."

In terms of her personal research, which focuses exclusively on tuberculosis, she is well-placed. TB rates in sub-Saharan Africa are "through the roof", she says, driven and fuelled to a large extent by the co-epidemic with HIV, with the latter being the most significant risk factor for the development of both primary and post-primary TB.

"This is a problem of the developing world and I would like to be part of a movement

that shifts the centre of gravity of the research and the setting of the research agenda to the south where the problem actually exists. I'm seeing trends of such a shift happening and I'm glad to be part of that."

Mizrahi is passionate about affirmative action for black and women scientists in a field that has traditionally been dominated by white males. "I've always had a lab that's been dominated by women - I've always been sensitive to it and always wanted to do it.

"In a way, it was almost leading by example. I think what I tried to show was that you could be a woman scientist and raise a family at the same time. I'm not saying that any of this was easy," she adds, "and it could never have been possible without extraordinary family support and work support as well. My mom has been an amazing grandmother who was able to step in when I was travelling for three to four months of the year, to help with the kids, do the afternoon lift schemes..."

"A lot of the women who've worked for me have had their families while they've worked for me. We used to laugh at one point where we thought that we were producing more babies than publications!"

She admits her maternal instincts do shine through in the lab. "Sometimes I just call myself a Jewish mom when I'm coming down on my students. That's the way I was raised and will continue to be as a scientist."

Mizrahi stresses that she is "absolutely committed" to the notion of transformation at all levels. "I believe that it's imperative.

"If one finds black students, we need to find every mechanism to support and encourage them because as an institute that aims to have an Africa-wide footprint, this is critically important.

"I'm very honoured by the appointment and hope I can do this job justice," the A-rated scientist says modestly.

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ALISON GOLDBERG

SUNDAY, March 6 is Bnei Akiva's worldwide Chessed Day. Bring your cars to Yeshiva College from 09:30 - 14:30 for a car wash: R20 for cars, R30 for 4x4s.

Simultaneously we will also be having

a jumble sale. Please drop off all clothes/shoes/toy donations at the Bnei office until March 3. It will be open on Sunday from 09:00 till 12:00. All money raised is for the Chevrah Kadisha and The Smile Foundation. For more information e-mail: sianne_green@hotmail.com.

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Brendon Katz to take on Santiago in MMA bout

JACK MILNER

PROFESSIONAL MIXED martial arts (MMA) is not something one would usually associate with a Jewish sportsman, but Brendon Katz is one of the best protagonists of the sport in South Africa.

Next Thursday night (March 3) Brendon will be fighting for South Africa against Omar Santiago of the US at the Standard Bank Arena in Johannesburg.

The 28-year-old Katz hails from Edenvale and until standard 7, attended King David Linksfield, before completing his matric at Eden College. He had been training in MMA for many years and finally decided to turn professional about two years ago.

Since then he has had six fights for five wins and a controversial points defeat. Remarkably, his five wins came by way of knock-outs or submissions.

"Brendon is the only Jewish fighter in MMA," said Neville Gruskin, whose company Now Famous Sports Promotions, manages Katz and more than 20 of the other top MMA fighters in the country.

"What makes him a great fighter is that he's incredibly tough. He's unstoppable!"

Despite his reputation as being unrelenting and as tough as they come, Katz has the fight of his career on his hands next week. Santiago, who has a record of 14 wins and one loss from 15 fights, will be no pushover.

But there is a lot at stake for Katz. "If he wins this fight, he will be about two fights away from a shot at the MMA world championship lightweight title belt," explained Gruskin.

He added that Katz was taking this fight very seriously. "Brendon is training like a machine to do South Africa proud."

It is Katz's dedication to his craft that



Brendon Katz will be fighting American Omar Santiago in a mixed martial arts encounter at the Standard Bank Arena in Johannesburg next Thursday, March 3.

has enticed Albert Bardavid of The Solution Team to sponsor him. "I trained with Brendon many years ago and more recently I saw him fight. What impressed me most was his interview after the fight. I respected his honesty and his forthright approach," said Bardavid.

Katz thanked his supporters and his sponsors. "I could not do this or be where I am today without all the incredible support you all give me."

Tickets for the fight are available from Computicket. For further information go to brendonkatz.co.za.

Teams named for Interpro soccer tournament

JACK MILNER

MORE THAN 300 youngsters countrywide participated in the trials for the Maccabi Interprovincial tournament that takes place in Cape Town next month.

Maccabi Gauteng announced their teams for the event. The youngsters come from different schools around the province King David Linksfield (KDL); King David Victory Park (KDVP); King David Sandton (KDS); Yeshiva College (YC); Hirsch Lyons (HL); Crawford College (Craw); and Bellavista (BVista).

Maccabi Gauteng Junior u-14 team:

Banji Gruskin (KDL); Daniel Stein (KDL); Jordan Horowitz (KDL); Matthew Kadish (KDL); Daniel Gewer (KDL); Ro-ee Tal (KDL); Greg Surmany (KDL); Ryan Polokow (KDL); Dean Fox (KDL); Benji Leechie (KDL); Adam Rabinovitch (KDL); Daniel Cramer (KDVP); Gavin Newfield (YC);

Joshua Waksman (KDL); Miron Segal (KDL); and Rhett Bekker (KDL).

Maccabi Gauteng Junior u-12 team:

Ricky Jayes (KDL); Adam Feldman (KDL); Gavi Nossel (KDVP); Gabi Riesenburger (YC); Aaron Chen (KDL); Josh Trope (BVista); Sean Terepolsky (Craw); Dean Meyer (KDL); Jordan Heller (KDL); Daniel Kravat (KDL); Ryan Horowitz (KDL); Guy Axelrod (KDL); Jesse Rom (KDVP); Michael Ribiero (HL); Yonatan Perez (YC); and Michi Meyer (YC).

Maccabi Gauteng Junior u-10 team:

Lance Dodo (KDL); Yigal Finkelstein (YC); Gidon Fox (YC); Adam Gamsy (KDS); Elad Ganon (YC); Trent Horowitz (KDL); Noah Kallner (KDL); Benji Melamdowitz (KDVP); Daniel Perez (YC); Jared Pearlman (KDL); Daron Sender (YC); Judd Silverman (KDL); Shane Silverman (KDL); Daylon Solomon (Craw); Adam Zimmerman (YC); and Dean Gordon (KDS).

Open soccer trial for Pan American Games

MACCABI OPEN soccer trials will take place on Sunday, February 27 from 09:00 to 13:00 only. If you have not yet registered for the trials, please send your details to football@maccabi.co.za. The trials are open to all players of 17 years and older.

A squad will be selected to represent Maccabi SA at the Pan American Maccabi Games in Brazil in December this year. This tournament will be a warm-up for the Maccabiah in Israel in July 2013.

For further information contact Ryan Kalk at football@maccabi.co.za

Futsal trials for Pan Am Games

THE 12th Pan American Maccabi Games will be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil from December 25 to January 3. National trials for Johannesburg participants wanting to try out for the SA Maccabi Men's open futsal team, will be held on the following dates:

The Johannesburg trial will take place at Discovery Soccer Park, The Wanderers Club, 21 North Road, Illovo, Johannesburg on Tuesday March 8 from 1900 to 2030.

The final round of trials will include Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban participants. The first round of trials will take place on Sunday, March 13 at UCT, Sports Hall 2, Rondebosch, Cape Town. Registration is at 16:00 and the trials will run until 18:00.

All Johannesburg and Durban-based participants are welcome to try out for the futsal team on March 13.

This final round of trials will include all those Cape Town-based players who were successful from the first round of trials, all Cape-based players who excused them-

selves from the first round due to being away overseas on business and/or who were injured at the time of the first round, as well as all up-country and Durban-based players who wish to attend.

Two members from the South African Futsal Association (namely the national SA Futsal coach and one SA national futsal player), together with the coach of the SA Maccabi futsal team, will be the selectors during the trials.

Please note that all participants wanting to take part in the trials need to pay R100 to register. Please make sure you wear indoor trainers to the trials and NOT boots with studs.

If you are interested in participating in the trials, please e-mail Ronen Cohen at ronen@native.co.za, by no later than March 1.

All players who are selected will need to pay R5 000 within one week of selection in order to secure their places in the team.

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