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THE "End the Occupation Campaign", comprising some 20 civil society organisations, has called for a national boycott against Israeli products.

In a media release the SAZF and SAJBD have called on the Jewish community to "defeat the boycott by increasing your purchases of Israeli products next week".

**WRITERS DEBATE 'WHAT'S A JEWISH WRITER?' /10**



SOUTH AFRICAN

# Jewish Report



www.sajewishreport.co.za

Friday, 1st June 2007 / 15 Sivan 5767

Volume 11 Number 20

## Foes of British boycott of Israel make a last stand

OPPONENTS of a proposed boycott of Israeli academics are making their final pitch before members of a large British trade union vote on boycott motions of Israeli academic institutions. Arab and Jewish Israeli students are hosting a stand at the conference detailing co-operation projects between Israelis and Arabs and between Israel and the UK, which could be affected. **SEE PAGE 8**



**John Berks enthusiastic about Ramallah Radio station**

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**JNF's tribute to Arthur Chaskalson**

**PAGE 6**

Read the *Jewish Report* e-paper on our website: [www.sajewishreport.co.za](http://www.sajewishreport.co.za)

**Goodbye Mrs Chips...**

Hazel Blend with several of the Yiddish Folk Nursery School's learners whom she will soon be saying goodbye to when she leaves the school after 40 years as a teacher and 38 years as headmaster. Blend is going to live in Australia. (Photo: Lara Greenberg) **SEE PAGE 7**

**LETTERS / 12 RABBI RICHARDS' DISTINGUISHED CAREER / 2 SEND IN YOUR BRIDES PICTURES / 6 IRON MAN DOES WELL IN SA / 16**



Another Firzt Cares initiative...

**AS WE SNUGGLE UP TO STAY WARM...  
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# Jewish Report

Published by  
S A Jewish Report (Pty) Ltd,  
Suite 175, Postnet X10039,  
Randburg, 2125

Tel: 011-886-0162  
Fax: 011-886-4202  
Printed by Caxton Ltd

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## PARSHA OF THE WEEK

### 'When you cause to alight...'

THE TITLE of this week's reading - Beha'alotecha - belies its fuller content: For in truth the portion deals with events in the desert, the marching, the celebration of the second Passover (the first to be held in freedom since the first was still in Egypt) and all of this comes as a precursor to the story of the spies and the resultant rebellion.

But that opening, and that particular word - Beha'alotecha - resonates a spirit which is itself worthy of comment. The word itself relates to the mounting of the lamps of the tabernacle, an act to be undertaken by Aaron, thus showing the importance thereof.

And, as with so much that relates to the Mishkan, literally the place where the Eternal was to be found, the undertaking of such a task should have been done with honour and with dignity. And so, if we allow ourselves to play with the word for a moment one sees the word OLEH or ALIYA very clearly therein.

Within a religious context we readily see a link with the call-up to the Torah - the moment when



**PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTECHA**  
Rabbi Charles D Wallach  
Temple Emanuel

one invited to say the blessing mounts the bimah at the Torah reading. As one who over three decades and more has had the privilege of welcoming those called to give blessing, it has always struck me how folk approach the task - often with a sense of humility to be sure, but always with a sense of pride: For is it not something for us to be free to express our faith, to approach the key source of what we are and publicly to give thanks and blessing?

Many are the stories of those who gave and give blessing despite trauma and traumatic circumstances. A couple of decades ago, as Jews from the then Soviet Union trickled out, some communities allowed those denied the celebrat-

ing of barmitzvah at its right time to have a belated, adult event.

The sheer joy, the pride would fill not just the person concerned, but the whole family. It was as if an added spirit was present.

As opposed to that, one rabbi I know, Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, tells the story of the moment when the Nazis attacked his home town in Germany, ransacked the synagogue, pulled the Torah scrolls from the Ark and proceeded to tear them, hurling the remnants into the town's swiftly flowing river.

The young Alfred recalled: "My grandfather waded into the water and clutched at however many segments of Torah he could and held them aloft out of the river: 'Alfred,' he said, 'look and remember: Hold the words of Torah dear and make them live!'"

A generation later the young Alfred became Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk and still later rose to become head of the Hebrew Union College, the principal rabbinic college in the United States. He had truly lived out the hope of his forlorn grandfather.

And so I go back to that word

## SHABBAT TIMES

June 01 / 15 Sivan

June 02 / 16 Sivan

Starts	Ends	
17:06	17:57	Johannesburg
17:27	18:21	Cape Town
16:47	17:39	Durban
17:07	17:59	Bloemfontein
16:59	17:53	Port Elizabeth
16:52	17:45	East London



which gives title to this week's sedra: For "Beha'alotecha" really means when you cause to alight... Each and everyone of us has it within them to "cause to alight", to increase the spirit, to give a sense of purpose and devotion, to help others achieve something they may not have thought possible before.

May this be an abiding message to take with us into this Shabbat.

## Rabbi Isaac Richards - a lifetime of service

DARRYL EGNAL

SOUTH AFRICA'S longest serving Jewish spiritual leader, Rabbi Isaac Richards, rabbi emeritus of Temple David Durban, died on Friday May 25 at the age of 93.

Rabbi Richards had a long and distinguished career within the Progressive Movement, and was instrumental in formulating the South African Progressive minhag (custom).

He was born in 1913 in Liverpool, England. After years of study in a yeshiva, he was accepted by the British Orthodox Beth Din in 1935 as a minister. He took up a post in Bangor, North Wales and then in Bolton, England, under the title of reverend.

When war broke out in 1939, he volunteered to serve as a chaplain in the British forces. When the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp was liberated, he was posted to the camp to be of assistance to survivors.

"It was a grim experience, but also uplifting, even if all I could do was to give a comforting word," Rabbi Richards said in a 2003 article

about his memoirs.

After the war, he took up duties as a chaplain in Germany, which involved visiting Jewish soldiers in north Germany.

"In 1946, as my demobilisation was approaching, I faced the problem as to my future. As an officer in the army, I had experienced a different way of life. My work among the survivors had completely broadened my outlook."

He answered an advertisement in the *London Jewish Chronicle* for a position as assistant to Rabbi M C Weiler, founding rabbi of the Progressive Jewish Movement in South Africa. Rabbi Weiler visited him in Germany and persuaded him to join the South African community.

On being discharged from the British army in November 1946, Rabbi Richards left for Johannesburg and his wife, Lily, and daughter, Monica, followed some months later. On his arrival, he took charge of the cheder and day-to-day matters affecting the members of Temple Israel in Hillbrow.

"Rabbi Weiler did a great deal of travelling during those years

and I was therefore very active," said Rabbi Richards. "I was involved in running services and dealing with members over the four or five years I was there."

In 1951, Rabbi Richards accepted a post in Port Elizabeth, where he served as reverend of the newly-established community for a few years. His wife, Lily passed away suddenly in December 1951. Not long after that, he decided to make aliyah with his daughter, but this didn't work out as planned, so he returned to South Africa.

He joined the Cape Town Progressive Congregation as director of education of the Hebrew and religion classes, where he met and married his second wife, Faye.

In 1966, Rabbi Richards decided to take a Sabbatical year and went to study at the Leo Baeck Rabbinical College in London. He was ordained as a rabbi in mid-1967 and returned to South Africa. His first rabbinic position was for Temple David in Durban, where



he remained for 27 years. Sadly, Faye passed away in Durban in 1998.

Rabbi Richards retired in 1986, but four years later, he was brought out of retirement to serve for a few more years. He retired again in 1994, but less than a year later, the congregation pleaded with him to return. He eventually retired in 2002 when the community finally found a new rabbi.

On this retirement, he was appointed rabbi emeritus of Temple David.

"Rabbi Richards served the Durban Jewish community and the South African Progressive Movement with love and dedication for the best part of 60 years," says Steve Lurie, chairman of the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ).

"We will miss his insight, his knowledge and his commitment to the movement."

Rabbi Richards is survived by his daughter, Monica, Faye's daughter, Margot, her husband, Vivian, and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Some angels reading to CT kids in need

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

"ANGELS OF ORT", an initiative of ORT Western Cape, was launched in early May at Leeuwenhof, the official residence of the premier of the province, Ebrahim Rasool. The project will involve setting up a volunteer net-

work of ORT members who will visit inner city schools situated in the Cape Town city bowl.

Teachers in these schools have to cope with up to 40 learners of differing needs per class. The "Angels of ORT" will assist teachers in this task by reading to small groups of learners.

Rosieda Shabodien, wife of the

premier, was reportedly "very excited" about the project, complimented Nilly Baruch, chairman of ORT Western Cape, on the initiative and said that it would give children hope and would mean far more to them than just reading.

Also present was Saras Pillay of the Western Cape education

department, who is chief curriculum adviser for the district in which the schools are situated.

• For additional information on the project, or if you would like to be involved, contact Nilly Baruch on 083-298-6849 or ORT's Cape Town office at (021) 975-7933.



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# Panel discusses some thorny conversion issues

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

WHY DO converts to Judaism have to adhere to higher standards than the rest of the community? Why has the conversion process become more difficult over the years? Why do partners of converts have to become "frum" as well? Should we in fact be encouraging conversions?

These were some of the questions dealt with at a panel discussion held under the auspices of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues (Cape Council). Answering the last question, Rabbi Dr Pinchas Zekry of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, who is chairman of the conversion committee of the Rabbinical Association of South Africa, said opinion was divided on the matter, with much depending on the individual circumstances and the location.

"Conversion doesn't always work - we do have great successes, though," he said. "Some great rabbis have come from the lines of 'gerim' (converts)."

He warned, however, that there was "a price and a commitment" necessary when converting to Judaism. One could not "close the doors", he added, referring to the "great nachas" experienced through converts who had changed their lives for the better, "so you can't say it's a dangerous route to take."

"If you live in Durban, it's not simple to find a Jewish 'shidduch', Cape Town too and even Johannesburg," he suggested in explanation.

It was "impossible" to have universally accepted conversions as circumstances differed from place to place. In Israel, for example, it was possible to be more lenient as one had to search to find non-kosher food and had to be "dafka" to work on "Shabbat".

Even if one was not "Shomer Shabbat"

and "Yomtov", one was exposed to "Divrei Torah" on television. In the Diaspora, the situation differed from country to country.

Many rabbis did not wish to involve themselves with conversions, as it was "not an easy situation at all" and a "big responsibility. We're not making the rules, just following them," he added.

On converts having to keep higher standards than the rest of the community, Rabbi Zekry said that when one came to Judaism as an adult, "we expect you to be like the Jews at Mount Sinai, accepting the covenant with G-d."

Rabbi Yitzchak Steele of the Claremont Wynberg Hebrew Congregation who coordinates the conversion process in Cape Town, spoke of the two-year programme that ranged from "a deep philosophical understanding" to practical issues. Moderator Rabbi Jonathan Altman of Beit Midrash Morasha, commented that the course did not only involve "book learning", but also "engagement with a Jewish environment".

Visiting Torah scholar Rabbi Jeff Wohlgernter of La Jolla, San Diego, said that he learned with "every single convert - there are no conversion classes and I don't hire teachers. To change a mindset and a thinking process takes more time and can only be done in an arduous way," he explained.

"It's not about your husband or boyfriend, but a connection to G-d and it's difficult to do this in a mass sort of way."

A failure in a convert was a failure on the part of the community, he stated, saying that converts were like citizens of a new country. "If they see others that are not so observant, it is difficult for them."

"We should uplift ourselves so that the standard is lifted up for them as well."

Explaining the "looser standard" for converting in the past, he said the prime moti-

vation had been to "hold on to the Jewish population because we lost so many in the Holocaust. But we've held on and now we can put back the details."

"In the past, we changed the acceptance, not the rule. Judaism hasn't changed, our knowledge of it has and we have to accept

that we were doing some things wrong," he added.

Answering a member of the audience who asked why he as the partner of a convert had to become "frum" as well, he said: "You're responsible for creating the (correct) environment for this person."



From left: Rabbis Yitzchak Steele, Jeff Wohlgernter, Pinchas Zekry and Jonathan Altman, who participated in the panel discussion on conversions.

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# A kosher roasting over chicken prices

ALISON GOLDBERG  
PHOTOGRAPHS: SHELLEY ELK

AGAINST A drastic reduction in the number of chickens slaughtered for the kosher market over the last six years of some 200 000 (an average 33 000 annually), prices per kilogram are currently almost double that for non-kosher chicken, though butchers like Ami Bolnick of Tenderchick and Bolbrand, vehemently disagree about the price difference.

The Union of Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) in Johannesburg which licenses suppliers of kosher poultry countrywide, is hard-pressed to explain the reason for the fall, but it suspects a number of factors may have contributed to it.

One of these is a drastic decline in marriages points out UOS executive director Darren Sevitz, resulting in a reduced number of Jews in the community.

Cape Town's UOS executive director, Mickey Glass adds emigration; a move away from meat by consumers; and partly prices themselves.

Bolnick says over this period it is important to note that while chicken slaughter has dropped, a turkey market has been developed by Tenderchick and Pick 'n Pay in response to consumer demand.

Imports do not appear as a factor in the fall-off, nor profiteering by any particular party.

Running at a net loss in 2005-6, the Johannesburg UOS is still deliberating over the granting of a licence to Cape Town-based Israeli Rammi Katz who imports Mehadrin chicken breasts from Israel.

Katz says filleted chicken breasts are selling in Johannesburg for R89,99/kg, while his in Cape Town sells for R79,99/kg. Glass points out that the latter figure is even higher than some local suppliers.

Aubrey Lampert, a letter writer to



*Jewish Report*, has called for a forensic audit into the price of kosher meat. In a letter to the paper three weeks ago, he compared the Johannesburg price of a whole kosher chicken at R37,50/kg to that of a non-kosher equivalent of R21,99/kg. For a chicken braai pack the relevant costs were R48,80/kg as against R18,99/kg for a non-kosher braai pack.

Bolnick, who does his own price comparisons in Johannesburg's northern suburbs on a monthly basis, confirms that the only cost relief is in the purchase of frozen kosher whole chickens compared to fresh.

He juxtaposes the sale of whole fresh chicken at the Norwood Hypermarket, citing R33,95/kg (kosher) against R26,95 (non-kosher). At Checkers in Balfour Park the price of frozen whole chickens is R25,99/kg (kosher) compared to R21,99/kg (non-kosher).

To these comparisons he adds the prices of non-kosher whole fresh chicken at Benmore Butchery at R33,99/kg and Oaklands Butchery at R28,99/kg.

Explaining the economics of the UOS's operations, Sevitz says shechita is part of the funding of the UOS. The UOS in Johannesburg is far larger than the Cape Town UOS which explains the latter's lower charges.

The Johannesburg UOS supports four

dayanim, a very large kashrut division, and a chief rabbi of whose cost it contributes 75 per cent (25 per cent by the Cape UOS).

"The UOS provides services which are essential to the preservation of Jewish life in South Africa, and this needs to be funded," he says.

Lampert is quite correct that customers are feeling the strain. Nor do they have much sympathy for what may appear to be an "unnecessary imbalance" in supply and demand.

As matters stand, customers would be better off theoretically buying their meat in Cape Town where prices of slaughtered beef and lamb to butchers are considerably cheaper.

Both UOSes are funded partially by the shechting of animals at abattoirs which in turn pass on the cost to butchers. In the case of oxen, Johannesburg charges R207/unit as against Cape Town's R99/unit, and R26/unit for lamb as against Cape Town's R16,20/unit.

Johannesburg's UOS charges R2,07 (Bolnick says R2,38) per chicken slaughtered.

Putting the fees in context, Sevitz says "on average the forequarter of an ox will weigh about 100kg. After treibering it loses about 10 per cent, so we are left with 90kg. The amount of R207 into 90kg accounts for R2,30 per kg. Of course the increase in kosher over non-kosher meat costs more than R2,30/kg, but it's important to see that the extra is not going to the Beth Din and the butchers and wholesalers must account for the difference.

"I'm sure they have good reasons, but it is for them to explain."

In the meantime customers will continue to look for savings wherever they can and buy whole frozen chicken over fresh for example, in a market which rarely advertises discounts.

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## SAUPJ gives nod to same-sex marriage

IN A landmark decision, the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) has approved marriages between Jewish couples of the same gender.

In a media release, Steve Lurie, chairman of the SAUPJ said: "This decision was arrived at after long and thoughtful deliberation, and in the spirit of what Progressive Judaism is about - inclusion of all Jews regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity."

At the national assembly of the SAUPJ held in Durban on May 6, it was agreed that there should be no distinction in the status of religious marriages of same-sex partners and heterosexual couples.

"This is a matter of justice and principle and we believe it is what Judaism requires of us in this day and age," said Lurie.

"As an inclusive movement, and one with a strong commitment to ensure that injustice is not done in our communities, we believe that this move goes a long way to repudiate prejudice."

In December 2006, South Africa became the fifth country in the world to grant same-sex couples the same status and rights as heterosexual marriage partners.

"The SAUPJ honours the divine within all human beings, and their right to live with dignity," said Lurie.

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# Berksie's well and living in Jerusalem

LIONEL SLIER

THERE ARE four essential things that every South African visiting Israel must do - pray at the Kotel, mourn at Yad Vashem, see the Shrine of The Dead Sea Scrolls and listen to John Berks on Ram FM 93.6.

Berks is the legendary South African radio presenter who enthralled at least two generations of South African listeners at LM radio, SABC and later 702.

He is currently the morning anchor at the newly started South African-backed Ram FM 93.6 that broadcasts from Jerusalem and Ramallah 24 hours a day. In an interview in Jerusalem, Berks said it was an absolute privilege to be living here at this stage of his life.

He said: "Personally things could not have been better. We anticipated that starting a station from scratch would be complex, difficult and challenging, but, then again, it makes the kind of contribution I believe it can make in the format of talk radio.

What is needed here is dialogue to get people to know each other and at this stage it is important for Israelis to get to know Palestinians and for Palestinians to get to know Israelis.

"The format is music but the idea is that with time the format will change from music to talk and we will have a balance between the two. The music we presently play is 'adults contemporary' from the seventies and eighties and catering for a large demographic age group. We maintain a good balance."

Berks told how happy he was to be in Israel, although "to learn Hebrew is like going back to cheder again, and learning sentences like kelev metachat le shulchun (the dog is under the table.) It is like the person learning Hebrew stopped someone in the street, asked him in basic Hebrew to tell him the time but to please answer in English.

"I've been here for five months. I was originally asked to come up for the launch by Issie Kirsh (of Primedia) and I'm very pleased with what has happened so far.

"In a way it is frustrating to be here; there is so much to see and so little time. Yet there are also fascinating aspects. To see a Jewish garbage collector or a Jewish cop is precious and it is wonderful to be in Israel with its advanced information technology. The infrastructure in this country is incredible.

"It's amazing how well the South African Jews have done and how much they have contributed. I keep in touch with South Africa, regularly surf the Net, but my feeling is that they are not doing enough there to combat crime. I have never felt as safe personally as I do in Israel.

"You can feel the strength of the people. The first month I broadcast from Ramallah and I used to take a taxi from my home in Malcha neighbourhood in Jerusalem at four o'clock in the morning. I still leave at four am but now walk to the

studio in Jerusalem. I never fear any degree of violence.

"My apartment is on the top of a hill and I have to go up 410 steps each day to get home. It is my daily exercise.

"As a South African it is fantastic to see Jews of different ethnic backgrounds mixing freely and equally in all spheres with other Israelis. It is lovely to see young people and realise how much they love music and laugh and enjoy life to the full.

"But there must be a balance. It is important to understand the Palestinian situation. They need their own sovereign state, to be independent and self-sufficient.

"In South Africa talk radio contributed a tremendous amount towards breaking down barriers between different peoples; we could all freely and openly express our opinions, make criticisms, make contributions, and in the end get together, solve our seemingly intractable problems and build a new country. I believe that Ram FM 93.6 can and will contribute to a similar solution."



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## SOCIAL SCENE

Rita Lewis jont@global.co.za



Lorraine and Arthur Chaskalson examine a congratulatory letter from Nelson Mandela.



Lorraine Chaskalson, Albie Sachs, Arthur Chaskalson, George Bizos, Nadine Gordimer, and Ahmed Kathrada.

# JNF honours Mr Justice Arthur Chaskalson

STAFF REPORTER  
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

FORMER CHIEF Justice Arthur Chaskalson is a lawyer's lawyer who took the time to listen to anyone in his court room. So said George Bizos at a function held this week by the Jewish National Fund of South Africa, to pay tribute to Chaskalson at their third annual honoree event.

Chaskalson has had a long and illustrious career in the legal world. In June 1994, he was appointed by former President Nelson Mandela as the first president of South Africa's new Constitutional Court. He became chief justice of South Africa in 2001, finally retiring in 2005.

Chaskalson's career was shaped by his devotion to the cause of democracy, for all his abhorrence of apartheid and his determination to fight the injustices which, for far too long, were the defining feature of the South African landscape.

Chaskalson was admitted to the Johannesburg Bar in 1956 and appeared as counsel for many members of the liberation movements in several major political trials including the Rivonia treason trial and the Delmas trial. He was the second South African to be elected as an honorary member of the Bar Association of New York, the first South African being Jan Smuts.

Chaskalson has received many awards including six doctorates. He was also given the human rights award by the Foundation for Freedom and Human Rights in Switzerland. He was instrumental in starting the Legal Resources Centre in 1978.

His mother, Mary Adler was closely involved with the Jewish community. She was president of the Women's Zionist Council of SA and also honorary life member of the World WIZO executive.

Lord Joel Joffe paid tribute to Chaskalson from London through a video message. He describes Chaskalson as unique, caring, courageous and generous and said he was privileged to be a close friend. "He had a passion for justice even when it was risky and unpopular and made financial sacrifices for the cause of justice," he said.

Mandela sent a congratulatory note to Chaskalson saying there was "none more

deserving than Chaskalson who made a big difference in the legal world".

Chaskalson's wife Lorraine also paid tribute to her husband, reciting two poems she wrote.

A panel discussion was held with Justice Albie Sachs, Ahmed Kathrada, (who was one of the accused in the Rivonia trial and sentenced to life imprisonment with Mandela) and George Bizos who defended Mandela, Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu in the trial.

Kathrada recalled how they, as prisoners, watched with interest when they were introduced to Chaskalson who was a young attorney.

"He was being touted as the new Issie Maisels and we eventually were convinced and were at peace with ourselves," he said.

Bizos described Chaskalson as a "lawyer's lawyer" and the greatest cross-examiner of policemen. He said Chaskalson made the world aware that they were defending patriots and not terrorists.

"He gave up a lucrative practice to make justice available for all, especially through his involvement in the Legal Resource Centre."

Chaskalson, in accepting the award, said he wanted to put things into context. "I am greatly moved by what has been said, but I am also embarrassed. I came from a comfortable home, I had a good education, good food and a university education which gave me access to an elite profession."

Things could have been very different, he said. His earliest recollection was the Second World War when he was eight. Although very young, he remembers the anxiety his parents felt as the Nazis went through Europe.

"I was young enough to know what was at stake and to understand that if my grandparents had not come to South Africa, we would have been victims of Nazi persecution. If the Nazis had won the war, we would have grown up as victims and not members of the privileged white community and all the benefits afforded to whites.

"My family prospered, not only through their hard work, but because of the opportunities afforded to them. We were not part of the marginalised population, but of a privileged group which did not suffer discrimination and humiliation and I was aware of the paradox.

"Many others did more, took greater risks and made bigger contributions than I have," he said.



Helen Suzman



George Bizos and Arthur Chaskalson



Reeva Forman and Lorraine Chaskalson



JNF treasurer Alan Menachemson and Director Isla Feldman.

## Let the bridal photos roll!

THE WIZO/SA *Jewish Report* bridal competition to select our Jewish Bride of the Year for 2006/2007, is gathering momentum. The culminating function will be held in March 2008. Again, as in the past, there will be a host of delectable prizes.

Our competition for 2007 follows last year's highly successful format. The rules are as follows:

1. Entries close at the end of December 2007. All brides married from July 2006 until then, are eligible for entry.

2. Brides must be present in Johannesburg at the time of judging.

3. The top 25 finalists must be in Johannesburg for the final interview judging, at their own expense or they will be disqualified.

4. The winner must become an active member of WIZO for one year following the competition.

5. No photographers are permitted to send in photographs. The only photographs permitted for entry are those submitted by the bride herself. All entries MUST be signed by the bride herself.

6. Photographs will be printed within the time frame and discretion of the

*Jewish Report*.

7. All photographs submitted will be judged with the original photograph, so no digital images are permitted.

8. Brides must specify whether they would like their photographs returned to them following the competition. The photographs will be available from the WIZO office at Beyachad in Johannesburg after the culminating function.

9. Very importantly: Please note, all photographs MUST be submitted to WIZO and NOT to the *SA Jewish Report*.

Send the photos to:

Sheila Levine  
WIZO/SAJR Bridal Competition  
PO Box 29216, Sandringham, Jhb 2131

or hand-deliver to:  
(WIZO at) Beyachad, 2 Elray Street,  
Raedene  
Johannesburg 2192

Please send in your photograph with:

- Bride's first and maiden names
- Place of chupah
- Date of wedding
- Name of photographer
- Contact telephone number
- E-mail address
- Cell number
- Signature, consenting to the printing of this photograph
- Would you like to get your photographs back?

## COMMUNITY BUZZ

LIONEL SLIER

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### OUDTSHOORN

ONE OF the Afrikaners donated two plots for the synagogue, while another donated the stones and had them brought to the site. The building, known as the Queen Street Synagogue, was completed in December 1888 and had, according to one account, been funded by Afrikaner donations.

In 1892 the inevitable happened in a Jewish community. The Kelm Jews broke away and built their own synagogue, the "Griener Shul" on St John Street, which was completed in 1896. The Queen Street Synagogue, in fact, had become too small for the growing community.

The Kelm Jews were a people of great tradition and knowledge and wanted more study and daily services; the rabbi of the Queen Street Synagogue was too Western for them. The ark in the new synagogue was modelled on that of the principal synagogue in Kelm.

A Jewish day school was established in Oudtshoorn in 1904 next to the Queen Street Synagogue. It was a government school which

had compulsory Hebrew classes and covered the first eight years of schooling. There was also a mikveh, which is still in use, while the Oudtshoorn Jewish Cemetery had been established in the 1880s.

The Jews also settled in the surrounding areas such as Calitzdorp, Ladismith and Uniondale. The 50km between Oudtshoorn and Calitzdorp was known as "Der Yiddische Gass" (the Jewish neighbourhood) as the hotel and all the 20 shops alongside the road were owned by Jews and they all closed on the Sabbath.

There was also a boarding house owned by Avraham Kaplan who kept a Torah and where daily services were held.

Meanwhile, the Jews started farming the ostriches and built huge sandstone houses, known as ostrich palaces, on their farms and in the town. In 1914 at the outbreak of the First World War, there were 600 Jewish families in Oudtshoorn, about a third of the town's white population.

Jews played an important part in the development of Oudtshoorn and the district. At one time, the mayor and two of the councillors were Jews, as was the district surgeon, the medical officer of health and a member of the municipal school board. Seven lawyers, three doctors and the biggest landowners and businessmen were Jewish.

The prosperity of Oudtshoorn was, of course, due to the high prices of the fashion industry paid

for ostrich feathers. In 1913 it reached \$500 for a pound of the finest feathers.

That was the year that fashion started changing, due in part to the open motor cars whose speed was not conducive to feathers attached to clothes or hats. The start of the war was the final nail in the coffin.

Both in South Africa and London there were warehouses full of feathers with no buyers. The feathers were worth next to nothing and the feather buyers were left with debts owed them by the dealers and therefore could not pay the farmers, who started growing tobacco and raising livestock to counter the collapse of the feather market.

Ostriches were raised on a small scale for their skins and, at a later stage for their meat.

*To be completed.*

• This article by David Zetler first appeared in *The Jerusalem Post* and was sent in by Basil Zive.

### JOHANNESBURG

IN 1895 the chief justice of the Transvaal Republic laid the foundation stone for a Jewish school in De Villiers Street in the centre of the town, but it took 18 months before the school was opened.

The school had become necessary as Jewish children were not allowed to attend state schools.

In 1902 there was a change of attitude towards Jewish people; the school was moved to Doornfontein

and it became known as the Jewish Government Primary School. In August of that year A M Abrahams became the headmaster and there were five teachers and 150 pupils.

In 1905 I A Harris arrived from England. He became a legend at the school and in 1966 the school was named after him.

In an article in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* of September 1985, Doreen Levin wrote that one of the earliest old boys was Joseph "Jinks" Beinashowitz who recalls arriving with his twin sister Annie Zulman when they were seven years old.

He only won one prize at school and that was when he tied for arithmetic in Standard 3. He recalled that for his birthday he had a party held in the nearby End Street Park and he had a chocolate cake. He lived in Pritchard Street in the centre of Johannesburg where his family also kept a cow, a sheep and a goat.

Well-known bottle store owner, Solly Kramer's three daughters Sadie, Beaty and Edie all went to the school in the late 1920s. Beaty recalled that many of her friends were from Arcadia, the Jewish orphanage down the Oxford Road hill in Parktown.

The children used to be given money to take a tramcar to get to and from Arcadia to the school.

Levin quotes Okey Geffin, the rugby Springbok of the late forties and early fifties: "My four brothers and sister were all at the school. My Afrikaans teacher, C Arenson,

who later became principal, would literally eat his hat and give five shillings to the opposite side if they could score a try against us.

"We played under-11, under-12 and under-13 and I don't think that we ever lost a game.

"I wasn't very brilliant on the academic side. In those days you either passed or failed. When my mother heard that I had failed Afrikaans, she wouldn't allow me to play rugby. When I told Mr Arenson I could not play because he had given me only 37 per cent for Afrikaans, he promptly ordered me onto the playing field, saying it wasn't 37 per cent it was 73 per cent and I had passed. This is true, I got through school on my rugby."

Besides Okey Geffin, other "old boys" were Hymie Kloner, the soccer Springbok and Transvaal cricketers Clarence Levy and Aaron Nickerl.

One of the best known "old girls" was the pianist Cherry Wainer, who became an international star in Britain where she went to live in 1948.

Today the once famous Jewish Government School, now the I H Harris Primary, finds itself in a neglected and rundown area of Johannesburg, but the memories and the sentiment remain, not only of the school through which so many of today's older Jewish citizens had passed, but indeed of the entire area of Doornfontein. As the writer L P Harley wrote: "The past is a different country."

## ME universality

LIONEL SLIER

"IT WAS an answer to my prayers when I was recommended to the Israel Now Tour organisers by Marlene Bethlehem," said Rev Moss Ntsha, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa. Ntsha was one of two Christian clerics on the May 2007 Israel Now Tour.

"I always wanted to understand the Middle East, the story of Israel and the conflict with the Palestinians.



"A big part of my stay was getting to grips with the story of Israel. Obviously as a Christian I have a very strong connection with this story and in a sense it is my story. It is like an onion with several layers.

"The one layer is the core and it is the history from Abraham through to the First Temple and the Second Temple, which is dramatised by the Temple Mount. Jerusalem is the story of the Old Testament and the New Testament and that is a special part.

"The second layer is the very picture of the Temple and the excavations beneath seem to underline the conflict and the Palestine/Israel question. In a sense I feel that, to my regret, I do not know to what extent the Palestinians have really seen the Temple under their shrine

almost as if the one on top is oppressing the one at the bottom. That is a very graphic way in which this conflict is shown.

"On this trip I haven't really had a Palestinian explain that conflict. If you look at the Temple lying underneath the Temple Mount, it is almost as if the burden of proof is on the oppressor above to explain why he is there.

"The third layer of this story for me is what seems to be G-d's hand on Israel. This is the whole story of the struggle of Israel and yet linked with that, I find that the ruling elite are really reticent about affirming their spiritual heritage. And does one see the hand of G-d in terms of the technological advances and the performance of the army in the wars against impossible odds?

"You would've thought the grace of G-d among Israel would have been readily found. I didn't find it. I find an incurable sense of unbelief.

"A rich religious experience was also combined with the historical significance of Jerusalem and ever emphasised by the religious significance is a powerful testament to 3 000 years of civilisation in the Middle East.

"I did not get the sense that Palestinians have ever been to museums such as Yad Vashem. It is almost like a Jewish story that only the Jews know and it is difficult to have a communication when people do not know each other's stories.

"I draw a parallel with South Africa. When there was not a bridge between each other and we did not read each other's stories, eg what Afrikaners suffered in the Anglo-Boer War remained an Afrikaner story and then they constructed apartheid on the basis of their own fears, nobody understood where they were coming from.

"So I think that understanding each other's story is an important starting point for peaceful reconciliation."

## Hazel leaves a 40-year legacy at Yiddish Folk

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY LARA GREENBERG

FOR 40 YEARS Hazel Blend has nurtured hundreds of children who have passed through the doors of Yiddish Folk Nursery School.

At the end of this school term, it will be Blend who walks out of the school and ends an era as she and her husband move on to a new life in Australia.

During an interview with *Jewish Report*, Blend, who has been headmaster at Yiddish Folk for 38 years, was unable to name one specific moment which stood out for her as she said that she relived those moments whenever she watched the children in the playground, or observed how their "little personalities" developed over a three year period - ensuring confident, independent children with high self-esteem.

It was an emotional-filled hour as Blend spoke about her many years at the school, describing how the school has always been such a huge part of her life and how, even on public holidays and during school holidays, she would come in to the school grounds "just to potter around".

Blend has always prided herself on the homey environment, which has been created within the school's walls and was happy to say that she has always known every single child's name and background - despite the fact that, annually, the school boasts 120 children between its six classes.

The prosperity of the school is a huge achievement for Blend who noted that even through tough times - such as high emigration levels - the school had always been full and already there was a waiting list until 2010.

The teachers all work as a team and Blend has always been careful to ensure that there is no competition - they all work towards

the common purpose of doing what's best for the children.

She is proud of the fact that the school has moved from a staff of unqualified teachers to a full staff of fully qualified teachers, two assistants, one fulltime secretary, a part-time speech therapist and a part-time social worker.

Blend's relationship with Yiddish Folk goes back to 1967 when she worked at the school as a student teacher.

Once she qualified, she was offered a position on the staff and started as a fulltime teacher for the five- to six-year-old group, in January 1968.

In April 1969, just over a year later and around the age of 22/23, Blend was appointed as the school's principal and although she has faced many challenges along the way, 38 years later, she still holds that position.

Over the years she has worked with 17 chairmen and she notes that the parents association has always been very active in organising cultural, social and fundraising events.

Because of today's lifestyle, Blend notes that the children are not as creative as those in years gone by.

"They have too many pressures and not enough time to just play," she says. "Children need to play and play and play and play..."

She added that on this note, parents put too much pressure on their children to do too many extramural activities.

"It's often the parents' needs and not the children's, because the parents feel that their children will be losing out if they don't do something."

Blend is also a huge advocate for parents and educators setting the right example for their children and teaching them the correct values.

She also believes it is not the end result that is important, but

rather the process of learning. On this note, Blend concurs with the saying: "In years to come, a child may forget what you taught him or her, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

In between her time at the school, Blend married David and raised her children, Howard and Lindi. Howard attended Yiddish Folk, while Lindi started out at the school.

In August, Hazel and David will be moving to Sydney, Australia to join Howard, Lindi and their respective families.

"It really hasn't hit me yet," said Blend. "This school has been part of my life and I can't imagine not coming in here every day."

What she says she will miss the most is the interaction with the children and parents - the noise of the children in the playground and listening in on their interactions and conversations. "You can learn so much from the children," she said.

Yiddish Folk Nursery School opened its doors in 1937 at 45 Upper Meyer Street, Doornfontein with the aim of providing Jewish parents with a Jewish nursery school during the morning, with an afternoon Yiddish school twice a week.

With the growth of the Jewish community in the Sydenham/Orange Grove area, an old house, built on a double stand was bought in 1954 and when the building took place in 1961, 107 9th Avenue Sydenham became the new home for Yiddish Folk. The school continues to run from that same address.

The school was taken over by the South African Board of Jewish Education, in January 1995 and has never had any financial problems.

Blend noted: "Yiddish Folk will always have a very special place in my heart - even if I'm living on the other side of the world."

## OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

## Jewish Report

## Are the ANC also like Nazis?

IN HIS latest "Letter from the President" on the official ANC website, President Thabo Mbeki expresses outrage at Cosatu secretary-general Zwelinzima Vavi's recent public statement, that a reported economic boom in South Africa is government propaganda similar to that used by Adolf Hitler's regime in Nazi Germany.

Says Mbeki: "The charge that our government and the ANC are behaving in a manner akin to the Nazis is serious in the extreme... it is not possible to ignore the grossly repugnant statement... Nazism was the most reactionary, chauvinist, predatory and anti-human political system to emerge in Europe and the world between the two world wars..."

"As a concrete expression of its pernicious racism, it slaughtered millions of Jewish people in the infamous Holocaust. The war it launched led to the death of over 20 million citizens of the Soviet Union... The suggestion that our movement and government have resorted to 'propaganda similar to that of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany' seeks to discredit our movement and government..."

The demagoguery inherent in the abuse of language in this way by Vavi is indeed repugnant. His use of the Nazi slur shows no understanding of what the Nazis were really like, either in their employment of propaganda orchestrated by Goebbels, or in the actions which were carried out under the umbrella of this propaganda.

South African Jews could be forgiven for feeling somewhat cynical, however, at Mbeki's anger. In recent months when his minister of intelligence was routinely insulting and offending Jews by likening the actions of Israel to those of the Nazis - a comparison equally outrageous - nary a word of public criticism was heard from the president.

We have said often in this paper that it is quite legitimate to criticise Israel: in the complex and interminable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, wrongs have been committed by all sides. There is plenty of blame to go around. But resorting to the Nazi analogy by government ministers is something else. It suggests a more sinister motive than objective comment.

If the president does not distance himself from such statements, he becomes associated with them by default. It would have been an important gesture towards Jewish South Africans to see him rejecting the Nazi slur, even if he remained critical of Israel.

Another article on the website reports on country-wide anti-Israel protests to be held next week "co-ordinated by the End the Occupation Campaign, comprising almost 20 civil society organisations, social movements, solidarity organisations, political parties and faith-based organisations". The tone of the article suggests that it should be supported.

There will be pickets in various centres around the country, including outside selected stores selling Israeli goods, with a call for South Africans to boycott products from Israel. The article says the ANC has called for a Parliamentary debate on the occupation of Palestinian territory. The organisers propose mass marches and rallies on Saturday, June 9 in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

The irony here is that most Israelis and Jews today also believe the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories should be ended. Israelis widely acknowledge that the occupation and the settlement enterprise has been a historical mistake, and want to get out.

But there seems no secure way at present to do this, given the chaos in the Palestinian world, continued rejection by Hamas of Israel's right to exist, and hundreds of Qassam rockets falling on the Israeli town of Sderot since Israel withdrew from Gaza. Israelis are wary of withdrawing from further Palestinian territories for fear of what would happen.

Former South African law professor John Dugard, who is the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories and not considered a friend of Israel, says: "The indiscriminate firing of rockets into Sderot violates international humanitarian law."

If the protestors are concerned about ending the occupation and about the Palestinians' welfare, they should call on them to stop the Qassams and concentrate on rebuilding Palestinian society rather than destroying Israel. And intellectual and moral consistency from our own government might also help point these protests in a more constructive direction.

## Bracing for a long struggle with Hamas

LESLIE SUSSER  
JERUSALEM

WITH NO end in sight to Qassam rocket attacks on Israeli civilians near the border with Gaza, the Israeli government is preparing for a long struggle against radical, Hamas-led Palestinian militants.

In two weeks of persistent bombardment, some 200 rockets have been fired across the border, killing at least two Israelis and injuring dozens more in the frontier town of Sderot. Now, it seems, that could be just the beginning.

Although dozens of Hamas and Islamic Jihad militiamen have been killed in retaliatory Israeli air strikes, several Cabinet ministers are pressing for an even tougher Israeli response to force Hamas to back down.

Both sides have an interest in continuing the fighting. Hamas wants to embarrass Israel and consolidate its position as the leading force in Palestinian politics. Israel wants to deal Hamas a crippling blow and help elevate the status of the more moderate Fatah movement on the Palestinian street.

For now the bigger problem for Israel is the West Bank. The Israeli army remains active there, gathering intelligence, arresting terror suspects and intercepting would-be suicide bombers.

Top army officers argue that a ceasefire suspending these activities would mean the return of suicide bombers to Israeli towns and cities. For Israel to even consider a ceasefire, the West Bank must be taken out of the equation.

But there is a bigger picture. In insti-



The charred remains of a restaurant are seen on Kibbutz Nir Am, on May 23. A Qassam rocket fired from Gaza by Hamas, made a direct hit, totally destroying the structure. (PHOTO: BRIAN HENDLER/JTA)

gating the violence, Hamas is also trying to undermine any chances for an Israeli-Arab peace dialogue based on the 2002 Arab League peace initiative. That initiative has been accepted by Arab moderates such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Fatah; it is rejected by Iran and its Hezbollah and Hamas allies.

"Everything is being organised by Iran," Deputy Defence Minister Ephraim Sneh told the *Jerusalem Post*.

Buoyed by the perceived success of Hezbollah's Iranian-backed rocket attacks on Israel during last year's Second Lebanon War, Hamas is trying to further undermine Israeli morale.

Hamas believes that time is on the Palestinians' side, that if it just keeps up the pressure, Israel eventually will collapse. That is why it rejects the two-state solution; Hamas believes that if it waits long enough, all of Israel will fall into its

hands.

At the same time, the United States has put forward a plan for easing Israeli pressure on Palestinian civilian life in the West Bank. The idea is both to weaken Hamas and to show the Palestinian people that only moderates like Fatah can get results.

What happens next on the negotiating front will depend on how the Hamas-Fatah standoff works out.

"Hamas' violent clashes with Fatah in the streets of Gaza, are nothing more than a dress rehearsal for the great confrontation the group anticipates in June or July," political analyst Akiva Eldar wrote in *Ha'aretz*.

If current efforts to prevent them fail, the outcome of those anticipated clashes could determine the contours of Israeli-Palestinian ties for years to come. (JTA)

## British boycott foes making last stand

JONNY PAUL  
LONDON

OPPONENTS of a proposed British boycott of Israeli academics are making their final pitch before members of Britain's largest trade union cast their votes this week on two boycott motions.

The University and College Union started meeting on Wednesday right through to today (Friday) at the sea resort of Bournemouth, on the southern coast of England.

The union will debate two motions calling for an outright boycott of Israeli academic institutions and seeking a "moratorium on research and cultural collaborations with Israel".

The move is the latest of several British efforts to boycott Israel. Last month the National Union of Journalists passed a motion to boycott Israeli goods. More recently, a group of British doctors and a group of architects called for a boycott within their respective professions.

In the British academic world, four attempts have been made to introduce a boycott of Israeli academics since 2002. The University and College Union was created last June by the merger of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, and the Association of University Teachers, the AUT, both of which had initiated their own boycott proposals.

Motions were defeated by the AUT in 2003, and although a motion passed in 2005, it was overwhelmingly overturned at a special council of the union following international outcry.

A boycott motion narrowly passed at the National Association conference in 2006, but the resolution expired with the merger of the unions.

According to the new boycott motion, "Israel's 40-year occupation has seriously damaged the fabric of Palestinian society through annexation, illegal settlement, collective punishment and restriction of movement."

It goes on to say the union "deplores the denial of educational rights for Palestinians by invasions, closures, checkpoints, curfews, and shootings and arrests of teachers, lecturers and stu-

dents" and "condemns the complicity of Israeli academia in the occupation, which has provoked a call from Palestinian trade unions for a comprehensive and consistent international boycott of all Israeli academic institutions".

If the motion passes, among the recommendations are "for members to consider the moral implications of existing and proposed links with Israeli academic institutions" and for guidance to members on "appropriate forms of action".

In an effort to counter the boycott, a group of Arab and Jewish Israeli students are hosting a stand at the conference to detail academic co-operation projects between Israelis and Arabs and between Israel and the United Kingdom, all of which they say could be affected if a boycott goes ahead.

They also will talk to delegates about the achievements of Israeli universities and showcase the projects between Israeli and Palestinian universities, as well as the joint work benefitting Israel's Arab minority that is threatened by the proposed boycott.

"The stall allows Israeli students to show that a boycott is counterproductive and will hurt the very relationships that will help bring peace in the Middle East," said Ofir Frankel, executive director of the International Advisory Board, which is sponsoring the stand.

"We also want to take this opportunity to build links with British academics that may advance these valuable projects."

The board was established by Bar-Ilan University in 2005 with the Academic Friends of Israel to respond to calls for boycotts of Israeli academics, fight anti-Israel policies of the British education unions and anti-Semitic incidents on university campuses.

The stall is supported by the Fair Play Campaign Group, part of the Board of Deputies of British Jews' campaign to combat boycott initiatives, to promote co-operation and dialogue in the Middle East, and by the British Friends of Israeli Universities.

Proponents of the boycott measure defend their efforts.

"Israeli universities are complicit in occupation of Palestinian territories and

in the harassment and abuse of Palestinian students and lecturers," said Haim Bresheeth, a University of East London lecturer who introduced the motion with Tom Hickey, a lecturer in philosophy at Brighton University.

"They are part of the system which imposes closures, curfews and collective punishments, supports military invasions of campuses and arbitrary arrests."

"Taking a stand on these issues is the least that we can do. International action is required to persuade Israeli academics that they must examine the role of their own institutions in denying educational rights to Palestinians."

The Israeli students aren't the only ones making their case in advance of the union vote.

Last week a delegation of senior Israeli academics returned to Israel after a week of meetings with British counterparts, parliamentarians and journalists in an effort to combat the boycott call.

With the delegation was Miriam Shlesinger, a professor at Bar-Ilan University and a victim of a boycott in 2002. She was removed from the board of a journal at Manchester University on the basis of her Israeli citizenship.

"A boycott against Israel is discriminatory and will achieve no useful purpose," Shlesinger said. "Many academics like myself are acting on behalf of the causes that by deterring us from doing this they are achieving the exact opposite."

Also last week, Steven Weinberg, a University of Texas professor and Nobel laureate, cancelled a visit to a London university citing the journalists' boycott and what he perceives to be "a widespread anti-Israel and anti-Semitic current in British opinion".

In a letter to Imperial College he wrote: "I know that some will say that these boycotts are directed only against Israel rather than generally against Jews, but given the history of the attacks on Israel and the oppressiveness and aggressiveness of other countries in the Middle East and elsewhere, boycotting Israel indicated a moral blindness for which it is hard to find any explanation other than anti-Semitism." (JTA)

## OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

# Israeli situation saddled with the 'A' word

THERE SEEMS to be no way of avoiding apartheid-era comparisons when analysing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not because there is any real validity to them but because they are being brought up persistently to ignore.

The fall of apartheid South Africa largely came about through its being turned into a pariah state, subjected to a host of damaging international sanctions, and Israel's enemies are quite openly seeking to ensure that history repeats itself.

Indeed, the "A" word is now being bandied about by those who consider themselves Israel's friends, or at least who are supportive of its continued existence.

Jimmy Carter's inclusion of the term "apartheid" in the title of his controversial book was particularly misleading as Carter himself states that he admires Israel as the only genuine democracy in the Middle East and is critical only of its policies in the territories.

Similarly irresponsible are Israeli human rights groups like B'tselem, who presumably are not opposed to Israel's existence but whose knee-jerk employment of pseudo-apartheid-like analogies serve to undermine the legitimacy of the entire Israeli state.

Debunking charges that Israel itself is an apartheid state is relatively straightforward (even if this is sometimes complicated by the undeniable fact that de facto discrimination against the Arab minority does occur).

The real focus of the Israel/apartheid campaign is to home in on the situation in the West Bank (Gaza having now been



**BARBARIC  
YAWP**  
David Saks

evacuated). Here it is pointless denying that similarities with apartheid South Africa exist, or even that in many ways the restrictions on the Palestinians are even harsher than those operating under the apartheid regime.

As a method of population control, for example, checkpoints are even more effective than pass laws. And as the minister of intelligence of a certain country close to home recently fulminated, certain West Bank roads are indeed barred to Palestinians and reserved for Jewish settlers, something he regarded as "obscene".

It could be that the only way to refute these damaging accusations is by countering that even if Israeli policies in the West Bank in some ways resemble those of apartheid South Africa, unlike in the latter situation, such measures are morally justified.

Moreover, a powerful counter-thrust could be made that those demanding the abolition of "human rights violations" such as checkpoints, security barriers and separate road systems effectively believe that the murder and mutilation of Jews is preferable to the inconveniencing of Arabs.

Neither rejoinder, to say the least, is going to make Israel and its defenders any more popular, but given the persistent refusal of their opponents to recognise the extent of the security threat posed by Palestinian terrorism, there may no longer be any choice.

One may as well take the above-mentioned case of separate roads for Jews and Arabs in the West Bank as an example. Here, what is truly "obscene" are the reasons why Israel was compelled to institute such extreme measures in the first place.

From the Israeli capture of the West Bank and Gaza in June 1967 to July 1994, Israelis used the same roads that the Muslim and Christian Arabs of the territories used. No new roads were built in those territories, while the existing roads were extensively upgraded by Israel. Then came September 2000 and the launch of Yasser Arafat's so-called "Second Intifada".

Constant attacks on public buses, school buses and private cars and trucks followed, the methods employed including drive-by shootings, sniper attacks, fire bombing, suicide bombings and truck and car bombs. (The cold-blooded murder of Tali Hatuel and her four daughters was just one of the many atrocities carried out by Palestinian "freedom fighters" during this time).

Israel's response was to build separate roads leading from Israel to the main Israeli communities in the territories, a measure that our minister of intelligence finds "obscene" but which has saved

countless Jewish lives. If this is apartheid, it is justifiable apartheid, and no matter what unreflecting fury this answer is likely to elicit, it has to be stated firmly and unequivocally.

Equating Israel's policies in the West Bank to those of apartheid-era South Africa is misleading and cynically unfair, not because parallels cannot be found but because the respective reasons for why repressive measures were implemented differ vastly from one another.

Unlike in apartheid South Africa, where discriminatory legislation was aimed primarily at concentrating power and privilege in the hands of the white minority, Israeli Jews face immediate threats to their very lives that simply did not exist in this country. Nearly 1 500 Israelis the majority of them civilians - have lost their lives over the past seven years, whereas perhaps a few dozen South African whites were killed in the 30-year-long "armed struggle".

What John Dugard and his ilk would probably counter to this is that the settlements are illegal under international law and therefore the Jews living beyond the Green Line have no right to be there in the first place. It would seem, therefore, that the only way to satisfy this lobby is the ethnic cleansing of nearly a quarter of a million West Bank Jews, or else withdrawing the Israeli security forces completely and leaving them to the tender mercies of their Palestinian neighbours.

There is not much Israel can do in the face of such unjust and unreasonable demands.

## National anthem of SA Nkosi Sikelel'

MARLENE BETHLEHEM

ONE OF our greatest successes in the transition to democracy in South Africa has been our attempts to promote the feeling of pride in being South African.

The national anthem, for instance, is a brilliant way that not only protects certain rights, but makes South Africans recognise, embrace and embody alternative ways of being South African.

The current version of the national anthem has been in existence since 1996.

It pains me to be at functions where members of various communities fail to sing the indigenous words at the beginning of the anthem, but sing vociferously when the Afrikaans and English texts are sung.

It has been more than a decade and many still have not learnt the words. It may be of some interest for people to have some background on the combined anthem.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika was composed in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a teacher at a Methodist mission school in Johannesburg. It was one of many songs he composed, and he was apparently a keen singer who composed the songs for his pupils.

The words of the first stanza were originally written in Xhosa as a hymn. In 1927 seven additional Xhosa stanzas were later added by Samuel Mqhayi, a poet.

Most of Sontonga's songs were sad, witnessing the suffering of African people in Johannesburg, but they were popular and after his death in 1905, choirs used to borrow them from his wife.

Solomon Plaatje, one of South Africa's greatest writers and a founding member of the ANC, was the first to have the song recorded. This was in London in 1923. A Sesotho version was published in 1942 by Moses Mphahlele.

The Rev J L Dube's Ohlange Zulu Choir popularised Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika at concerts in Johannesburg, and it became a popular church hymn that was also adopted as the anthem at political meetings.

For decades Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika was regarded as the national anthem of South

Africa by the oppressed and it was always sung as an act of defiance against the apartheid regime.

A proclamation issued by the State President on April 20 1994, stipulated that both Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika and Die Stem (the Call of South Africa) would be the national anthems of South Africa. In 1996 a shortened, combined version of the two anthems was released as the new anthem.

There are no standard versions or translations of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika so the words vary from place to place and from occasion to occasion. Generally the first stanza is sung in Xhosa or Zulu, followed by the Sesotho version.

*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika  
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,  
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,  
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.*

The above-version covers all Nguni-speaking South Africans, but is understood by many, as South Africa is a multilingual state.

*Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,  
O fedise dintwa la matshwenyeho,  
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,  
Setjhaba sa South Afrika - South Afrika.*

The above version covers all Sesotho-speaking South Africans but is understood by many, as South Africa is a multilingual state in a diverse country.

*Uit die blou van onse hemel,  
Uit die diepte van ons see,  
Oor ons ewige gebergtes,  
Waar die kranse antwoord gee,*

*Sounds the call to come together,  
And united we shall stand,  
Let us live and strive for freedom,  
In South Africa our land.*

South Africans need to make an effort to learn the words and fulfil the ideals of "Unity in Diversity".

## CANTORIAL EXTRAVAGANZA

*The Jewish National Fund of SA in association with  
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**Naphtali Hershtik**, Chazzan of the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem, Israel has travelled the world capturing the hearts of audiences with his cultured and refined singing both on the concert stage and in synagogues during the rendition of prayer. He is the complete Cantor with the greatest class in interpreting the liturgy and songs of the Jewish people.

**Natanel Hershtik**, the younger son of Naphtali is the new genre of chazzonim. He is blessed with a natural music talent, nurtured and influenced by his father. He is also able to synthesise the art form of jazz and other musical styles. He is currently studying Law and is the Cantor of the prestigious Hamptons Synagogue in New York.

Proceeds of the concert will go to the JNF Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre in Mamelodi and the William Shatner / JNF Therapeutic Riding Consortium Endowment in Israel which supports some 30 riding centres in Israel for mentally and physically disabled children.

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## TAPESTRY

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# Architect Jeremy Rose - icon of heritage design

ROBYN SASSEN

DURING MARCH, architect Jeremy Rose presented the first of a series of public lectures, hosted by the University of Johannesburg Arts Academy in Auckland Park. The centre's timetable allows for lectures to piggy-back on large-scale theatre productions.

Associated with his architect practice since 1995, Rose was educated at Wits University. For the past 10 years, his practice (MRA) has worked largely in the related fields of heritage design, offering architectural presence and voice to projects that in the past have had no voice at all.

MRA has been responsible for several post-apartheid architectural icons on the local urban landscape, ranging from the Apartheid Museum, to the reconstruction of Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, the UJ Arts Academy itself, and the Freedom Park

Monument in Pretoria, to name but a few.

Rose focused his lecture on place in terms of its functional success, billing it "Landscape and Context". He offered insight into the making of an architecture and what pull it has on the space in an urban framework, from the inside looking out, and from the outside looking in.

In explaining recent design achievements of MRA, Rose offered insight into shifting trends in global and local architecture in terms of environmental sensitivity and historical precedents.

In designing the Apartheid Museum, MRA acknowledged Johannesburg's gold-mining history. "Making new architecture about Johannesburg was about the events and industry, mine dumps and mining headgear. The view from the Apartheid Museum is central to its design."

The Hector Pieterse Museum in Soweto was built on the site of

the uprising. Words describing the events of June 16 1976 are painted on the museum's windows, using the living landscape like a map to document its history.

Freedom Park in Pretoria, on top of Proclamation Hill, is currently underway in collaboration with artist Marco Cianfanelli. Its manifestation is light and open, governed by calibrated organisation of landmasses and metal poles in diminishing sizes, evocative of reeds.

"In traditional African practice, the reed was a conduit for life," Rose commented. The space is like an amphitheatre, a sanctuary. With a pond in the middle, it counterpoises quietly yet provocatively with the Voortrekker Monument, which stands on a neighbouring hill.

Rose spoke of MRA's competition entries for the Freedom Statue at Mandela Bay, Wits's Art Gallery and the Carlow Art Factory in Ireland. He also

explained their work on the Mokopane Interpretive Centre, the Spier Art Gallery in Stellenbosch, which enables a structure which folds into the landscape, so as not to inflict its visual presence aggressively, and the Dino Park Interpretive Centre in the Drakensberg, with a similar methodology.

MRA's work ethic is about simplicity and boldness without bombast. It is about truth to materials, and can involve the reuse of historically imbued materials that have to be archaeologically salvaged.

Rose delights in the organic nature of concrete as a design medium, an element which has earned several of MRA's works their distinct sense of often contradictory starkness.

He also sings the merits of unconventional cladding like mesh and living grass to enable a building to integrate smoothly into its environment.



Architect Jeremy Rose outside the imposing facade of the University of Johannesburg Arts Academy. (PHOTOGRAPH: EHLEN... BEKKER)

# Writers debate what's a Jewish writer

DINA KRAFT  
JERUSALEM

AMONG THOSE jostling for room in crowded conference halls in downtown Jerusalem were a Serbian novelist, a Russian short story writer, an Israeli poet and a German playwright.

They were among some 100 writers who gathered from across the world to begin a conversation on what it means to be a Jewish writer.

Polish-born writer Eva Hoffman spoke of how Jewish identity intertwines with her writing life.

"I started writing out of the Diaspora (experience) - the great rupture of emigration, the loss of my first language and finding a second language," she said during a panel discussion. "Being inside and outside... this is the classic Jewish and writer's position."

Kissufim, the Jerusalem Conference of Jewish Writers, was the first gathering of its kind in Israel. The four-day event, which ended on April 19, featured readings and roundtable discussions on topics ranging from memory and the Holocaust to Nobel winner S Y Agnon to the variety of languages in Jewish literature. It was hosted by Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, The Academic Centre for Jewish Studies and Leadership.

Central to the gathering's goals was to expose Israeli Jewish writers and Diaspora Jewish writers to each other.

At a panel discussion on what defines a Jewish writer, Israeli author Aharon Megged said using Hebrew was central to his writing experience.

"In Hebrew, every letter has meaning," he said. "It is the language of the Bible, a language with layers of history... there is something Jewish deep inside it that you cannot distance yourself from."

Melvin Jules Bukiet, a New York novelist and literary critic, asked if the glorification of Hebrew was not in some ways an attempt to disenfranchise other languages.

Prize-winning writer Maya Kaganskaya, who immigrated to

Israel from Kiev and writes exclusively in Russian, said that despite many years in Israel it was still the Russian language and its great authors with whom she connected most deeply.

Such debate was among the aims of the conference, organisers said. The idea was not that participants should agree on every topic but rather - because this was a unique encounter between Diaspora and Israeli Jewish writers - they would start debating the same themes and topics.

"There is sometimes a sense that there is a Diaspora-Israel break, that some Israelis have a very strong sense that Israel is the centre of the Jewish world and some people in the Diaspora feel very uncomfortable with that, as if it is some sort of denigration of their own lives," said Michael Kramer, a conference organiser and director of the graduate creative writing programme in Bar-Ilan University's English department.

"One of the things we were trying to do was get beyond that sense of a break," Kramer said. "We invited people to speak and read in their own languages, trying to get things translated not just in the linguistic sense, but also the larger sense to get a sense of their world translated."

Jonathan Rosen, a New York author and editor, said the conference provided important insights. "It's unusual to have a conference like this in Israel, where Jewish identity plays a different role in the cultural imagination than it does in the United States," he told JTA.

Rosen said the conference dealt with those differences but also underscored the emerging understanding among Israeli writers that there's a vibrant Diaspora, just as it allows Diaspora writers a chance to contemplate the vital role Israel plays in Jewish life.

"We all need each other," Rosen said.

Another theme that emerged was a return by some American Jewish writers to the role of religion in their lives. Rosen himself wrote a novel, "Joy Comes in the Morning", that features a woman

rabbi as its main character.

Rosen said that stood in contrast to the older generation of Jewish writers, who wrote of moving away from their religious and immigrant origins to embrace American culture, even viewing Ellis Island as the new Mount Sinai.

Now, he said, there was a "journey back toward Jewish identity and consciousness rather than self-consciousness. It is a journey that is equally heroic, fruitful and exhilarating and is even quintessentially American, because without an individual identity one cannot have an American identity."

Rosen traces the trend to the 1960s, when Jewish studies began to make inroads at American universities, the Six-Day War boosted Jewish self-confidence and genteel American anti-Semitism went into eclipse.

Nessa Rapoport, a Canadian-born memoirist and writer who now lives in New York City and long has dealt with Jewish themes, also sees Jewish writing taking a turn toward its religious roots.

"Once I felt considerable solitude as a writer in my passion for the Jewish literary tradition," she said. "Now I see an increasing number of Jewish American writers as engaged as I am by the eloquence of our shared literary inheritance."

Rapoport said she sometimes was overwhelmed by how much writing there was on Jewish themes.

"I used to be able to read most of what was published in American Jewish writing," she said. "Now I cannot possibly keep up."

The conference was an opportunity for the writers to network and begin to create a kind of community. Plans are under way for another gathering in two years.

Carolyn Hessel, head of the Jewish Book Council, was among those attending the conference. Considered among the most powerful voices in North American Jewish literature, she has been delighted by the recent surge of high-quality literary fiction produced by the younger generation.

"It's like a Renaissance of Jewish literature," she said. (JTA)



Writers Eva Hoffman, left, Jonathan Rosen, right, and Ruth Fainstein speak at Kissufim, the Jerusalem Conference of Jewish Writers, in Jerusalem, on April 18. (CREDIT: BRIAN HENDLER/JTA)



People crowd a room during a session at Kissufim (CREDIT: BRIAN HENDLER/JTA)

## TAPESTRY

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## ARTS MATTERS

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publication

**Civic Theatre, Braamfontein:** In the Nelson Mandela, Australia's "Ten Tenors", June 6-17. In the Tesson, Ben Elton's "Popcorn", until July 1. In the People's Theatre, "Babe, the Sheep-Pig" June 4 - August 11. (011) 877-6800.

**Goodman Gallery, Rosebank:** "Diary Pages", by Harold Rubin, until June 16, features an autobiographical documentary film: "A Magnificent Failure". (011) 788-1113.

**Johannesburg Art Gallery, Joubert Park:** "Dunga Manzi: Stirring Waters" Tsonga and Shangaan art from southern Africa, curated by Nessa Leibhammer, Natalie Knight and Billy Makhubele, until August 18. (011) 725-3130.

**Liberty Theatre on the Square, Sandton:** At lunchtime on June 1, Malane Hofmeyr (flute), Susan Mouton (cello) and Annika Burke (piano) play works by Mendelssohn and Martinu. On June 8, Sempre Viva: Camelia Onea (violin), Kerryn Wiesniewsky (piano) and Polina Burdokova (cello) play works by Beethoven and Shostakovich. From June 8, Alan Swerdlow directs "Some Girl(s)"; cast includes Craig Urbani. (011) 883-8606.

**Linder Auditorium, Parktown:** The Johannesburg Philharmonic's fourth week of season two features works by Malcolm Forsyth and Grieg on June 6 and 7. The soloist is Ingrid Jacoby (piano), and conductor is Conrad van Alphen. (011) 789-2733. On June 9, the Johannesburg Musical Society presents the Kerimov Trio. (011) 728-5492.

**Market, Newtown:** In the Barney Simon, Yael Farber's "Molora", an adaptation of Aeschylus's Oresteia trilogy, until June 3. In the Laager, Athol Fugard's "Victory", with Ameera Patel and Wayne van Rooyen, until July 1. (011) 832-1641.

**Montecasino, Fourways:** "Menopause the Musical" in the Main Theatre until July 22. In the Studio, "Defending the Caveman" with Alan Committie until July 1. (011) 511-1988.

**State Theatre, Pretoria:** In the Opera, Black Tie Ensemble celebrates Mario Lanza, on June 1 and 3. (012) 322-7944.

**UJ Arts Centre, Auckland Park:** In the theatre, Ian von Memerty's "The Heart is Round", until June 3. In the gallery, Sue Pam-Grant's solo exhibition, entitled "Inner Lining", June 6-27. (011) 489-2556.

# This Fugard implodes into a shallow heap of words

**Play:** *Victory* by Athol Fugard  
**Director:** Lara Foot Newton  
**Cast:** Cobus Rossouw, Ameera Patel, Wayne van Rooyen  
**Venue:** *The Laager at the Market Theatre, Newtown, Johannesburg*

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

THERE IS a special tension that pervades audiences at the opening of any new Fugard work. The memory of his earlier plays - which yielded some of the greatest moments in contemporary world theatre - entitles one to expect something very special.

"Victory" opens with a vintage Fugard setting: Freddie and Victoria, two coloured township youngsters, have broken into the house of Lionel Benson, a local white, elderly widower and former schoolteacher.

Victoria's mother - now also dead - was the domestic servant for Benson and his wife, and became a close friend and confidante of the couple. As a result, Benson has always remained very protective towards Victoria, for whom he retains almost avuncular affection.

The two youngsters, ransacking the old man's library by candlelight and laying waste to his treas-

ured volumes, are hardly toughened criminals. Giggling, gauche and incompetent, they are high both on liquor and on the gleeful anticipation of finding "the money", a store of cash which Victoria insists is stashed somewhere in this house - which, after all, is one she knows well.

No such avidity as was the case in "Hello and Goodbye" exists. Instead, the couple resort to juvenile bickering about how they will spend the cash (should they go to Cape Town, to join up with professional gangsters, like the Hard Livings?).

Freddie - still too callow to be a real hoodlum - alternates between bravado and bullying his insecure girlfriend. She, for her part, is racked with guilt by the act of robbing an old man who is her benefactor, as well as having deviated so badly from her mother's standards of integrity.

So when Benson surprises his bungling housebreakers in mid-robbery, the ensuing confrontation involves many complex, multi-layered responses.

It sounds like an ideal springboard for a life-altering flight into the truths which few other playwrights can traverse as deftly as Fugard. But, alas - this is a vehicle

which simply fails to achieve either height or depth. Instead, it implodes into a small, shallow heap of words, lacking cohesion and conceptual clarity.

The fault certainly does not lie with Newton, whose direction has added every possible dimension to a play with these fault lines. Nor can it fairly be laid at the door of the cast, although on press night their interactions were slow, stilted and always a beat too late to ring true.

Rossouw, as Benson, delivers a performance at once poignant and dignified, but there is only so much even an accomplished actor can draw out of a hollow character.

Caught between moralising and maudering, Benson's attempt to locate the spark of human decency in his assailants - using, of all things, Tolstoy as a divining rod - is brave, and even beautiful, but utterly ineffectual.

Wayne van Rooyen, as Freddie, seems unsure of whether to play his character for laughs, or for something more menacing. When the confrontation ends in tragedy, his hasty decamping from the scene - which might have offered a dramatic insight into his innate cowardice - is botched by



**Cobus Rossouw (Benson) and Wayne van Rooyen (Freddie).**

grotesquely inappropriate levity.

Ameera Patel, as Victoria, is the least powerful of the cast - although her character demands far more energy and force. Too sweet and compliant to portray the coarseness of an embittered young woman, she fails to move us.

The same is true of the other two characters. In short: we simply don't believe them.

In her programme notes, Newton mentions - almost as an apologia - that Fugard has himself been a crime victim, and based "Victory" on that experience. It explains, to some degree, his need to explore a situation in which all loyalties and assumptions (in both the predator and the prey) are ambushed, cauterised and corrupted by fear. But it does not explain why, even from a non-political, wholly humanistic approach, the play falls flat.

Any reviewer would cringe at having to slate a work by Athol Fugard - but the sad fact is that, this time, the emperor is naked.

"Victory" runs until July 1. Bookings at Computicket or at the Market Theatre, tel: (011) 832-1641.

## Akeelah and the bee

**Cast:** Keke Palmer, Curtis Armstrong, Laurence Fishburne, Angela Bassett  
**Director:** David Atchison



**FELDMAN ON FILM**  
Peter Feldman

Akeelah Anderson, played by delightful newcomer Keke Palmer, is an 11-year-old South Los Angeles student with a knack for spelling. But she is afraid to stand out as a "brainiac".

Her principal (Curtis Armstrong), however, encourages her to enter a spelling competition. She is then coached by a former university professor, Joshua Larabee (Laurence Fishburne), who also teaches her some valuable lessons about life.

Humour and drama, and an excellent cast, makes this an enchanting little film.

## Next

**Cast:** Nicolas Cage, Julianne Moore, Jessica Biel  
**Director:** Lee Tamahori

Nicolas Cage is not having a good hair day. The director has saddled the man with an unbecoming hair piece.

But there are other problems, too. His character, Cris Johnson, is a man with a freaky gift. He can see into the future (but only for a maximum of two minutes at a time) and knows exactly what is going to happen within that time frame.

He can duck a speeding bullet, something he is frequently called upon to do here, and knows exactly when a slot machine will pay out.

Inspired by a Philip K Dick story, *Next* starts out with serious intent, but soon degenerates into mild farce under Lee Tamahori's direction. The rules keep changing and one feels horribly cheated at the end.

An anomaly, though, is that when it comes to the life of the attractive Liz (Jessica Biel), Cris can see more than two minutes ahead into her life. He has never met her, but knows their fate is entwined. It's never explained why he can peer so far into Liz's future, a plot device without which the rest of the story cannot unfold.

Meanwhile, FBI agent Callie Ferris (Julianne Moore) is tracking Cris. She needs his help to stop a terrorist about to detonate a nuclear bomb.

*Next* starts off with intriguing possibilities but fails to deliver as the story hits murky territory from which it never emerges.

## Driving lessons

**Cast:** Rupert Grint, Julie Walters, Laura Linney  
**Director:** Jeremy Brock

Rupert Grint, of "Harry Potter" fame has certainly grown up. In this wacky comedy he plays Ben, a painfully shy teenager who is brought out of his shell by an eccentric, retired actress Evie (Julie Walters).

He drinks alcohol, beds a young woman and drives a car without a licence. He has an over-bearing mother (Laura Linney) which accounts for his state of mind. But over-bearing Evie changes all that in a series of crass and often comic incidents that help extend Ben's narrow boundaries.

The pace is laboured at times and the characters forced, but it offers some isolated moments of comic relief.

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## LETTERS

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

**Disclaimer**

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

**Guidelines for letters**

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

## Beth Din doesn't set kosher prices

ALBERT GLASS, in his letter (*Jewish Report* May 25 on kosher prices) writes that "it would not be out of place for those who decide on prices, both at the Beth Din and the suppliers, to 'come clean' with the pricing structures".

There is a great misperception that the Beth Din is involved in the setting of prices. This is simply not the case.

The Beth Din, which is administered by the UOS, is not a business, it is a regulatory body. What the Beth Din does set, however, are the standards of kashrut which, when adhered to, understandably will add to the cost of the final product.

While the UOS is a non-profit organisation, it is also a non-loss organisation, and charges for the services which it provides to our community, whether a shechita fee for the slaughter of oxen and chickens, or a licence fee for the certification of kosher establishments.

These fees, while no doubt contributing

in small part to the final cost to the consumer, can in no way be said to be the only factors which account for the excess price over similar non-kosher products.

And there is no secrecy either. I was recently contacted by a reporter from the *Jewish Report* and I gave her full disclosure, not only of what we charge, but also details of what these funds are applied to, as well as other trends and statistics. It is not necessary to repeat them here, as I am sure they will be disclosed in her article.

The kashrut division of the UOS is a world class service provider; our mission is simple: to ensure that our community have the greatest possible selection of kosher products and services, at the highest standards of kashrut. We are not the enemy.

**Darren Sevitz**  
Executive Director  
Union of Orthodox Synagogues

## On the subject of George Soros

I WASN'T convinced by Mr Justice Dennis Davis's reply to my letter about George Soros.

Davis chose to leave out Soros's words, "I am not a Zionist", because it did not suit the

tenor of his argument, and as a result, was a blatant manipulation of a quotation.

**Anthony Posner**  
Johannesburg

## A library membership drive needed

SHELLEY ELK'S fine article "Fate of the Beyachad Library in the balance" in the latest *Jewish Report*, refers.

We don't need a consultant to advise us: we need a membership drive!

We suggest *Jewish Report* spearheads just that, under the stewardship/patronage of Mr Gerald Leissner, chairman of Beyachad.

We wish to become members. Kindly

advise us to whom a cheque for R120 should be made, and to which address it should be sent.

Let us act positively and decisively to keep this important and wonderful national Jewish treasure and heritage open, and available to all.

**Rose and Leslie Herring**  
Port Elizabeth

## Once again, the ubiquitous Ronnie...

WE SHOULD move beyond the debate as to whether (Intelligence Minister) Ronnie Kasrils is an anti-Semite, to observe merely that his actions and words are indistinguishable from that of a clever anti-Semite.

He always attributes the very worst motives to Jews, and exculpates or denies the most outrageous acts of the enemies of the Jews.

The torrent of explicit genocidal threats from Hamas and Iran, leave him totally unmoved, but he is quick to taint Israel with Nazi analogies.

His many historical errors all follow the same trend: He dismisses the Nazi collaborating Mufti of Jerusalem as an "obscure Palestinian", which is like writing out DF Malan from the history of apartheid.

He paints Jews as the aggressors in 1948 when Jamal Hussein of the Arab Higher Committee told the UN Security Council in April that year that: "We have never concealed the fact that we began the fighting."

As Jews in South Africa we should be very concerned that Kasrils has said that his entry into the Israel debate was "on the instructions" of his party. He clearly serves the purpose of deflecting accusations of anti-

Semitism while promoting a view of the conflict at odds with officially espoused government policy but closer to the real views of those in power.

No other community is subject to such a constant torrent of abuse from a Cabinet minister who is given total leeway to speak outside his portfolio and evade the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility.

Why does Kasrils feel stirred to contradict government policy on the Middle East but not speak against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, Darfur, Syria or Iran?

The Jewish communal leadership response to Kasrils has been abysmal. Government needs to be told very firmly that we object to his deployment as a battering ram against us.

He should be made to stick to his portfolio, or else we must draw the conclusion that we do not have equal status with other communities in South Africa because everything he does has official approval.

**Jack Bloom**  
Johannesburg

## Don't 'personalise' defence of Israel

ON MAY 29 Ronnie Kasrils was a guest on Radio 702/567 Cape Talk late night show. To the credit of the presenter he was more challenging than we are used to from other talk show hosts.

Three Jewish callers who were either members or pro-Not in My Name, were suitably articulate. However, the pro-Israel response was discouraging to say the least.

I would urge advocates for Israel not to personalise their remarks as it gives guests such as Kasrils the perfect opportunity to accuse all of his Jewish critics of this, and for him always to be branded as a traitorous self-hating Jew, and non-Jews of always being anti-Semitic.

Attacking Kasrils personally is not an intelligent response to the demonising of Israel. Both sides have their own "truth" and this is to be expected. So many ignorant accusations grossly misrepresenting the conflict are made that anyone with a modicum of knowledge is able to refute and focus on facts, to properly challenge the hypocrisy and double standards, and should not produce emotional outbursts over the radio.

This is self-defeating as it allows the guest to avoid the real issues. The influence of Kasrils is minuscule in terms of the Israeli government and people, so, unless you are well-equipped it is better

to ignore him, however galling it might be, rather than give him more ammunition to continue his vendetta.

The SAJBD is able to judge whether his actions are anathema vis-à-vis local Jewish interests and the political arena, and to act accordingly, as it does.

However, over the next few months we all need to be prepared for an overheating of anti-Israel noise over the media and elsewhere, in line with a worldwide initiative called the 60/40 Campaign which encompasses the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe), 60 years since the founding of the state of Israel and 40 years since the Six Day War.

Zionism will be even more under siege. This is a propaganda war.

Palestinians are suffering and Israelis are painted in black and white terms to be the oppressors and occupiers and sole agents for Palestinian suffering.

Our personal responses over the radio and in the electronic and print media, to be effective, should reflect, as do the proponents for Palestinians, not only our passion and rightness we hold for our cause, but also informed, well-reasoned and logical exposure of the fallacies and myths perpetrated against Israel.

**Stephen Paul**  
Three Anchor Bay  
Cape Town

## More 'intelligence' is needed

I FEEL obliged to reply to the recent statement of our Minister of Intelligence Ronnie Kasrils.

As minister of intelligence, he should be aware of basic information about Israel - this he either sadly lacks or alternatively, towards which he is turning a wilful blind eye.

Let me apprise him of the following facts:

1) In a search for peace Israel voluntarily, and using force, evacuated ALL the Israeli settlers from the Gaza area. This split the nation - but the settlements no longer exist.

I must admit that I was in favour of this evacuation at the time.

Instead of making use of thriving agricultural areas, which could have both helped feed, and provide employment to Palestinians, the farms were allowed to rot away.

The Hamas-led Palestinian government commenced firing Qassam rockets into Israel.

2) Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, over 1 500 rockets have been fired into Israel, causing death, injury and damage.

3) For some time Israel resisted the call for a military incursion to put an end to these deadly rockets.

4) Only very recently, has the Israeli air

force retaliated with strikes targeted at Qassam launching sites and Hamas terror operatives.

5) Instead of saying: "It is a disgrace for a government calling itself democratic to behave in this way," Kasrils should apprise himself of the facts.

6) Kasrils ignores the internecine fighting between Hamas and Fatah; more Palestinians have been killed by Palestinians this month, than Palestinian terror operatives killed by Israelis.

7) Last Tuesday alone 24 rockets hit Israel; the killed and wounded exceeded 30.

8) If Kasrils is really interested in peace between Israel and Palestine, he should help, not hinder current negotiations between Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister and Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president.

9) If Kasrils, instead of lounging comfortably at home, and being a large armchair critic, really wanted to inform himself of the true situation, I would suggest that he spends two months of real intelligence gathering - one week with his friends in the Palestinian areas and one month visiting Israel.

I feel sure that his sister would be happy for him to live in her home there (even if he wears his keffiyah).

**Sydney Chaskalson**  
Johannesburg

## SA Jewish Report was welcomed

THE HEADLINE to the article in last week's issue ("Not warmest welcome for SAJR") on page 16 by Moira Schneider, in which she reported on the Palestinian conference in Cape Town, may have given the impression that the organisers were not

welcoming.

However, Schneider feels that this did not reflect her experience in which, aside from one individual, the general attitude towards her on the part of the organisers and others was welcoming.

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## COMMUNITY COLUMNS



## ABOVE BOARD

Michael Bagraim,  
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

## Planning on business lines for survival

tion is the Distributions committee. Comprising leading accountants, this body examines the budgets submitted by all beneficiary bodies of the United Jewish Campaign (including the SAJBD) to assess how they have been running, whether fiscal discipline has been maintained, what their future prospects are and how they might cut costs.

By and large, Jewish organisations in Cape Town have co-operated whole-heartedly with the above bodies, thereby helping ensure their own smooth running and providing the necessary assurance to donors that their contributions are being put to optimum use.

Given the greater size and diversity of the Jewish community in Johannesburg, establishing a Priorities Board or Distributions committee along Cape Town lines might not be feasible. Nevertheless, the principle of fiscal discipline is also being taken very seriously by the city's leading Jewish organisations.

Most of the main welfare organisations now fall under the Chevrah Kadisha's umbrella, and the latter's fine reputation when it comes to the responsible discharge of its multifaceted obligations, is well deserved. We also see how our day schools, after so many years of existing on the brink, are now at last running on a firm financial basis, as are the various organisations within the Beyachad structure.

The smaller Jewish communities around the country - Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, East London and Bloemfontein - have all adapted sensibly to their respective situations, rationalising where necessary and increasing co-operation with one another.

It is encouraging so see that many religious congregations in numerical decline have had the foresight to relocate to smaller premises rather than remaining in their original buildings to the bitter end. The Benoni, Krugersdorp, Port Elizabeth, Klerksdorp and Emmarentia congregations are among those who have given themselves an extended lease of life through making additional funds available to ensure their future continuity.



FED FOCUS  
Avrom Krengel  
Chairman

A column of the South African Zionist Federation

## The UN African Meeting on Palestine

All the delegates who spoke - and it was mainly the African and Arab/Islamic ones - called only on Israel to work towards peace through the medium of land for peace.

It was Israel who was exhorted to return to the 1967 borders and to adhere to the conditions set by the 2002 Saudi Arabia peace plan. It was demanded of Israel that she allow the Palestinians self-determination, independence and sovereignty and that she stop attacking civilians in the Palestinian territories.

And it was Israel who was accused of having destroyed the Palestinian areas and of instituting state terrorism.

This was an astonishing and incredibly one-sided litany of accusations against Israel in a conflict in which the Palestinians and the terrorist Hamas government had seemingly no role to play other than to be unwitting victims beaten into submission by the IDF.

Although only a few media representatives were there, some of them evinced surprise at the fact that a UN conference could be as blatantly and openly biased as this one was.

The Palestinians were lauded for being "peace-loving", "willing to negotiate", "victims" with no recourse to their rights. The rocket attacks launched from Gaza and the Hezbollah enclaves were ignored or referred to as legitimate self-defence and while the suffering of the ordinary Palestinians was stridently proclaimed, that of the hundreds of thousands of Israelis living in daily fear for their lives was alluded to only once, and in passing, by the speaker who delivered the message from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

The conference was chilling, an eye-opener (although only one) among many such, combining the very worst elements of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in a tirade of unconcealed hatred towards Israel and her people. There's a long road ahead to travel.

## CROSSWORD No 27

LEAH SIMON

### ACROSS:

- Dismiss the bright spark! (4)
- Garment for a period when horses are trained in poise (8)
- The place is something to behold, we hear (4)
- Not quite muttering, but still saying something (8)
- Make a twit of oneself on a date! (5, 2, 5)
- Arranges for instructions (6)
- Give thanks to Italians (6)
- Shall we call it a day? (6, 1, 5)
- Craved water in third set (8)
- Behold - set out for company symbol! (4)
- One young leader lasted, somehow - and consistently (8)
- Yearn to lose a point - and find him (4)

### DOWN:

- Runny eggs? (4, 4)
- Slept it off after stopping work (7)
- Confirm, if a try is ordered (6)
- What one pays at a mountain lodge? (5, 5)
- I get bail, having an excuse (5)
- Thus ogre is confused in Rome (4)
- I tried less, somehow, being germ-free (10)
- Lower one's spine - and stop arguing (8)
- Study for those feeling a bit cagey? (7)
- Will confused Al ever expose it? (6)

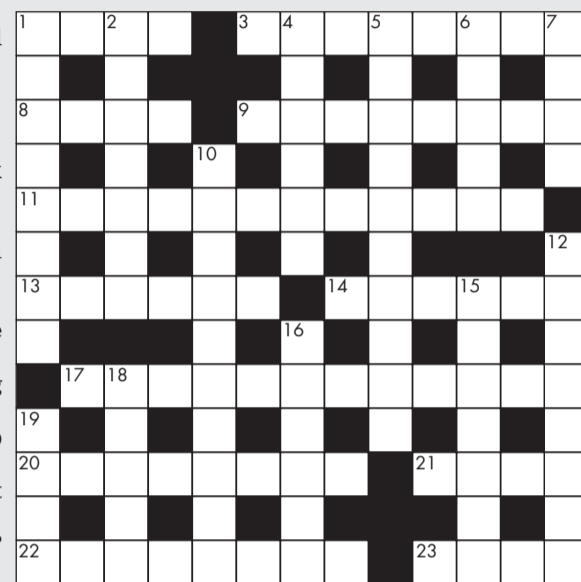
18. Pen is correct, we hear (5)

19. — Redding, 1960s American soul singer (4)

### SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 26

ACROSS: 1. Wipe; 3. Remanded; 8. Ling; 9. Epidural; 11. Writer's block; 13. Shears; 14. Esther; 17. The mad hatter; 20. Thickest; 21. Site; 22. Mistreat; 23. Felt.

DOWN: 1. Wild West; 2. Pensive; 4. Expose; 5. Andalusian; 6. Doric; 7. Dull; 10. Merrymaker; 12. Prurient; 15. Hittite; 16. Odessa; 18. Hails; 19. Stem.



## THE BRIDGE LOUNGE by Jeff Sapire

### Column 23

THE SOUTH African Championships are taking place this week at the Links in Johannesburg.

Here's a most unusual hand from the Teams event.

Nine card suits are not easy to deal with. Firstly, most of us have not had much experience with them, and one is never quite sure how to even start the bidding.

One option that comes to mind is 5D of course. A 9 card suit can always do that, but the question is whether the hand is a bit too strong. Partner will never know that the hand is quite this good.

One top player opened 6D! Some bid! She reckoned that on a good day it might make, and if not, perhaps the opponents had a big contract on, so perhaps it would shut them out.

Another expert opened 4NT, which is a variation of Blackwood which asks for SPECIFIC aces. The replies are 5C = no ace, and bidding 5D/5H/5S shows that ace. 6C shows the ace of clubs, and 5NT shows 2 aces.

The problem with this choice is that a response of 5H, showing the HA, puts you in slam off 2 cashing aces by the opponents.

I like the sequence above. 2D was strong, and 2H was a natural positive. East now made the key bid of jumping to 4D, to show a solid suit and asking partner to cue bid. The idea is that when there is a forcing auction, after 2D-2H, jumps must show solid suits.

East dealer, NS vul  
NORTH  
♠ QJ1092  
♥ A94  
♦ J7  
♣ J64

WEST  
♠ K7  
♥ K876532  
♦ 10  
♣ A83

EAST  
♠ 5  
♥ -  
♦ AKQ965432  
♣ K109

SOUTH  
♠ A8643  
♥ QJ10  
♦ 8  
♣ Q752

West	North	East	South
2H	Pass	2D	Pass
4H	Pass	4D	Pass
5C	Pass	4S	Pass
		6D	All pass

Opening lead: SA

This partnership was playing that they cue bid 1st or 2nd round controls, so West showed something in hearts, and East a control in spades. West continued by showing a club control, and East decided that it was time to just blast 6D.

When you have voids and singletons it's impossible to know exactly who has what, so East gave up on a possible grand slam and settled for the practical small slam.

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## YOUTH TALK

Lara Greenberg jewishreport@yahoo.com

## Bikkurim for the Jewish needy



The Grade R children at Yeshiva Pre-School, in Johannesburg on May 22, during Shavuot celebrations, bring their Bikkurim in a procession to Yerushalayim, with an ox leading the way. They give their Bikkurim to the Kohanim. The food the children brought, will be given to Yad Aharon, an organisation that helps the needy in the community. In the picture: Back row: Benhamin Eidelman, Teegan Gottlieb, Avadya Moritz. Front: Ben Marks, Alon Benbenishti (Photo: Ilan Ossendryver)

## SAUJS very active on Wits campus

**BENJI SHULMAN**  
POLITICAL OFFICER SAUJS WITS

IT HAS been a busy start to the year for SAUJS, this has been especially so for the political committee. The most pressing concern has been the continuing vociferousness of the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC).

They continue to make use of the Wits campus as a platform for comparisons between Israel and apartheid and as a means to spread inflammatory, racist publications.

In response to this SAUJS has successfully engaged the Wits Management and managed to ensure that the inflammatory *Palestinian Times* newspaper was removed and banned from campus. In addition to this SAUJS ran a campaign especially for human rights day, highlighting Israel's impressive record with regards to media freedom and religious tolerance.

It also made a publication of its own called *Truth in the Middle East* showing how characters such as Mickey Mouse are

being used to teach hatred to children as well as highlighting some of the other hate mongering behaviour of Palestinian leaders.

In other events SAUJS in conjunction with the Darfur Awareness Committee hosted an exhibition about the genocide in that country.

It also engaged with the PSC at a live debate held at St Johns, where most agreed the speakers were well prepared and gave an honest and effective, factually based view of the Middle East situation. They were ably backed up by a good showing of SAUJS members who were in attendance at the event.

The current political committee has put together a number of new initiatives and will start to implement them as the year progresses. These include an extensive media campaign to encourage South Africans to view Israel in a more positive light.

A thank you goes to the Jewish Board of Deputies which has been enormously helpful, we look forward to working with you in the future.

## Grandparents' Shavuot morning at KDVP

**DENISE SUTTNER**

A WONDERFUL morning was enjoyed by grandparents at King David Pre-Primary School Victory Park when their grandchildren gave them a lot of naches performing for them

with beautiful Shavuot songs and dances.

They all agreed that this was the best morning they had had in a long time.

Seen here is granny Irene Salomon with her grandson Daniel Fluxman.



## WHAT'S ON

Lara Greenberg jewishreport@yahoo.com

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

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

- The Jewish National Fund (JNF) Choir, Beyachad, 2 Elray St, Raedene. Contact Crystal Kaplan. 083-376-5999.
- The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society (JWBS) - Sandringham Gardens, 85 George Avenue Sandringham 2192. Contact Carolyn Sabbagh. (011) 485-5232.
- The Jewish Outlook Team. Contact Ryan Cane, Support line: 27 76 215 8600; e-mail info@jewishoutlook.org.za; website http://www.jewishoutlook.org.za
- Nechama Bereavement Counselling Centre - Room A304, 3rd Floor, hospital wing, Sandringham Gardens, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham, 2192. Contact (011) 640-1322.
- New Friendship Ladies Group - A group for single women - contact Lucille (011) 719 5226 (H) or 082-927-5786.
- ORT South Africa - 44 Central Street, Cnr 10th Ave, Houghton. Contact (011) 728-7154.
- Partners for Life - Discreet Jewish introductions. Contact (011) 887-2073.
- Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre (RCHCC) and Great Park Shul, Johannesburg. Contact Hazel, (011) 728-8088 or Rene Sidley (011) 728-8378. Cost usually R50, including refreshments.
- Second Innings, Johannesburg - Jewish Community Services - Donald Gordon Centre, 85 George Avenue Sandringham. Contact Grecia Gabriel, (011) 532-9616.
- The Simcha Friendship and Cultural Circle (SFCC), Johannesburg - Sandton Shul. Contact Sylvia Shull, (011) 783-5600.
- The United Sisterhood, 38 Oxford Road Parktown. Contact Helen (011) 646-2409.
- South African Zionist Federation (SAZF), Johannesburg - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Contact Froma, (011) 645-2505.
- South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Jhb) - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Contact (011) 645-2500.
- United Zionist Luncheon Club (UZLC), Johannesburg - Our Parents Home. Contact Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.
- Union of Jewish Women (UJW), Johannesburg - 1 Oak Street Houghton. Contact (011) 648-1053. Cost R10 for the Friendship Luncheon Club.
- WIZO Johannesburg - Beyachad, 2 Elray Street Raedene. Contact Joyce Chodos (011) 645-2548 or Sandy Kramer (011) 645-2515.
- Bikkur Cholim - Jewish Society for Visiting the Sick, 7A Chester Road, Greenside East, Johannesburg. Joy Gafin (011) 447-6689.

Please note that all contact and venue details can be found in the key.

**Today, Friday (June 1)**

- **UZLC** is hosting Michael Sieff, national director, ORT SA, speaking on "Jewish Life in Latin America (eg. Cuba and Venezuela).
- **Jewish Women's Benevolent Society** is hosting a book sale at Click's Rosebank from 09:00 until 15:00. Contact (011) 485-5232.

**Sunday (June 3)**

- **Second Innings** is hosting Larry Benjamin at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, speaking on "Where is the Middle East going - Quo Vadis?" from 10:00.
- **Chief Rabbi's weekly address** to the community at 20:00 on Radio 2000 (99.7 - 100.2 FM).
- **Curiosity Collectors market** presents Cotlands Petticoat Lane fleamarket at Rosebank Mews from 09:00 until 15:00. Contact Edna or Hylton Segal on 082-572-9701.

- **Jaffa** is hosting a morning market from 09:00 to 12:00 at Jaffa Old Age home, 42 Mackie Street, Bailey's Muckleneuk, Pretoria. Contact (012) 346-2006.

**Monday (June 4)**

- **Israel Philately Society** is meeting in the boardroom of Waverley Shul from 19:30 to display the last 12 months' new issues and a quiz. Contact Selwyn Uria (011) 786-7692.

- **UJW Johannesburg** is hosting Antony Altbeker

speaking on "The dirty work of democracy - policing in South Africa: stories from the stories" at 09:30.

- **Caje** is hosting: 19:45 TO 20:30 - Kabbalah of the Alef Bet by Rabbi Yossy Goldman; or, The Living Torah by Rabbi Sholem Bacher. 20:30 - The Great Debate: Chabad-Lubavitch: Chassidism by Rabbi Levy Wineberg and Rabbi Michael Katz. At Sydenham-Highlands North Shul. Contact (011) 640-5021.

**Tuesday (June 5)**

- **WIZO Women Inspired** are hosting Gayle Landau, dietician at the Donald Gordon Hospital, to speak on "Healthy eating" at 09:30. For details phone Joceline 082-441-4375 or Isarae 083-375-1212.

- **RCHCC** in association with The Viktor Frankl Institute of SA presents a series of talks by a variety of experts in the field of logotherapy and existential analysis: "What is life expecting of us?" They will be hosting Dr Teria Shantall speaking on "Logotherapy: a case for personal, national and global healing" and Dr Kanda speaking on "Personal journey to finding meaning and the role of Logotherapy in work" at 07:30. Cost R130 and R95 for students and pensioners.

**Wednesday (June 6)**

- **SFCC** is hosting a visit to Ngwenya Glass Village. Transport cost R35.

- **RCHCC** in association with The Viktor Frankl Institute of SA presents a series of talks by a variety of experts in the field of logotherapy and existential analysis, "What is life expecting of us?" From 19:30. Cost R130 and R95 for students and pensioners.

- **UJW Johannesburg** is hosting Digby Ricci speaking on "Stardom - past and present".

**Friday (June 8)**

- **UZLC** is hosting Wendy Kahn, national director, SAJBD, speaking on "Boardwalk".

**Sunday (June 10)**

- **Second Innings** is hosting Rabbi Gidon Fox at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge Golden Acres speaking on "Live and let die - euthanasia active and passive" from 10:00.

- **Chief Rabbi's** weekly address to the community at 20:00 on Radio 2000 (99.7 - 100.2 FM).

- **Bikkur Cholim** is hosting its Biennial General Meeting at the Bikkur Cholim offices - Greenside Hebrew Congregation, 7A Chester Road, Greenside from 11:00. Contact Joy on (011) 447-6689.

- **Big Band Music Appreciation Society** will meet to enjoy audio and visual material at St Johns College in the Jeffrey Auditorium, St David's Rd, Lower Houghton, 14:15. Contact Dave (011) 885-3525 or Barney (011) 615-3412 for further information.

**Monday (June 11)**

- **UJW Johannesburg** is hosting Yossi Torfstein, deputy head of mission at the Embassy of Israel, speaking on "Current affairs in Israel" at 09:30.

- **Caje** is hosting: 19:45 TO 20:30 - Kabbalah of the Alef Bet by Rabbi Yossy Goldman; or, The Living Torah by Rabbi Sholem Bacher. 20:30 - The Great Debate: Ohr Somayach: Litvish by Rabbi Larry Shein and Rabbi Shmuel Moffson. At Sydenham-Highlands North Shul. Contact (011) 640-5021.

**Tuesday (June 12)**

- **WIZO Fortnightly Forum** is hosting Aidel Kazilsky on "Kabbala and sexuality" at 09:30.

- **Second Innings Men's Group**, "The not-out club" is hosting Dr Bernard Fanaroff speaking on "Heaven's above - astronomy in South Africa" from 14:30 at Our Parents Home. Ladies welcome. Contact Lionel on (011) 728-5225.

- **RCHCC** is hosting a book launch and lecture at 19:30 by Professor Charles van Onselen on his latest book, "The Fox and the Flies". Cost R50.

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Our organisation is looking for a senior IT Technician. Candidates must have a minimum of 5 years working experience. They must have completed a MMCSE. Linux would be an advantage. They must have a valid drivers license. The ideal incumbent must be a peoples person and able to deliver in a demanding environment.

Interested candidates to forward a comprehensive c.v. to hr@jhbchev.co.za, fax 0866327774 or attention HR Department, Private Bag X1, Sandringham 2131

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## Project Supervisor

Our organisation requires a Project Supervisor. This person must have a good knowledge of the building industry, and must be experienced in general maintenance, plumbing and electrical work. Attention to detail is a key requirement of this position. Only candidates with a minimum of 5 years experience need apply for this position. The incumbent must be computer literate. Own transport essential.

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### COMMUNITY NOTICE

**KASHRUT ALERT**  
McCain Young and Tender Broccoli Florets bears an unauthorised Beth Din logo and is NOT kosher. McCain have apologised for the error and have taken corrective action.

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## Deputy Principal School for Jewish Children with Special Educational Needs

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# Sack does well in SA Iron Man

JACK MILNER

MACCABI GAMES 2005 gold medallist Mark Sack, performed superbly in the recent South African Iron Man Triathlon in Port Elizabeth by finishing 41st overall in a field of 1 600 participants.

The event took place in very challenging conditions. The 3,8km sea swim off Hobie Beach in strong winds, meant the water was rough with a strong current, followed by a 180km bicycle ride and a 42,2km run. Sack completed the distance in 10 hours 11 min.

Since the Maccabiah, 35-year-old Sack ran his first Comrades last year in seven hours and four minutes, finishing 225 overall out of 12 000 and walking off with a silver medal. He also achieved a personal best marathon time of two hours, 49 minutes at the Jackie Gibson Marathon last year, finishing 10th overall.

Sack also raced the Prestige Ultra-Marathon at the Vaal in February, finishing sixth overall with the third fastest time on the day. With results of 12th and 10th overall in the first and third Johannesburg Triathlon Series respec-

tively, Sack has proved that by limiting racing and focusing on specific events, one can achieve one's goals.

His elder brother, Clive, the Maccabiah silver medallist, has been selected for the first time to represent South Africa at the World Championships in Hamburg, Germany. He earned his place after an excellent race at the SA Championships at Langebaan. At the Ultra Prestige Triathlon - 1,9km swim, 90km cycle and 21km run - Clive finished eighth in his age group.

Mark and 37-year-old Clive are competing in the same age group this year (35 to 39) with excellent results.

A newcomer to triathlons, 25-year-old Ian Schwabsky from Pretoria, completed his first triathlon, the Prestige Ultra, in a respectable 23rd position in the 25-to-29 age group. He followed that up with a wonderful Iron Man in Port Elizabeth, completing the course in 12 hours, 52 minutes. Schwabsky looks like a fine prospect for the future.

In the inaugural Sibaya Durban Ultra Triathlon which took place in Umdloti this weekend, the one-mile swim in rough seas was off the Umdloti beach, the 60km

cycle on the rolling hills of the area, finishing with a 16km run on sandy and stony terrain in the cane fields around the Sibaya Casino north of Umhlanga.

In the heat of the day, Marc Price finished 18th overall in a time of three hours, four minutes and 26 seconds.

Following his disappointing SA Iron Man Triathlon where he pulled out of the race after 65km of the cycle event due to a second puncture in five kilometres, this was some encouragement for Price as he prepares for the World Championships in August.

In the same race Schwabsky completed the course in 3:42,40, finishing 57th overall. Basil Kletz finished third in the over-50 category, completing the course in 3:54,53.

Jonathan and David Boyer, sons of Comrades veteran and Wits first rugby team centre of years gone by, Steven, had hopes this season of some triathlon participation. However, an incident early one morning while cycling when they were hit by a car, resulting in shoulder surgery for David, highlighted the dangers of cycling.

They will be out enjoying their first full triathlon season later this year.



Mark Sack on the cycle ride at the recent South African Iron Man Triathlon in Port Elizabeth.

# Shaun claims bronze at World Cup event

JACK MILNER

SOUTH AFRICAN canoeist Shaun Rubenstein's Olympic prospects took a giant leap when he won a bronze medal in a World Cup event in Szged, Hungary.

The country's leading canoeist and current World Marathon champion finished third in the 500m K1 race to Canadian Adam van Koevenden with Marek Twadorski of Poland, last year's world champion, well beaten in fifth position.

"This is the first medal I have had in an Olympic discipline sprint event," said Shaun, whose major focus is to qualify for next year's Beijing Games.

"Achieving a podium finish is really exciting and motivating, but I am delighted with the way that I have been racing and the consistency of my performances.

"Rami Zur of the US, 500m K1 bronze medallist two weeks ago in Croatia, was in the lane next to me and I knew that if I stayed in contact with him and put in a really strong challenge in the last 100m, I would be in with a medal chance."

Van Koevenden won easily, in a time of one minute, 41,158 seconds with Swede Anders Gustafsson 1,248 seconds further back. Rubenstein was right on his haunches, though, completing the course in 1:42,616.

The World Cup in Hungary was the biggest of the European events with 52 countries participating. While Shaun could only manage fourth place in the 1000m K1, his time of three minutes, 28 seconds was



Shaun Rubenstein continued his build-up to next year's Olympic Games by winning a bronze medal at the World Cup canoeing event in Szged, Hungary.

the fastest time ever achieved by a South African paddler

"That was a really good race. Not only was it my fastest time, but I missed out on winning a bronze medal by 0,1 seconds from Tim Brabants, 2006 European champion and World Championship silver medallist," said the South African.

Earlier in the month, Shaun participated in another World Cup event at Zagreb in Croatia. In the 1000m K1 he finished fourth, narrowly missing out on a medal by just less than half a second from Brabants who finished third. In the 500m K1 Shaun finished fifth overall in a very close race.

Shaun will next be in action this weekend at another World Cup tournament in France. The World Championships takes place in Duisberg, Germany, from August 8 to 12.

# Young Jaryd strikes gold


MICHAEL BAGRAIM

A YOUNG learner, Jaryd Cohen at Herzlia Middle School, Cape Town, came first in the Dolphin Boys Section (under-14) at the 2007 South African Championships in slalom waterskiing (gold medal), which were held at


Thornlea Dam in KwaZulu-Natal, recently.

Since starting skiing competitively in January this year, he has also won the Western Province Championships, the Mpumalanga Championships, and the KwaZulu-Natal Championships.

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