

CAPE JEWISH CHRONICLE

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MAY 2021

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Fire at our doorstep

On 18 April, a wind-free and unseasonably hot Sunday morning, a fire started on the open land between Phillip Kgosana Drive and Rhodes Memorial.

“When the fire started at hospital bend, it spread exceptionally quickly even before the wind came up. From the rate it was spreading, everyone knew it would turn into a big fire. There was also a lot of fuel. It hadn’t rained in at least three weeks, so you can imagine how dry all that bush was.” — Jacques Weber, *JWI NEWS*

“I received a phone call from my friend and colleague, Tanya Barben, virtually in tears. UCT was going up in flames. The Jagger Library that suffered the worst damage contained UCT’s Special Collections, including the huge archival collection of her parents, banned and exiled political activists Professor Jack and Ray Simons. One of the flagship collections, it contained the history of the ANC and much more. It also contained the Rare Books collection that Tanya had built up over 22 years. I had worked at UCT Libraries and the Kaplan Centre for 31 years as the Jewish Studies Librarian. The Jewish Studies collection was part of the African Studies Division now known as Special Collections, so I was intimately involved with the library.

I was particularly concerned about the Morris Alexander collection that contains records of the Cape Jewish Philanthropic Society established in 1859, as well as two items that I sent over to Special Collections two years ago. These were the remnants of two of the earliest surviving South African Yiddish newspapers, *Der Kriegstaphet — The War Dispatch*, published daily for three months in 1899 during the Anglo-Boer War, containing Reuters news of the war in Yiddish; as well as *Der Yiddisher Advokat* (1904-1914), a weekly newspaper published by Yiddishist David Goldblatt. We’ve now heard that the manuscripts and archives housed in the basement of the Jagger building are intact, which is a great relief.

Thanks to a firewall, the fire did not spread into the Main Library containing books from the Jewish Studies Library formerly housed in the Kaplan Centre.” — **Veronica Belling**

“I am heart-broken at the burning of part of the Jagger Library and of the flames engulfing the most beautiful building at our Alma mater. UCT has been part of my life since I arrived in SA 40 years ago. I brought up my three ‘babies’ there, when I had no baby sitter I took them to ‘work’ and while I lectured, I sent them to the library to ‘fetch books for me’ in order to keep them busy. My students’ theses are all housed there and the fate of these important documents is not known yet.



Herzlia Highlands Primary against a fiery backdrop

Years of research and toil, of dreams of ‘advancing human knowledge’ gone up in smoke.” — **Azila (Tzili) Talit Reisenberger**

“The Kaplan Centre’s archival store falls under the purview of Special Collections, and we work closely with the Kaplan Centre to maintain those collections. The Archives Office was also housed on the upper level of Jagger Library — where the administrative records of the manuscripts and archives collections were kept. Our administrative records were lost, including those related to the Kaplan Centre. We do have databases but the original agreements were lost.” — Michal Singer, Principal Archivist for Special Collections Dept, housed in the Jagger Library

“I was really worried. We had no idea what state the building was in. Thank God it was spared. Once we were given permission to access the campus, we [didn’t hesitate].”

While there are other valuable artefacts in the building, his primary focus was to secure the Torah.

“There have been cases where people have risked their lives to save the scrolls from burning synagogues.” “[Going into the building] was exhilarating; it was the feeling of fulfilling a higher purpose. I just knew I had to get in there.” — **Rabbi Nissen Goldman co-director of Chabad on Campus** (Credit: *News24, Nicole McCain*)

“Our CSO volunteers were very busy monitoring the situation, some on the ground at the schools and installations in Vredehoek,

etc. Others were in the office calling community members who live near the fire-line to check if they had evacuated and if not, if they needed assistance. They also assisted in removing the Torah from the Kaplan Centre.” — **CSO**

“When news broke of the fire, we started sharing updates to Facebook. Our first communication was about directing offers of donations to the relevant fire stations (Sea Point and the one on Roeland Street). This effort helped divert traffic from the Newlands base where operations were continuing.

Several individuals asked after and offered to help students who were evacuated from UCT. Our second communication was a call to action so we could coordinate these offers.

We also helped CSO, Rabbi Nissen Goldman and Kaplan Centre coordinate the extraction of the Torah from the Kaplan Centre.” — **Cape SAJBD**

“Herzlia closed four campus buildings for two days to limit the number of people in the area. Affected schools and central administration switched to online learning and working. Our sifrei Torah were relocated as a precautionary measure, and strategic senior staff and security staff remained onsite.” — United Herzlia Schools

“News of thousands of students needing to evacuate made us realise we needed to step in and help. Food, clothes, toiletries were top of the list with so many people doing their part... but what about sanitary products?

We took to social media, and the response was overwhelming. We were able to distribute over 100 pads and tampons directly to women in the various hotels which UCT had organised. We also donated a large number of sanitary products to Gift of the Givers. As a result of an expanding relationship with SHAWCO Women’s Health, we were provided with reusable sanitary pads which we donated as well.” — **Mama Flo (a group of the Union of Jewish Women)**

“I visited Table Mountain area. You cannot fault our firefighting teams — the City of Cape Town, Table Mountain National Parks or volunteer wildfire services. They’re exceptionally good at what they do and work together, and you can see it. We’re lucky we’re living in a city with a very good fire service. We have approximately 70-75 fire fighting vehicles. There were close to 270 fire fighters, over 50 vehicles, excluding police service, law enforcement, metro police, disaster risk management. Lots of videos of evacuations were being made by disaster risk management walking around telling people to leave. It was a very coordinated response.” — Jacques Weber

Regular contributors

Page 1	Fire at our doorstep
Page 3	Des says... UJW Save the date
Page 4	Shabbat times Subscriptions
Page 6-11	Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies
Page 12-14	SA Zionist Federation (Cape Council)
Page 15	The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning MA Graduates
Page 16	Temple Israel
Page 17	Galit Cohen — Mensch Changemaker of the month South African Jewish Museum
Page 18	Family announcements BZA WIZO's magnificent golf day
Page 19	Jewish Community Services
Page 20	Cape Jewish Seniors Association
Page 21	Meet three new Mensches Telfed on SASI — South Africans studying in Israel
Page 24	Anton Katz on <i>Surfing and the law</i>
Page 25	Nechama — Talking to children about death Letter to the editor
Page 27	Craig Nudelman on <i>Tradition</i> Salisbury House
Page 28	Chronic Ads

Features

Page 4	Herzlia AGM Welcome new schlichim Enriching Jewish Education in Cape Town
Page 22	<i>I am Here</i> — Cape Town Holocaust survivor's life captured in award-winning documentary
Page 26	Sydenham Shul and Education Africa present <i>Sounds of Celebration VIII</i>
Page 29	Two Shauns tackle the waves in Robben Island crossing
Page 30	Claudia Gurwitz reflects collective disharmony in her latest paintings



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Des Says...

By Desrae Saacks, acting editor Cape Jewish Chronicle

What's really important?



This column has been a work-in-progress at the back of my mind for the whole month. Ideas, themes and concepts have formed and changed as content arrived in my inbox, and events unfolded around me.

By far the most recent and dramatic event was the April 18 fire that devoured precious vegetation, landmark buildings, archival material and infrastructure; and narrowly missed taking so much more. While some of it is lost forever, heartening scenes of green shoots on the mountainside, and burly firemen feeding water to an injured tortoise whose head is smaller than their finger-tips remind us that while loss and destruction are unavoidably part and parcel of our human condition, so too is the precious and transient gift of life.

On page 25, Nechama's recent guest speaker, Carin Marcus, drives this point home when she guides us on how to talk to children about death. Central to her message is the fact that death is an intrinsic part of life, and understanding death is an essential factor in appreciating the wonder of life. In a letter to the editor on the same page, Lisa Michalson talks about the very same thing.

Director Jordy Sank uses a novel documentary format to tell the life-affirming story of 99-year-old Cape Town resident and Holocaust survivor, Ella Blumenthal. Read more about *I Am Here*, and the amazing woman who inspired this work, on page 22.

Craig Nudelman's piece on page 27 got me pondering the tension between tradition and progress, as he discusses, among other things, the iconic 1971 movie, *Fiddler on the Roof*. The movie asks, 'how much can you move away from your traditions without losing yourself or your place in the world?'

Those of us living in close proximity to the mountain were once again faced with the decision (as we are every few years) of what to save when evacuating our houses, just in case they actually do go up in flames this time. What are the most important things in our lives, that we absolutely

cannot live without? Stress aside, it's an interesting exercise.

In the most literal sense there's nothing that absolutely can't be done without or replaced. Documents, underwear, medications, laptop of course. (I don't count pets as objects but rather as family — however they too need to be gathered up, packed into cars and accommodated).

One quickly realises that it's the people (and animals) in your life that really matter. The thought of losing all one's worldly possessions is overwhelming, if you stop to think about it. But the fact is, we'll be ok, even if all the *stuff* is not there when we get back.

And still the theme of loss repeats.

I received a phone call late last week from Rabbi Gavi Ziegler of Phyllis Jowell Day School. He told me about a week-long campaign to be launched on 3 May in partnership with SAJBD, called #makethecall. This is a challenge to the whole community to reach out to someone with whom you've lost contact, pick up the phone, and talk to them.

COVID-19 is not yet behind us. At the time of writing this, we are waiting with bated breath for a third wave. Since COVID-19 hit our shores, our community has not been spared the devastating loss of life, and way of life, that the whole country and indeed world has suffered. COVID-19 has caused loss of income, loss of lifestyle options, and for many, loss of social connection. #Makethecall aims to reconnect our community on a person-to-person level, across the spectrum of age, religious observance and all the wonderful diversity that makes up the South African Jewish community; to rebuild, reconnect and restore relationship.

Loss of loved ones, loss of tradition, loss of lifestyle, loss of material possessions, loss of history, historical efforts and fruits of our labours. What's really important? What will we miss? What will we survive? What do we learn from loss? How do we carry on? What do we need to hold onto so that we don't lose ourselves? As individuals? As community? What is really important?

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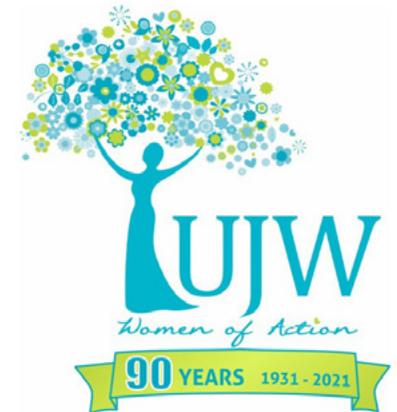


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Herzlia and SAZF welcome new Shlichim

The SAZF Cape Council and Herzlia schools are thrilled to welcome our Cape Town community Shlichim, Batya and Hed Shmueli and their children Shneur, Noa and Naomi. We are so thankful for the invaluable contribution you will bring in strengthening our community's connection to Israel. Hed will be working in the Herzlia Schools and Batya will be working with the community from the SAZF offices. We wish you every success here in your Shlichut.



Shabbat and Yom Tov Times

Date	Portion	Candle lighting Latest	Ends
7 May/25 Iyar	Behar/Bechukkotai	5.42pm	6.34pm
14 May/3 Sivan	Bemidbar	5.36pm	6.29pm
16 May/5 Sivan	Shavuot 1st day	5.35pm	
17 May/6 Sivan	Shavuot 2nd day	6.28pm	6.27pm
21 May/10 Sivan	Naso	5.32pm	6.25pm
28 May/17 Sivan	Behaalot'cha	5.29pm	6.23pm

N.B. Please note that the times indicated are the earliest times for candle lighting. Please consult your Rabbi.

UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS will take place on **19 May 2021 at 18h00, via the Zoom Online Meeting Platform.**

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for elected Governor positions, duly proposed and seconded must be lodged by 16h00 on Wednesday 12 May 2021. A CV of not more than 120 words must be attached to the nomination form. Please email chairman@herzlia.com or contact **021 286 3452** for nomination forms or more details.

VOTING

Parents in good standing, Alumni, Trustees, Honorary Life Members and donors to United Herzlia Schools and The Herzlia Foundation Trust are members of the UHS and are eligible to vote.

DAVID GINSBERG
Director Finance & Administration

Parents, benefactors and donors of the school please accept this as an invitation. Right of admission reserved.



Yasher koach to graduates of Masters degree in Jewish Education

Last year, a group of people completed a Masters degree in Jewish Education with the Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning. In addition, there is another group currently working towards this qualification.

Cape Town had a significant enrolment — Rabbis Feldman and Thurgood, and Karen Kaimowitz*, Yael Ayache and Chaim Moch from Herzlia.

"I wanted to improve myself as a teacher and specifically as a Jewish educator. I know there was a lot to learn, and to improve upon, in terms of Jewish education in the country and I thought that this would be the first step towards understanding Jewish education at a deeper level. To work towards an improved future, you first need to understand where you are in the present and the MA provided this grounding for me in both a personal (relating to my own teaching) and a broader (relating to educational systems) way. We were fortunate to be part of a group of South African educators and Rabbis who were also on this course with us. I was inspired to see these people, many of whom are very knowledgeable, thinking hard and working hard to continue developing their knowledge so that they can serve their communities better."

Chaim Moch, Head of JLL, UHS Primary Schools Curriculum Coordinator

The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning worked with the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS) to create a South African adaption of the mode of thinking, pedagogics and education that LSJS pioneered in the UK. This programme is impacting schools, shuls and various Cape Town communal organisations, with their key leaders graduating, further attesting to the impact of the programme across the Cape Town community as a whole including the direct impact in the schools.

*Karen Kaimowitz, previously of ORT, has taken over as principal of Gan Aviv preschool.

See page 15 for more on this story

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[back to contents](#)



CAPE SAJBD
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CONNECT, COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY

By Daniel Bloch, Executive Director, Cape SAJBD

This month, I begin my journey as the executive director of the Cape SAJBD. At the age of 42, I have achieved many milestones, both personally and professionally, the most recent one being the opportunity to represent my community. This fills me with immense pride and honour.



Growing up in a Jewish home, I watched my father actively engage with the community, and it was something I wished to emulate as I got older. My family and upbringing have been an integral factor in my personal and career growth. In 2017, I decided to follow in my father's footsteps by joining the management committee of the Green & Sea Point Hebrew Congregation, where I have spent the past four years working with a passionate team. In 2019, I was elected to the United Herzlia Schools Board of Governors where I spent a year understanding their importance and impact on our community.

Two years later, and I find myself part of the dynamic team at the Cape SAJBD. Strengthening and building relationships with both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities is paramount to ensuring that the Board achieves its vision — to ensure the continuity, protection, and resilience of a proud Western Cape Jewish community, in an inclusive and just society. This is my core task and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

My background is primarily in the events and media industry, where I have worked with many international companies, using my skills as a leader and decision-maker to ensure the success of many projects. Building long-lasting relationships and connecting with industry leaders is one of my passions and is the inspiration for my monthly column titled *Connect, Collaborate, Community*.

Currently, the Board has several important projects on the go; however, I would like to start by focusing on strengthening our relationships with the seventy community affiliates. Through effective collaboration with each affiliate, we can share experiences, generate ideas, and combine resources; allowing us to work smarter and more efficiently. This will enable us to connect with many like-minded community members and effect real change in the community. Connect + Collaborate = a strong and unified community capable of achieving anything!

My commitment is to represent the Western Cape Jewish Community to the best of my abilities, fight for our right to practice our Judaism and continue the important work of the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

A time of significant consideration

By Tzvi Brivik, Chairperson, Cape SAJBD

We are pleased to welcome Daniel Bloch as the new executive director.

The position carries great weight and responsibility. Daniel is a graduate of Herzlia High school and has served on its governing body, and is also a member of the Marais Road Shul. He has vast experience in the events and media industry. He brings with him a love and understanding of our community. Daniel has joined us from 1 May 2021. He understands that, as is stated in the parashah of this week, "There is no gain without some pain," in other words, he appreciates the steep learning curve which he is about to embark on and which includes a series of meetings so that he can take the time to get to know our various affiliates and sister organisations. He joins us at a time when the Cape SAJBD has been considering significant matters.

These include the comments that had been made by Dr Lwazi Lushaba in a pre-recorded lecture in the first week of April. Those comments had drawn criticism from various fields, including academia, the University of Cape Town and the DA. We have responded by affirming our commitment to our constitution

which is to build a united and democratic South Africa based on mutual respect, understanding, and human dignity. We have also pointed out that these remarks had been made during the week of Yom HaShoah when we observed the Holocaust Remembrance Day by taking pride in our heritage. At the time, we invited Dr Lushaba to engage with us.



In addition to reverting to the use of the law to protect our community, we can engage and educate. We are of the strong view that this approach not only empowers our community, but also the communities and persons around us. We have also repeatedly emphasised our #WordsMatter campaign, in which we have urged representatives of our community and externally to carefully weigh and measure their words to ensure these are not divisive or intended to cause harm. In this week's parashah, we are told that "More things can go wrong than can go right." It is a reminder of a lack of equilibrium. To ensure that our community's rights are protected, we are mandated to right that balance as best we can.

On a different note, there has been some return to normalcy. We are relying heavily on the vaccine roll-out to secure the health of our community. While this is attended to, we urge everybody to continue to keep a safe social distance and wear masks in public. If South Africa is to follow the trends in the northern hemisphere around COVID-19, then there is a third wave expected — and this should be guarded against as much as possible.

We cannot underestimate the cost of the pandemic emotionally, physically and financially to individual members of our community and our communal structures. Incredible work has been done by members of our community and our affiliates, including the burial services through the UOS, Rabbinical counselling and outreach. I would like to mention Jewish Community Services which has done outstanding work providing mental health-care, financial assistance and also administering the Tikvah Fund, the SimchaFund and the food bank — amongst other initiatives.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Jodi Goldberg, a member of our professional staff, much success in the future. Jodi will be leaving the Cape SAJBD at the end of April 2021. She has worked in our offices as Projects and Operations Coordinator as well as attending to various administrative duties, since 2013. *Behatzlacha!*

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Yom HaShoah ve'Hagevurah: remembering in vignettes

By Gwynne Robins

This year, we were unable to meet at the cemetery to mourn the deaths of six million Jewish men, women and children for reasons of public health and fear.

Fear of crowds, fear of socialising, fear of going out in case we are invaded by an invisible virus. Instead, the Cape SAJBD commemorated the event with three short video vignettes, produced by Chad Nathan, covering most of the elements in our traditional ceremony.

If our ancestors had not managed to reach South Africa before the Immigration Quota Act in 1930 stopped their arrival, many of us whose ancestors had come from Eastern Europe would not be here today. This is because eighty years ago, in the summer of 1941, their friends and family who had remained behind would have been killed by the Einsatzkommandos. By the time Germany surrendered in 1945, 95% of the 237 500 Lithuanian Jews had been murdered, nearly all of the 70 000 Jews living in Latvia in 1941, and 90% of the Rhodes Island community.

Our first video focused on what the Holocaust means to our youth. As it says in the Tanach (Joel 1.3): "Tell your children of it and let your children tell their children and their children another generation." We filmed the learners at Cape Town Torah High School situated in the Ponovez Shul — nearly all the Ponovez Jews were killed in 1941. Amber-Lee Bobrow, Rika Wineberg and Musya Deren from Torah High and Kirstin Kukard and Cheryl van den Berg from the Herzlia High School explained what the Holocaust meant to them, while learners from the Herzlia Junior High SLC recited a poem, and representatives from Habonim Dror, SAUJS, Bnei Akiva and Netzer read out names of murdered children. There were songs from the Herzlia Vocal Ensemble under the baton of Ivor Joffe and from Benji Anstey, accompanied by Gabriel Sieff on the piano.



Deputy Head of Herzlia High School, Rachel Wohlman reads The Action in the Ghetto of Rohatyn, March 1942, a poem by Alexander Kimel.

In another video, our chairman Tzvi Brivik and the Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan delivered messages about the day, focusing on the murders of the Lithuanian and Latvian Jews in 1941. The highlight was a talk by Zola Shuman, whose parents were both survivors from the Vilna ghetto and labour camps. Her mother Chayele Rosenthal was known as the "nightingale of the ghetto" and her uncle who died the day before liberation



Zola Shuman gives the keynote address and speaks about her parents, both Holocaust survivors, Chayele Rosenthal and Xavier Piatka.

was a talented songwriter, whose popular songs are still sung. The film ended with Cantor Choni Goldman from the Gardens Synagogue singing the hazkarah.

Our final vignette focused on Music and the Shoah, a story of song to survive and uplift, with a pre-War Russian song by balalaika player Dusia Borodoff from Riga Latvia — most of her family were killed in Auschwitz. Her son Gary Silberman has committed her beautiful music onto CD in her memory. Other songs were by Caely-Jo Levy, a singer, songwriter, actress and choreographer with a passion for klezmer music, and by Cantor Goldman. There was a Yiddish poem written in the Vilna Ghetto by Avrom Sutzkever, which was recited by Dr Veronica Belling, and a Ladino poem written and recited by Isaac Habib. His mother was one of the 1767 Jews from Rhodes Island and Cos who were deported to Auschwitz. Only 163 survived. The video ended with a plaintive song by saxophonist-composer Rus Nerwich.

In Deuteronomy 4:9, we are told to "guard ourselves carefully, lest we forget the things our eyes saw, and lest these things depart from our hearts all the days of our lives." It adds that "you shall make them known



Dr Veronica Belling reads the poem, The Lead Plates at the Rom Press by Avrom Sutzkever.

to your children and your children's children". The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies does this each year in honour of our people who were killed in the Holocaust and thanks to our youth, that memory is being guarded and carried forward.

Click here to watch the recordings:

[Through the Eyes of Our Youth](#)
[L'Dor V'Dor: Generation to Generation](#)
[Music and the Shoah](#)





CAPE SAJBD
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20 years after the 2001 Durban Conference, NGO Monitor weighs in

By Tyla Dallas

On Thursday 4 March, the Cape SAJBD hosted a webinar with guest speakers Professor Gerald Steinberg and Shaun Sacks from NGO Monitor.

NGO Monitor is a globally recognised research institute in Jerusalem that promotes democratic values and good governance and is the leading source of information on political NGOs active in delegitimisation campaigns against Israel, and the role of both government and private funder-enablers.

It was founded following the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa ("Durban conference"), and is a project of The Institute for NGO Research, a recognised organisation in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 2013. This year marks 20 years since the infamous Durban conference, so it is only apt that we commemorated it by reflecting on the last 20 years, in light of increasing international antisemitism.

The speakers discussed the formation of NGO Monitor, the development of the 'Durban strategy' that emerged from the Durban conference, and the important work they do around the world in fighting and investigating antisemitism.

Professor Gerald Steinberg is the founder and president of NGO Monitor and Professor Emeritus at Bar Ilan University, where he founded the Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation. His research focuses on Middle East diplomacy and security, the politics of human rights and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and Israeli politics and arms control. He was awarded a prestigious Israel Science Foundation grant and served as team leader for the 'Israel at the Polls' chapters on peace negotiations and Israel-American relations from 1988-2005. He was a member of the advisory board of the *Israel Law Review* and is a member of the Israel Council of Foreign Affairs. He was appointed to the Israel Higher-Education Council Committee on Public Policy, is an academic participant in the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism at the ICCA, and a participating member of the Halifax International Security Forum since 2014. He has a plethora of publications. His op-ed columns have been published in *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe), *Financial Times*, and the *Jerusalem Post*, and he has also appeared as a commentator on several news channels such as BBC and CNN. He is an expert on BDS, Antisemitism and Lawfare; Politics and Middle Eastern Affairs; Israel, the US and Europe Relations; and NGOs and Foreign Funding.

Joining Professor Steinberg, we had Shaun Sacks who is a Senior Researcher at NGO Monitor and made Aliya from South Africa in 1998. He received his BA from Bar Ilan University, and before joining NGO Monitor, was the senior project manager for Netsource and emerging market manager for McAfee Inc. Shaun's articles and op-eds have appeared in many publications including the *Jerusalem Post* and the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. Shaun has also appeared on popular Israeli TV channels such as Ynet and Channel 20. He is an expert on European Government Funding for NGOs; Combating BDS in Europe; European Government Transparency and Antisemitism in Europe.

To watch this webinar, follow us on Facebook @CapeSAJBD, click on our 'videos' tab and open the '20 Years After the 2001 Durban Conference' video.

Woman of Worth and an event worth noting

By Tyla Dallas



Dawn Nathan-Jones, Tyla Dallas, Dr Nomafrench Mbombo (Health MEC), Adrienne Jacobson and Premier Alan Winde

On 8 March, International Women's Day, the Cape SAJBD was invited to attend the Western Cape Government's interfaith prayer event, with Western Cape Minister of Health Dr Nomafrench Mbombo and Premier Alan Winde.

The two-hour event was held at the government building concourse in the CBD and was attended by Adrienne Jacobson (Executive Committee), Dawn Nathan-Jones (Chairperson of the Associate Relations subcommittee) and Tyla Dallas (Legal Researcher).

International Women's Day focuses on celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Female representatives from Christian, Charismatic, Muslim, Jewish, African, Khoisan and Hindu faith-based organisations were asked to prepare

a prayer honouring the important role of women, and in remembrance of COVID-19 fatalities.

Adrienne read, in Hebrew and English, a beautiful hymn called Eishet Chayil, which translates to a 'Woman of Valour or Worth', and is sung to the woman of the home on a Friday night. She chose this hymn as it acknowledges that "it is the woman who makes the home into a divine spiritual place of nurturing where our souls can flourish."

The Cape SAJBD was grateful to unite with religious women leaders from across the Western Cape's faith-based institutions in a morning of prayer and reflection. The voice of women singing and chanting filled the halls of the building, and reminded us that through collaboration, we are strong and immutable. That together, we can make a difference and #ChooseToChallenge injustice and disparity, and create peace, harmony and love.



Dawn Nathan-Jones, Adrienne Jacobson and Dr Ivan Meyer (Agriculture MEC)



Adrienne Jacobson with representatives of the Khoisan people



The history of our bursary fund

By Gwynne Robins

According to Maimonides (1138–1204), the highest form of tzedakah was supporting people so that they would not have to be dependent on others. This is what the bursary fund of the Cape SAJBD does by enabling students to get a tertiary education.

There is a problem. Twenty years ago, a university course cost R6000, and today it can cost between R60 000 and R120 000 and the existing bursary funds have to stretch further and further each year as the costs of tertiary education and the number of applicants grows.

Once upon a time bursaries were awarded by several different organisations which had received bequests or donations, like the SAJBD, country communities, the Union of Jewish Women, the Bnoth Zion Association, the Jewish Board of Guardians. Some bursaries came with conditions — the donor wanted the bursary to go to an orphan, to a woman, to someone who wanted to teach Hebrew, to a medical student.

When Joe Fintz, as Board’s treasurer, took over the administration of the Board’s bursaries in the 1990s, he realised that it would be more efficient to have the bursaries controlled by one body. It would be easier to find an applicant to fit a specific qualification if the net were to be spread wider and more interest could be raised by pooling the bursary funds.

The organisations agreed, and the Cape SAJBD’s BOD Bursary Committee came into being, incorporating people with many specific skills — law, accountancy, IT, and a representative from the Herzlia remissions committee (in addition to those with empathy combined with chesed and tzedakah).

In 2002, Simon Brodovcky mentioned to Eliot Osrin that he had learnt that the bursary funds were earning little interest as they had been invested in fixed deposits. Simon felt passionate about assisting the bursary cause because of the financial challenges he had faced when he was young and studying.

Once properly invested by Simon,

the value of the bursary funds soared and began to attract capital donations from generous donors and estates, like Pasvolsky, Ben Yehuda, Raphaely, Link SA and the original Jewish Museum.

Lester Hoffman is the current chairperson of the BOD Bursary Committee, which oversees the award of bursaries. The policy is to provide financial assistance to verified needy families to assist those students to find gainful employment. Eligibility is limited to students who are established residents of the Western Cape for study in the Western Cape. These must be for tertiary education at local recognised academic institutions. Each case is examined on its merits and the students are required to provide midyear and end of the year results.

Last year, the Bursary Committee awarded bursaries amounting to R2 101 500 to 73 students, of which 22 were new applications, 14 were renewals and 37 were postgraduates.

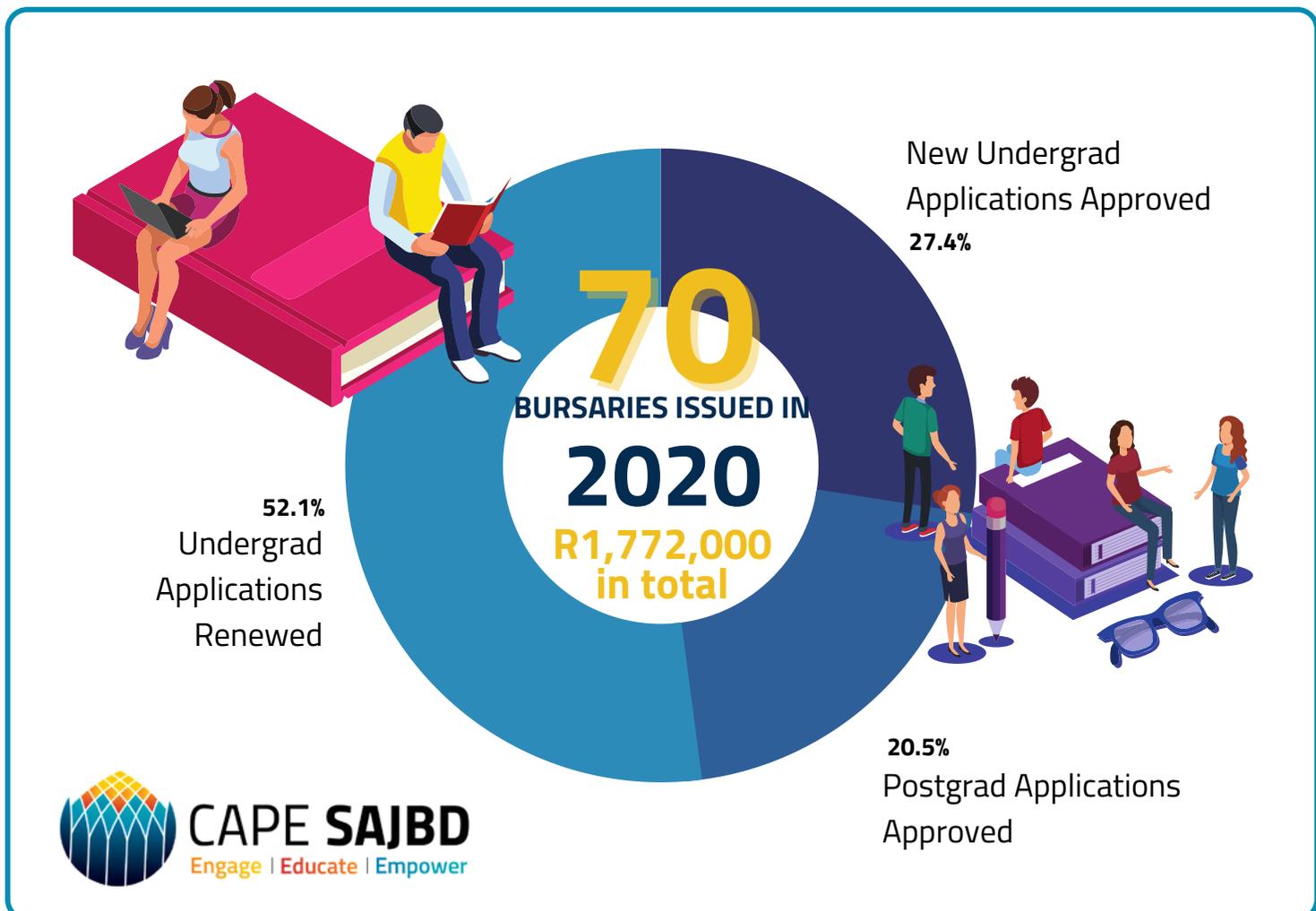
Historically, Jews have always placed a high value on learning. In

times of persecution, education was one thing they could always take with them and it was the emphasis on education that enabled Jews to achieve success beyond the poverty of their immigrant parents.

The Pew Research Centre has established that Jews are the most highly educated of the world’s major religious groups. In South Africa, Jews average 12 years of schooling and 29% have post-secondary degrees, compared with an average of 7.2 years of schooling and 3% with higher education among non-Jewish South Africans.

This year, the financial effect on our community of COVID-19 means that many more families will find it difficult to afford tertiary education for their matriculants. With the increased demand for bursaries and the increased costs of tertiary education, the income generated from capital from the combined bursary funds is currently inadequate to serve the communal needs.

For more information, contact Gwynne Robins at sajbd1@ctjc.co.za





Cape SAJBD welcomes decision declaring Uyghur persecution a genocide

By Mathilde Myburgh

The Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape SAJBD) welcomes the passage of a motion in Canada's House of Commons on Monday 22 February, which declares the persecution of the Uyghur people by the People's Republic of China an act of genocide under international law.

In sitting number 63 on Monday 22 February, the House passed a motion of opposition regarding religious minorities in China, with 266 votes in favour and zero against.

The motion text details that, in the opinion of the House, the People's Republic of China had engaged in actions that are consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260, better known as the 'Genocide Convention' — which includes using detention camps and measures intended to prevent births of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.

Given its policy had been to act in concert with its allies when it comes to recognising the genocide, and given bipartisan consensus in the

United States in two consecutive administrations that Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims are being subjected to a genocide by the People's Republic of China, the House overwhelmingly recognised this genocide, a welcome development.

It has called upon the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Winter Olympics out of Beijing should the Chinese government continue this genocide.

In line with the Cape SAJBD's objectives and the experiences of the Jewish community with genocide and antisemitism, and with the annual Yom HaShoah recently observed in April, we unequivocally support this motion passed by Canada's House of Commons.

It is our firmly held belief that the religious and civil rights, status and welfare of any citizen of a country be safeguarded by its government and defended by human rights organisations locally and globally. In South Africa, protecting the human rights of our Jewish constituency and the people of the Western Cape is at the very core of what the

Cape SAJBD does. We work hard to promote harmonious relations between the Jewish community and other communities, and we empathise with the Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim communities facing this plight at the hands of their fellow citizens and their government.

We welcome global attention to the plight of Uyghur and Turkic Muslims in the People's Republic of China and pray that the visibility of this and other decisions and utterances by institutions and communities alike afford these minority communities routes to representation and ultimately, liberation.

According to Wikipedia, the Uyghur community is recognised by the Chinese government as a regional minority community, native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of Northwest China. It is estimated that since 2015, over a million Uyghurs have been detained in internment camps over a governmental goal to ensure adherence to national ideology by "re-educating" Uyghurs and changing their political thinking, sense of identity and religious beliefs. In South Africa, with a 25-year-old

Constitution praised the world over for its progressive and inclusive content, such acts against fellow countrymen are illegal. This forced "re-education" goes against the very grain of South Africa's Bill of Rights, which places every citizen as equal before the law, with the right to equally be protected by and benefit from it. Discriminating against one another on the grounds of race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language is prohibited, unconscionable and, frankly, un-South African.

Chinese authorities estimate there are 12 million Uyghur people in the country, which has been disputed by the community itself as early as 2003, arguing that their 20 million+ population is purposefully being undercounted.

As early as 2017, Human Rights Watch called for the People's Government of China to immediately release Uyghur people held in unlawful political education centres in Xinjiang. We must never forget the lessons learned in the Shoah and its aftermath.

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Religious intolerance, respect and human rights, and the need for unity

By Mickey Glass

Below is a speech by Mickey Glass, former chairperson of the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum, prepared and delivered for the Ahmadiyya Mosque Meeting held in April around Pesach. Mickey is a former member of the Cape SAJBD board, former executive director of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues and has a long and pioneering involvement in Cape Town-based interfaith work.

Good Day to you all.

I apologise that I am talking to you via a pre-recorded message as I am unable to participate directly today because we are in the midst of our Passover festival. Today is the first of this major eight-day festival.

When I was first invited to speak in your mosque some years ago, it was for Interfaith Harmony Week. Since then, I have been privileged to participate in quite a few of your public events. This particular function follows examples of obnoxious vandalism perpetrated on the front wall and doors of your mosque in Athlone. This was not the first time such incidents have occurred.

Of course, we Jews are no strangers to these kinds of attacks. Your letterhead carries the message "Love for all, Hatred for none." Unfortunately, we live in a world where those sentiments are no longer automatic. You know that Judaism has been around for thousands of years, twice as long as Christianity and three times as long as Islam. Our four thousand years of history have taught us much about interreligious hatred, more often than not used for political, and not theological purposes.

Naturally, over the years, we have seen the mushrooming of sects, of movements that break away from the centre to establish their variation of our faith. In Judaism, the enmity between our Reform, Conservative and Orthodox groupings has resulted in hundreds of books, endless arguments and, sometimes, even intrafaith violence.

You, the Ahmadis represent another section of Islam. Of course, you know far better than I that the divisions between the Sunni majority and the Shiite minority have often resulted in bloodshed.

Ahmadis have been persecuted in countries like Pakistan, where their freedom of religion has been curtailed by a series of laws and even constitutional amendments. No-one is going to emerge in triumph from confrontations of this kind and that is where our experience has taught us to communicate. The greatest single antidote to violence is conversation.

Too often in today's world, groups speak to themselves, not to one another – Jews to Jews, Christians to fellow Christians and Muslims to Muslims. And even then, differences in practices, in customs and so on, are rarely explained, and then we witness intrareligious violence. Gone are the days where people of different viewpoints were forced to share the public arena and thus meet and reason with their opponents.

The sanctity of human life, the inalienable freedoms of a just society are religious absolutes. They flow from the proposition that it was not we who created God in our image but God who made us in His. They belong to the very tradition that Jews, Christians and Muslims —who have spent so much of their history in mutual hostility— share.

Today, the world is dominated by social media which targets those who agree with us and screens out the voices of dissent. Those who wish to make known their opposition to whatever they object to, whether it's the colour of my skin, or the faith I follow, whether it's their version of Islam as opposed to yours, have been brainwashed into believing that some violent expression of dissent or protest is better than any alternative. The conversation which is the heartbeat of democracy is dying and with it our chances for peaceful interaction.

Religion can and has often been a source of discord. But it can also be a form of conflict resolution. It is up to the leaders of our great faiths to become an active force for peace and for the justice and compassion on which peace ultimately depends.

We are taught that we live in a progressive civilisation. Can we make space for one another? Can we live together in one community?

We are being summoned to a great challenge – can we find, in the human 'thou', a fragment of the Divine 'Thou'? There are times when God meets us in the face of a stranger. Can we recognise God's image in one who is not in my image?

The global age in which we live has turned our world into a society of strangers. We should not see this as a threat to our identity but rather as a call to a moral and spiritual generosity that is more demanding than we had ever imagined.

I do not believe that the sanctity of human life and the inalienable freedoms of a just society are relative. Relativism is too weak to resist the storm winds of religious fervour. Only an equal and opposite passion for what our faith stands for can resist those pressures. The sanctity of human life, the inalienable freedoms of a just society are religious absolutes. They flow from the proposition that it was not we who created God in our image but God who made us in His. They belong to the very tradition that Jews, Christians and Muslims —who have spent so much of their history in mutual hostility— share.

Nothing has proved harder in the history of civilisation than to see God or good, or human dignity in those whose language is not mine, whose skin is a different colour, whose faith is not my faith, and whose truth is not my truth. There are surely many ways of arriving at this generosity of spirit, and each faith must find its own.

We have to understand that the truth at the beating heart of monotheism is that God transcends the particularities of culture and the limits of human understanding. He is my God, but also of all mankind, even of those whose customs and way of life are unlike mine.

You might think that I'm talking nonsense, that hatreds that have existed for decades are deeply entrenched and will never change. For over 100 years, it was religious dogma that no Arab state would ever accept the permanence of the State of Israel. The peace treaties signed by Egypt and Jordan more than fifty years ago were described

as aberrations that were ascribed to the particular circumstances of each country.

Suddenly about six months ago, the UAE, Bahrein, Morocco, Oman and Sudan confirmed the Abraham Accords and hundreds of thousands of their citizens have already been visiting Israel and vice-versa; there are 22 flights every week between Tel-Aviv and Rabat, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Bahrein. El Al aircraft displaying the Star of David has been seen regularly at Khartoum airport.

The greatest single antidote to violence is conversation.

Over three aircraft with Arab flags land every day at Ben Gurion airport. And every one of these states makes it clear that their commitment to the establishment of a Palestine state remains a priority.

Within the next few months, probably another 3-4 Arab states will join the Abraham Accords and that will most certainly bring much closer the realisation of a Palestine state. Only by talking to one another, by understanding one another, can differences be resolved. It's not only in the Middle East. Today we witness the very warm and strong relations between America and Vietnam which no one could have foreseen amid the Vietnam war which cost tens of thousands of lives.

My message is to seek those who differ from you and start conversations. When people join hands, becoming even for one minute 'like one body with one soul', they are a formidable force for good. God's first question to humankind was: "Where are you?" That is the question which people of faith hear, by those who have internalised the ethic of responsibility. True faith is a form of listening, and what we hear in the still silence of the soul is God's question: "What have you done with the gift I gave you, of life? How have you used your time? Have you lived for yourself alone or have you lived also for others?"



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By Karen Marsden Sank, Chair SAZF Cape Council



This year Israel proudly celebrates her 73rd birthday, as the jewel in the crown of our global community.

For every Jew no matter where we are, we remain acutely aware of the tremendous challenges and sacrifices that have been made over this time to safeguard our homeland, ensuring that Israel is a place of refuge and safety for all Jews. This milestone is testament to our determination, resilience and a continued spirit of victory and faith.

Yom Hazikaron, the day preceding Yom Ha'atzmaut is devoted to the

memory of those who gave their lives in order for us to be able to acknowledge and revel in this achievement. Not only have we as a nation remained steadfast in safeguarding our homeland and our continued existence, but are proud that Israel as a nation stands tall amongst other countries in the areas of IT, technology and cutting-edge research across all sectors.

At a time when the world as we know it looks and feels so different, Israel's birthday is an opportunity for all of us to be mindful of all the miracles surrounding this celebration.

Each one of us can in our own way make sense of how Israel's history, heartaches, sacrifices and challenges both as a country and as a people makes this celebration and the journey both of our beloved State of Israel and its people even more special.

As a community we will never forget. Too many have paid a huge price for our independence. However, as we celebrated together, acknowledging, paying tribute and honouring our beloved Israel, we stand proud, we stand committed and we stand together in our unwavering belief,

support and love for our homeland.

As we look to the future it's important we remain present, and continue to demonstrate an authentic belief in who we are and what Israel means to us as individuals, celebrating and acknowledging what so many gave their lives for. Each of us, together with future generations, needs to ensure that our own spirit of victory and faith is entrenched, in order to ensure we remain a united community – *Am Yisrael Chai*.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) donated to SA Friends of Israel

By Trystan Tregenza Hall

Through the generosity and tenacity of Masks for Medics and The Angel Network, it was made possible for South African Friends of Israel to deliver a significant consignment of high quality, medical grade PPE to its network.

The PPE consisted of 86 foot-pedal sanitiser dispensers, 172 large five-litre bottles of sanitiser fluid, 430 face guards or visors, plus several thousand disposable face masks. These have been distributed for the

protection of the paid staff and volunteers who are working on the front lines to provide community services within some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the Cape Town region, as well as for the benefit of their service users. These brave workers have been keeping the wheels rolling at 31 pre-schools and seven soup kitchens/churches, as well as several care homes and a high school. The majority of these facilities are located in the Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain and Fisantekraal areas. Some of the staff and volunteers

have personally suffered with COVID-19, having contracted the virus during the course of their occupations. Many of them have had insufficient or inappropriate PPE, sometimes consisting of only a simple face scarf, as these community organisations have hitherto fallen through the cracks of government PPE provision. Many have expressed their heartfelt thanks to the charities involved in obtaining the supply of PPE, as well as to the Jewish community, for helping to make these meaningful donations possible.



Trystan Tregenza Hall, SAZF CC Executive Director Chaya Singer and Natasha Salkinder with the PPE for SA Friends of Israel



Councillor Demitrius Dudley and his daughter, Christy Haefele, at the Nomhle Educare Centre



Councillor Demitrius Dudley and his daughter, Christy Haefele, at Reaching Stars Educare Centre



South African community celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut together

By Leora Hessen, Vice Chairperson, SAZF Cape Council

On Wednesday, 14 April, the South African Jewish community was united by the South African Zionist Federation in a ceremony and celebration, for Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut. After a year of online conferences, meetings, school days, classes, simchas and sadness, the trepidation of hosting a celebration online was real.

But our community came together to honour our fallen soldiers. We were privileged to see footage of our school children standing at attention when the siren went off. We heard stories from IDF soldiers from *Brothers for Life* and their beautiful tribute to Eric Samson OBM.

And then we came together to celebrate, all 7000 people on various screens across South Africa. We heard our children tell us what Israel means to them. For the first time our three Chairpersons (National, Cape Council and KZN) were able to celebrate together at one

communal event. And together we experienced the highlight of the night – Lior Suchard – the world's most famous mentalist.

Lior has entertained millions of people worldwide and, in one of her interviews, Barbra Streisand said about him, "There really are things which defy explanation. When I first experienced Lior's mental gifts, I knew I was in the presence of someone extraordinary. Each time our paths cross, I'm more and more fascinated by how he does what he does."

Thank you to all of you that joined the SAZF for our live virtual Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations. We hope that we will be able to celebrate in-person again soon, but we are grateful that you took the time to join us on screen.



Lior Suchard interacting with Dream ticket holders



SAZF CC Executive Director Chaya Singer, SAZF CC Chairperson Karen Marsden Sank, SAZF CC Vice Chairperson Leora Hessen, National Chairman Rowan Polovin and KZN Chairman Grant Maserow



SAZF spelled out in the cards



SAZF CC Chairperson, Karen Marsden Sank, paying tribute to community stalwart, the late Eric Samson z"l



MC David Bloch thanking Lior Suchard for an amazing show



Youth Movements roundup

A Diller look into community

Diller's two-day community initiative was a time for the cohort to take a step back and actively engage with our community, learn about what goes on behind the scenes and give back to the less fortunate.

Day one took place at the Cullinan Hotel with leaders of the UJC, WIZO, SAUJS, the SAJBD, Zionist Federation and CSO in attendance. We spent the first part of the day discussing what it meant to be part of a community and the technical aspects of our community such as logistics, finances and person-based volunteering. At the end of

the day our parents joined us for tea and got to experience a taste of a Diller workshop.

On the second day the cohort was split between Manna preschool and the JCS food bank. At Manna we packed care packages and painted murals on classroom walls and at the JCS foodbank we packed Pesach food packages for Jewish families of our community. This day put into practice the key Diller values of Tikkun Olam and community. JCS can always use volunteers or donations and Manna, in their infancy as a preschool, would welcome donations of school equipment and help with upgrading their property.



The Diller group who volunteered at Manna Preschool standing in front of the rainbow mural they painted

Aliyah continues

Last month, on 9 April, fifty-three South Africans making Aliya landed in Israel, including nine olim from Cape Town! They arrived just in time for the Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day siren, an auspicious day to start their new lives in Israel.



Diller Community Day was a valuable and enriching experience. We were able to take a step back and see the inner-workings of our community, what it means to be part of one and how important it is to look out for others. Finally, we'd like to thank the six members of the leadership panel as well as Lauren Cohn and Debbie Katz-Durant for their time, passion and leadership.

— Adam Selikowitz and Ben Vogelman

Bnei Akiva

Bnei Akiva Cape Town have started the year off busy. We have a great new team of leaders and excited channichim. Family meet-ups have started, activities like matzah-pizza-making have been great, volunteering is happening, soccer games and school visits have been amazing! There are lots more exciting things to come. We can't wait to keep you updated for all the big, exciting, fun and safe things happening this year.

SAUJS

This year SAUJS ran a two-week online campaign to combat the mistruths and hatred spread during Israel Apartheid Week. The first week of our #OwnYourTruth campaign focused on shedding light on important topics within our student community, such as LGBTQI+ rights. The second week of the campaign was run to directly combat Israel Apartheid Week. During this week SAUJS focused on reclaiming the Zionist narrative. This campaign was an incredible success as was evidenced by the mass amounts of engagement from students over various social media platforms, in which they stood proudly as Zionists.

During the week we were fortunate enough to have a panel discussion, *Reclaiming Zionism* with incredible panelists Einat Wilf and Ran Bar Yashafat. The attendance of and feedback from this event were overwhelmingly positive, and assisted SAUJS in our fight to own our truth.

To conclude the week, SAUJS ran the first of a five-part crash course on the history of the Middle East conflict. During this series of courses we will provide our members the knowledge to be able to stand up and defend their truths in preparation for future

Israel Apartheid Weeks.

To sign up for the crash course and follow what SAUJS is up to, find us on Facebook @SAUJS Western Cape!

— Cassandra Mayekiso, Western Cape Director, SAUJS

Netzer and Habonim join forces before heading off to Israel

The Netzer and Habonim South African Shnatties began their Shnat Process together in South Africa. With an incredible three part programme all over South Africa, the Shnatties could not have had more fun waiting for Israel to open its borders. They began their journey together in The Craggs, near Plettenberg Bay, where they bonded, volunteered in the Kurland Village, hiked all of Robberg and Nature's Valley and learned about various agricultural farming techniques from the local Garden Route farms.

They then split off into their respective movements for a week of their own learning, working, hiking and volunteering in Cape Town and Hermanus only to once again meet up in Johannesburg where they stayed at the Tholego Eco Village and Learning Center. Here they learned about Eco-Living, they volunteered, herded cattle, gardened and even harvested the vegetables for their own dinner.

What an amazing experience it was for all involved! We look forward to more partnerships in the future!



Tiyul in The Craggs

Mazal Tov to the Academy Graduates 2021 MA in Jewish Education!



Yael Ayache

Educator at United Herzlia Schools



Rabbi Oshy Feldman

Senior Rabbi at Cape Town Hebrew Congregation Gardens Shul



Karen Kaimowitz

CO-CEO ORT SA CAPE



Chaim Moch

Head of Jewish Life and Learning (JLL) Herzlia Highlands Primary



Rabbi Sam Thurgood

Rabbi of Beit Midrash Morasha



Stacey Dembo

Executive Director of Yeshiva Mizrahi and Non-exec Chairperson of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning



Ilana Stein

Conservationist, Writer, and Head of Education at The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning



Rabbi Yehuda Stern

Rabbi of Sydenham Shul



Adrian Chiger

Businessman and Community Leader

Contact us to learn more about our NED programming for Educators:

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[back to contents](#)

Consider This

By Rabbi Emma Gottlieb



Thousands of years before this ‘unprecedented’ pandemic, our Jewish tradition was already providing us with the spiritual practices and coping mechanisms we use to get through difficult times.

The Psalms, when we date them historically, span at least five centuries, and some are as old as the 5th century B.C.E (over 2500 years ago!). Throughout the ages and generations, people of all faiths have taken comfort in these ancient words of guidance, reassurance, expression and catharsis. The Psalms put to words our despair, delight, horror, hope, exhaustion, exuberance, fear, faith, and renewal, reminding us that human experience is as old as time, and that in many ways, there is ‘nothing new under the sun’.

If we look at Psalm 32 for example, a psalm of thanksgiving for recovery from illness, we see how a piece of writing thousands of years old can resonate with us as if it had been written yesterday. Rabbi Irving Greenberg writes of Psalm 32, that in the beginning, “the patient is in total isolation, trapped in illness, sunk in him/herself, wasting away.” (Weintraub, Rabbi Simkha. Healing of the Soul, Healing of Body: Spiritual Leaders Unfold the Strengths & Solace in Psalms, p.35) Similarly, Rabbi Rachel Cowan, writing about Psalm 41, describes how, “as we struggle to come to terms with illness, we hear our own voices in this meditation on suffering” (ibid, p.41). We can relate to the psalmist, who wonders where she will find strength and courage to face the fear, anger and grief she is experiencing. We can empathise with the psalmist. When we hear the psalmist ask, “why have You afflicted me, O God?” we think of the many times we have cried out with those same words.

The Psalms reflect back to us how we often blame ourselves when we are faced with adversity, questioning what we’ve done to deserve what is happening to us. They share honestly the experience of begrudging others their joy when we are only feeling sorrow. And they also remind us that there is tremendous power in faith and in the hope of better times. Rabbi Cowan writes about how our experiences often reflect the despair we see in some of the psalms, yet they also, “contain the wisdom that can lead to our healing... Our healing does not lie in self-pity (but in turning to) the deepest part of ourselves... seeking comfort from God, and in reaching out (to one another). Allowing ourselves to be comforted, we can comfort others, and bring about a great tikkun/repair to our world.”

Whether we have come through illness or watched a loved one struggle with illness; whether we have lost someone recently or are simply feeling despair at the ongoing difficulties of our present reality, we can turn to our ancient texts for solace. We are not alone in feeling the way we feel. Those all around us are likely struggling with similar emotions. Even thousands of years ago, these emotional responses were valid in responding to adversity, illness, loss and fear. By reading the Psalms, we remember that those who came before us made it through difficult times, and so can we. After all, we need only to flip the page from a psalm about suffering to a psalm of celebration, to know that times will be better, and that we will have opportunities to come together again in joy, in song, and in gratitude.

Kein Yehi Ratson – May this be God’s Will.

Pesach togetherness despite COVID-19

Temple Israel offered a wide range of online activities and resources for Pesach this year.

Pesach preparation began with a cooking demonstration led by Rabbi Emma Gottlieb and her mom Beth, on Wednesday evening 24 March. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring Rabbi Emma and Beth together on one screen, making the physical distance between South Africa and Canada irrelevant!



Dvora Schweitzer receiving her Pesach parcel

These offerings afforded people the opportunity of celebrating Pesach in a meaningful way if they were unable to attend a family seder. The YouTube option also allowed congregants to supplement their own sederim by screening select pieces.

The second night of Pesach provided an opportunity for the young families of our community to get together online for a special seder led by Rabbi Greg Alexander, Student Rabbi Andi Kuti and our youth worker and Netzer Madrichah Rachael Bootcov.

The seventh day Pesach service was followed by a seventh day morning service during which we acknowledged, celebrated and blessed all the babies of our congregation that were born during lockdown. It was fitting to hold such a special service on *Shevi’i shel Pesach*, deemed by Jewish tradition to be the anniversary of the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, since the parting sea can be viewed as a birth canal through which Am Yisrael was born.

Our Pesach offerings were well received by our congregants and brought a strong sense of community despite the fact that we couldn’t get together in our synagogues because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to a generous donation, Temple Israel was once again able to put together Pesach packs which were delivered to the aged members of our congregation, fulfilling the mitzvot of maot chitim and honouring our seniors. These packs were delivered by members of the programming team and synagogue councils.

Our Pesach evening service took place on Saturday 27 March, after which congregants attended their sederim. Temple Israel offered two seder options: a Zoom seder led by Rabbi Malcolm and Gillian Matitiani, and a YouTube prerecorded video of a seder led by all four members of the rabbinic team, lay readers and children of our congregation. This video was pieced together and edited by Rabbi Emma Gottlieb.

NETZER WENT ON AN END OF PESACH TIYUL! WITH ALL OF THE COVID CHECKS IN PLACE, SOCIAL DISTANCING AND WEARING OF MASKS, WE MANAGED TO HAVE A FUN AND SAFE TIME ON TABLE MOUNTAIN THIS PAST SUNDAY. BE SURE TO JOIN US AT THE NEXT ONE!

Temple Israel Cape Town

SHAVUOT 5781

16 May 2021 from 6pm to midnight on Zoom and Facebook

Shavuot Services

Annual cheesecake competition

Variety of speakers

email marketing@templeisrael.co.za for more info

Mazaltov to those who celebrated Bnei Mitzvah with us last month

Josh Stoller
10 April

Zara Lurie
17 April

Noah Geer
17 April

MENSCH CHANGE-MAKER OF THE MONTH

By Galit Cohen

The landscape of the Eastern Cape is dotted with colourful huts and rondavels that every now and then cluster into small villages or homesteads. Lush, green, soft hills are interspersed with dramatic valleys. The scenery of the Eastern Cape is breath-taking.

But who are the people living in those huts? Who chooses to live in such isolation, in harsh conditions and why?

My name is Galit Cohen, I was born and bred in Haifa, Israel. As a professional working in the international development and humanitarian aid arena, I've been part of emergency missions to Haiti after the devastating earthquake in 2010; the Philippines after Typhoon Hayan in 2014; Oklahoma City after a Tornado in 2014; and in South Sudan for eight months in 2014-15.

For the last 10 years, I've been working in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. It's a long way from home, but I call it home. I've spent eight of these years as director of a non-profit company *Ripples for Change* (www.ripplesforchange.org). Not many know the realities of rural

areas... and, if I may, I'd like to take you on a journey to show you what I see every time I travel to a rural community.

I see a mother who must stretch the R460 monthly Child Support Grant to the maximum — with this she buys food, school uniforms, communication, and transport. I see people who can manage their budget better than many finance experts. I see miracle workers. I see South Africa's globally recognised social grant system which effectively helps to alleviate poverty for millions every month.

I see active, progressive traditional leadership willing to work hard for their people, advocating on their behalf and coordinating big projects that will benefit their communities. I see *Imbizos*, a type of a local court where people resolve their issues in a respectful manner. For eight years I've been working with *CONTRALESA* (the Congress of Traditional Leaders) where all the chiefs, headmen and local royal families come together.



Galit with traditional leaders, representative of CONTRALESA (Congress of Traditional Leaders).

As director of *Ripples for Change*, I've experienced great partnerships with traditional leaders with whom we've developed many exciting joint projects. We have incredible working relationships of mutual respect and understanding — and occasionally I'm even asked to start a meeting with a prayer in Hebrew, which I proudly do!

I see entrepreneurs with a dream to open a small bakery, a laundry, a catering business, a tent-hiring company, a spaza or a saloon business. I see people who know their community. They know their clients' needs, and they have the right local networks. All they need is

someone to believe in them — a bit of seed money — and mentorship.

I hear from early childhood development practitioners who hope to strengthen their monthly income stream with a small business — aiming to relieve their dependency on the Department of Social Development and be able to more sustainably self-develop.

I see people who prefer to live on their ancestors' land, to raise their kids where they grew up. I see people who appreciate their tradition, something I believe that as Jews we can relate to.

Continues on page 25

Galit Cohen is a member of the Mensch Network, a Jewish social change organisation committed to a socially just South Africa. www.mensch.org.za

#MuseumMondays



We're taking the Monday blues away offering visitors **FREE ENTRY** to the SA Jewish Museum every Monday from 10am until 4pm.

And that's not all...

Treat yourself with these Monday Specials at our restaurant, Café Riteve:

Pizza & cold drink - R 85,00
Specialty coffee & carrot/cheese cake - R 50,00

Enjoy a museum Monday on us to get your week off to a great start!

For further information email: info@sajewishmuseum.co.za

For restaurant bookings: 021 465-1594

[back to contents](#)

Family Announcements

CONDOLENCES — THANK YOU

ADA FUCHS

We would like to thank all our family and friends for their love, support and kindness shown on the passing of our dear mom.

Thank you for all the calls, messages and meals during Shiva, which were so much appreciated.

Special thanks to Rabbi and Rebbetzin Wineberg and Rabbi and Rebbetzin Liebenberg for their heartfelt support.

Our mom will be missed and is deeply mourned by her children Brian and Adele, Ivan and Dianne, Melanie and Lawrence, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

BRIAN JOSSELOWITZ

11/4/1947 - 13/1/2021

We wish to thank family, friends, Rabbi Bernstein and the Milnerton Shul for their support, love and kindness shown on the sudden passing of our husband, father and grandfather, as well as various organisations who have expressed their condolences.

Brian will be missed by his beloved wife, Barbara, children, Michael and Saul, daughters-in-law Sigal and Lara, and grandchildren Sophia, Noah and Jacob.

LEN MARKS

We wish to thank Rabbi Liebenberg as well as our family and wonderful friends, far and wide, for their love, kindness and support shown to us on the unexpected passing of our beloved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather.

Len is deeply mourned and will be in our hearts forever.

Marianne, Tony, Sherice and Jesse

RABBI DESMOND MAIZELS

HaRav Zvi ben Yeshayahu ve'Frayda a'h

רץ כצבי לעשות רצון אביו שבשמים

Swift as a deer (Zvi) to do the will of His Father in Heaven. (Ethics of the Fathers 5:20)

Grateful thanks from the whole family for the outpouring of love, respect, support and appreciation shown to us after the passing of our dear husband, father, grandfather and brother.

The messages are so very comforting. Please accept our sincere apologies if we have not managed to respond to your message personally — we have read them all and will cherish them.

Many people have shared how Rabbi Maizels touched them deeply, and how their interaction with him led them to be more careful in their mitzvah observance or interpersonal relations.

We ask that, in his memory, you try to emulate in a concrete manner one characteristic that you admired in him — either through increased observance of a specific mitzvah or enhanced interpersonal relations. In this way his memory will live on in all our hearts and through our actions.

May all the good done in his memory be for the *eilui neshama* (elevation of the soul) of Rav Zvi ben Yeshayahu ve' Frayda.

We thank Hashem for the gift of sharing our lives with such a special person.

Esther Maizels

Hillel and Yael Maizels; Hodaya, Elisheva, Ayelet, Noam and Miriam Ora and Zvi Davidson; Temima, Chananya, Sarah, Moriah, Elisheva, Avigail, Yisrael and Rachel

Yael and Ariel Harati; Adi, Shira, Noa, Hallel, Yehuda, Ori, Roi and Shaked Gila and Dotan Frangi; Emuna Mayim Barbara Kahn; Heather and Alan Sacks

To place a family announcement email: chron@ctjc.co.za

Two years in the planning – one magnificent Golf Day

Almost two years to the day since our golfers were last able to play together, it was with some delight that 28 four-ball teams teed off for WIZO's Sponsor-a-Child Golf Day on 25 March.

Due to safety protocols we had to forgo our usual dinner and prize-giving ceremony, but delicious take-away lunch and dinner packs, a fabulous wet-hole on the 16th sponsored by Spark ATM, sushi from Willoughby & Co, and Sugarbird gin tastings all added to marvellous atmosphere.

WIZO thanks both the players and sponsors who continue to make our golf day the one of the highlights on the golfing calendar. Monies raised go to WIZO's "Sponsor-A-Child" fund for disadvantaged youth.

Mazaltov to David Shevil, Russel Berman, Marc Sternberg and Mark Chamberlin for taking first place.



Tilley Hefer, Hoppy Lloyd, Donné Querido and Kate Tipper



Kelly Melnick, Lee Silke, Janene Currie, Tamar Lazarus, Michal Shakhnovich, Donné Querido and Lee Salama

Please support the wonderful sponsors and businesses which pushed the boat out during these difficult times, to donate our magnificent prizes to all the winners:

Hole Sponsors: Barry Friedman, Cohesive Capital, Josdel Property, Spark ATM.

Donations and Prizes: Adam Closenber, Addis (Usabco), African Spirit, Alligator, Alplas, Audiolens, Bags Of Bites, Banks Kitchen Shop, Brightstar Lighting, Casa LV, Cindy's Health & Beauty, Coco Li Fashion, Druk My Niet Wine Estate, Fairview Wines, Gill Raphael, Graeme Burnham, Heart To Art, High Road Wines, Hila Zetler, Interbrand, Issa Werb, Jamey Lipschitz, Jarrid Murcia, Jill Rabie, Jonathan Osrin, Julian Rabinowitz, Leisureturn, Lexus Cape Town, Loulisa, Made With Love & Passion, Mario's Jewellers, Mark Solomon Jewellers, Maxi's Jewellery, Medhair, Non Ferrous Metal Works, Ocean Blue Restaurant, Osrin Advisory, O.N.S. Health Studio, Peer Family, Pick n Pay, Premier Shoes, Pure Vision Property, Richard Goldstein, Rina Lifman, Robert Franco, Ronald & Tamar Lazarus, Schulman's Linen, Singer Group, Skin Tonic, Sofistica, Spar Paddocks, Stafford Shaw, Terry & Ari Stevenson, Sorbet, Sorbet Paddocks, Sunset Pharmacy, Suzanne & Aubrey Luck, The Athletes Foot Store, The Pro Shop, The Yard, Voyage Exclusive Fashion, Willoughby & Co Restaurant, Zane Lazarus.



**JEWISH
COMMUNITY
SERVICES
CAPE TOWN**



www.jcs.org.za

JCS @ WORK

The Face of Social Work

By Zia Adler (Social Worker)

Jewish Community Services Cape Town with the historical nomenclature of the Cape Town Philanthropic Association and The Jewish Board of Guardians has evolved over the centuries as a chrysalis response to the social service needs of the Jewish community. From humble beginnings rooted in the 1880's, the humanitarian response to immigrants arriving at the docks, impecunious, jobless and alone has developed into a powerhouse of social service delivery.

The social work department comprises a team of five social workers, one senior and a social work assistant. This professional cohort of change agents apply themselves daily to a range of sensitive and complex human experiences. Through a collaborative process, largely clandestine in nature due to the confidential nature of its service, this gently nudges a fragile trajectory that endeavors to counter a downward biopsychosocial spiral. A broad range of services are provided, a client system swaddled from cradle to grave, generic in its purpose, encompassing individual counselling and casework, community development, group work, work programmes, skills development, personal growth programmes, awareness, early intervention, prevention, statutory services and reintegration. The team of social workers apply themselves to a range of adverse human experiences which include but are not limited to:

- Homeless persons exposed to the elements while living on the streets alone, alienated and estranged only to find solace and feel satiated with hunger pains at bay.
- Domestic violence victims transforming to heroic survivors where a battered and bruised psyche palls while unhinging the cycle of abuse.
- Child protection services meeting statutory obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Reducing risk and promoting achievement of optimum potential for children.
- Strengthening of families ethereal in their structure, learning healthy modes of relating and communicating.
- Substance use disorders, persons threadbare in the literal gutter, courageous in the grip of a biopsychosocial disease

climbing the rehabilitation mountain towards a sober and functional future, reclaiming esteem and self-worth but emotionally unjudged in the despair of a relapse.

- Persons struck, often in the prime of their life by mental illness given access to services and treatments and shelter that prevent and reduce symptoms.
- Suicidal ideation shrinks where self-harm transforms to self-love and active suicides are prevented and lives saved.
- Individuals plucked from struggling economic circumstances placed in a warm safe environment cloaked in safety and security.
- Repaired relationships. Volatile and sensitive encounters restored to harmony and reason.
- 24-hour crisis intervention bears witness to the most profound, intimate and emotionally electric human experiences, the bridge between life and death, psychosis and a slide from reality, suicidality and threat of harm to others.
- In the grip of a stubborn and surprising pandemic, supportive counselling offsets loneliness, isolation, depression, alienation and anxiety diluting emotional and psychosocial fallout of multiple losses of livelihood, certainty and security.
- The unemployed demoralised and disempowered become rooted in purpose and meaning.

- The elderly and disabled know no flounder placed within self-determined borders safe from exploitation and threat.

- Trauma debriefing, reclaiming agency. Providing crucial support to children, adults and families in need, creating healthier families and community.

Due to a variety of factors, social worker and client may not always achieve the desired outcome. There are instances where solutions do not satisfy all ethical concerns, where insight fails, where unrealistic expectations clash with the reality of the constraints in the change process, roles may be misconstrued, personal agency falters, where truth is at odds with perception. Where there is a response to complex and multi-dimensional issues in an ambiguous process. Here progress may falter or fail where best efforts stumble to realise or effect change. Social work is an often-misunderstood profession due to this network of entangled variables of laws, ethics, values, norms and perceptions which can serve to chafe the decision-making process which can be complex and challenging. Despite the challenges the menu of transformation can be dramatic and although social workers cannot wave a magic wand at times outcomes are such that they can feel truly magical.

For more information please contact a JCS social worker on **021 462 5520** or email info@jcs.org.za.



Photo by Nik Shulatin on Unsplash

#JewishCommunity #SocialWork #SocialUpliftment





Cape Jewish Seniors Association

DIRECTOR: Diana Sochen 021 434 9691 director@cjsa.org.za ADMIN: Amanda 021 434 9691 admin@cjsa.org.za search CJSA on Facebook

And so the isolation continues!

Who would have thought that we would be celebrating a second Pesach isolated from our families and friends?

For as long as I can remember, right back to my childhood when the family got together to celebrate chags, with the cousins enjoying the together time and the adults sitting with our grandparents enjoying just being together — Pesach was the time of the year that resonated with family life and being together. Yet, once again, throughout the Jewish world this was not the case, and even though many did have small social gatherings, the majority of our seniors and others celebrated a very solitary Seder.

We really tried our best to ensure that every member could have the pleasure of a Seder, even if they were on their own; and thanks to Merle and Berkies and our incredible volunteers, we delivered over 200 families with both Shabbat and Pesach Seder meals. The planning and execution of such a service was really frenetic and unbelievably stressful, but our goal was achieved and everyone was happy once they received their order. Of course, added to the fact of lockdown, this year Pesach commenced directly after Shabbat (this happens every seven years), so we had to ensure that our Shabbat meals were suitably prepared in order to conform with Pesach requirements.

Special thanks to KOCOSA Cape Kosher Consumers — under the chairmanship of Rebbetzin Maizels — for their generous donation to the Shabbat meal and Yomtov project. Their donation enabled us to include taiglach treats in each parcel. Our thanks also, to the Herzlia Weizmann

learners who took time to beautifully illustrate and thoughtfully pen Pesach cards which were also included in the parcels. We have had such positive feedback from both of these special gifts.

We have seen the need to assist a number of our community members with meals during the week, and each Wednesday we deliver a one-plate meal to people who have been identified by our social workers as a person who can benefit from the added meal. We have so many angels who have sponsored those meals — a real mitzvah for the recipients and special thanks to those who have come on board with this sponsorship. If you are celebrating a birthday, or would like to honour someone in your family or the community, please contact us to enquire as how to sponsor our Wednesday midweek meals.

Our Zoom presentations are increasing. There is the opportunity for our members to log on at least once daily to enjoy the programmes we are offering. Our Ageless Grace exercise classes are offered twice a week, and they really do help our members in loosening up and getting the heartbeat going. Our weekly Yiddish classes, beginners class with Sybil and intermediate with Rochelle and Veronica, are enjoyed every Friday morning at 10am. Thursdays offer weekly guest speakers on a variety of interesting and stimulating topics, and on the first Thursday of the month, there is a wonderful concert with Cantor Ivor Joffe and friends. Each Thursday afternoon we enjoy a concert series. Social worker Rebecca Yoko hosts a quiz and each social worker has the opportunity to have a session with their members. Our knitting group

meets every Wednesday afternoon and whilst they knit for charity, they watch a movie series that is enjoyed by all. We join in with JW3 Abraham Presentations in the UK on Tuesdays and Fridays at lunchtime, and we also forward to members any other programmes that might be of interest.

The social workers continue to interact with the members regularly. Home visits take place whenever necessary, and Zoom counselling sessions are also available if requested. Our members care for one another and are wonderful in giving the heads-up to the social workers if there is any concern felt regarding anyone at all.

At the end of March we bade farewell to both our Sea Point housekeeper Wadia Isaacs, and Sea Point driver, Malcolm Stuppel. Both loyal members of the CJSA team have retired after being so loved and so much part of everything that we do for our members. They will be sorely missed, but know that we all wish them well as they retire, and thank them for their years of service to our seniors. As soon as we open our doors again, we will host a suitable event to acknowledge them for what they have done for us and meant to each one of us.

Hopefully, the third wave will not appear, and it won't be long before we are all able to receive the very necessary vaccination so that each centre can open its doors to welcome each member back to our homes. Please take care and remain safe!

Diana Sochen, Director

Social and Personal

Even during the lockdown period, there have been numerous occasions of celebration.

Births

Miriam Lichterman — great granddaughter
Wilfred Mirkin — great-granddaughter
Hymie and Shirley Waldman — great-granddaughter

Batmitzvah

Adele and Bernard Saven — granddaughter
Stuart and Lindy Diamond — daughter

Marriage

June Benjamin — grandson

Special Birthday

Selwyn Schiff — 80th

We welcome new members

Eliav Bigelman, Neill Selipsky, Gail Shorkend and Debbie Sher
Wishing a speedy recovery
Mae Navias

Our sincere condolences to members and families of members who have recently passed away:-

Barbara Kahn — brother Rabbi
Desmond Maizels
Diane Abel — husband Colin
Muriel Sendzil — sister Truda Goldman

Condolences to the family of
Marion Blomson and Ida Surovsky.

Note that the CJSA Wine is available at a donation of R80 per bottle.

Please support this fundraising initiative.



CJSA is providing weekly Shabbat meals and special mid-week meals to members of our community. There are people who cannot afford to pay for these meals. We have a number of ways in which YOU can assist us in providing Shabbat meals or mid-week meals by either sponsoring the meal in lieu of a birthday or any special gift, or purchasing booklets of gift certificates. Choose one of these special gift cards and make someone very happy.





The Mensch Network is growing! Meet three Mensches moving mountains

GENEVIEVE BOOTCOV is safety parent for vulnerable babies and the founder of *Little Hands Baby Home*. As a Herzlia graduate and lifelong member of Netzer Youth Movement, her passion for taking care of children grew as she took on more leadership roles. After volunteering at the baby house [*Ubuntu*], she formalised this role by becoming an accredited safety parent for babies. This year she's opened her own baby care home and is currently caring for Luna, who is just five months.

Little Hands Baby Home is a unique home which cares about each child as an individual. The aim is to provide each baby and child with the support to reach their unique full potential — giving them a head-start for wherever

life takes them. The home plans to care for six abandoned babies at any given time.

ESTA LEVITAS has been deeply involved in volunteering in Jewish communal life for the past 20 years. She has also spent many years doing outreach projects in Cape Town's townships. Currently, Esta chairs the outreach arm of *Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town* with great passion and motivation.

The focus of *Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town Outreach Activity* is to ensure food security for those who need it most — working with food kitchens and helping them establish vegetable gardens. The project is currently working with two food kitchens, the *Community Bible Society* and

the *Yiza Ekhaya Community Soup Kitchen*, run by Mama Mickey. Both are based in Khayelitsha. They are very excited to be holding their first training programme in June, where 15 people will be equipped with the skills needed to create and sustain vegetable gardens.

GALIT COHEN was born in Haifa and now lives in the Eastern Cape. With twenty years' experience as a professional in the international development and humanitarian aid arena, she's managed programmes in Israel, Haiti, USA, the Philippines and South Sudan.

In South Africa she's worked in townships around Gauteng and the Western Cape. For the past eight years Galit has been the Director of

Ripples for Change.

Ripples for Change was founded in 2013 in East London to strengthen rural and semi-urban communities in South Africa. The organisation believes in upskilling community members and leaders to ensure impactful, long-lasting social and economic change. It's dedicated to finding new strategies for dealing with challenges faced by rural communities. Their programmes focus on building capacities of local leaders and community members, early childhood development, agricultural programmes for emerging and existing farmers, and supporting communities by linking them to existing resources and supplies.



SASI – Southern Africans Studying in Israel REGISTER FOR THE 2021-22 SASI ACADEMIC YEAR

Telfed is a home away from home for all Southern African students in Israel, offering professional advice and a friendly support network. The SASI programme is a joint initiative between Telfed, the Eric and Sheila Samson Foundation and leading Israeli universities and academic institutions. SASI social volunteering programme affords a unique opportunity to experience Israel and give back to Israeli society.

PROGRAMME GOALS:

- Study in English and/or Hebrew and obtain an internationally-recognised academic degree.
- Adjust to a new environment.
- Expand your social network.
- Give back to the community and assist Olim living in Israel.
- Explore Israeli culture, history, society & diversity.

SOCIAL & VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

REQUIREMENTS:

- Telfed's annual events.
- Community volunteering assisting Olim living in Israel on a weekly basis (3 hours a week for a total of 80 volunteering hours + 14 hours of training per academic year).
- Jewish and Israeli cultural events throughout the academic year, organised by the scholarship department (an integral part of the programme including a Shabbat get-together, tours, picnics and more).



WHO CAN APPLY?

- Southern African citizens of Jewish lineage according to the 'Law of Return', with a recognised matric and university pass certificate.
- It is not compulsory to make Aliyah in order to participate in the SASI programme.

SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT:

- Annual scholarship of NIS 5,500 for the academic year, plus a modest cultural and travel stipend.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Apply to a university of your choice.
- Apply for a SASI social and volunteering scholarship using Telfed's online application form.
- Online interview with a SASI staff member.

Contact us for more information:

www.telfed.org.il/

admin.esp@telfed.org.il

Toll free from SA: 0800-997-495 (ext 211)

Telfed telfed_israel

Cape Town Holocaust survivor's life captured in inspiring documentary

By Leila Stein

Holocaust documentaries and survivor testimonies have been captured on film since the liberation of the camps. The most recent to join this history's critical archives is *I Am Here*, a new take on the survivor documentary format.

I Am Here is a documentary directed by Jordy Sank, that chronicles 99-year-old Holocaust survivor Ella Blumenthal's life. The film explores her early years in Poland, the harrowing stories of her time in the concentration camps, and her life in Cape Town with her family.

Jordy met Ella at a Shabbat dinner, where she shared her stories about her time in the camps. He explains that the two developed a friendship, during which time he decided to make the film capturing her memories and experiences.

"We wanted to show the zest for life and the eternal spirit that she has, that almost has a sort of a positive message for the future. You know, despite everything that she's been through, she's able to overcome it," explains Jordy.

Jordy and producer Gabriella Blumberg explain that they wanted to make a film that would engage with younger generations. They accomplished this by using animation as a unique story-telling device when covering Ella's earlier years.

"It's never been captured in this way creatively, of course, with regards to having the animation, and it's not like a talking head, black and white documentary," says Gabriella.

Jordy explains that they moved away from the black and white stock footage because it wasn't personal enough. "Ella has these really, really personal harrowing stories and miraculous wonderful stories of survival," he says. "We found that the stock footage... didn't allow you to connect to a character and sort of walk alongside her, you know, go on this journey with her."

The end result draws the audience into these different experiences to feel as though they are there alongside her. These contrast with present-day Ella in all her energetic, playfulness, whether it's enjoying a walk on the promenade or celebrating with her family.

"Ella's personality is just completely magnetic. It's actually it's a personality that stays with you when you leave the film. You know, she, her personality is remarkable. In spite of what she's been through, she's just got this remarkable resilience and this unwavering energy and determination," says Gabriella.

The film has already connected with audiences who have been able to watch it. It recently won the Audience Award at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival. This is an award that is chosen by the audience who vote for their favourite film.

"I think to get that award was validating and that sense of knowing, just knowing that it did resonate with people, even though we weren't sitting with them," says Gabriella.

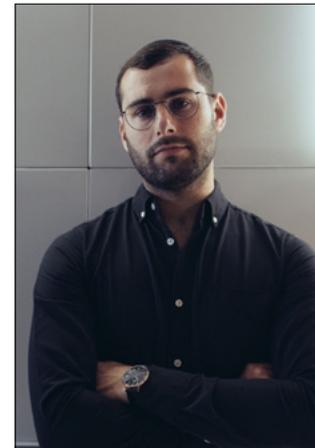
South Africans wanting to catch the incredible film will have to wait a little longer. News and updates about the film's distribution and screenings can be found on Sanctuary Film's website, Instagram (@sanctuaryfilms), and Facebook (@sanctuaryfilms).



Ella Blumenthal at the window of her Sea Point apartment



Triumphantly still here!



Jordy Sank



Gabriella Blumberg



Ella as a young woman in 1938



I Am Here won the coveted Audience Award at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival



The film uses animation as a unique story-telling device when covering Ella's earlier years.

[back to contents](#)



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A VIEW FROM THE BAR

Surfing and the law

By Anton Katz



Many would be surprised by seeing the words *the law* and *surfing* in the same sentence. But the reality is, there is an interesting dynamic at play.

The law and surfing interact often, and in subtle and surprising ways. There are two things that made me think of the relationship. The first is the images of many surfers protesting and defying the government's COVID-19 closure of the beaches. During the beach ban I saw many surfers in the water and on the beach as if there was no ban and that COVID-19 did not exist. Not only that the pandemic did not exist, but that there is no law governing the surfer in his ocean paradise.

The law concerns humans, our interactions with each other, with the environment, with businesses and with government. And surfing does the same.

Secondly, my children in their surfing excitement have managed to persuade me to enter and enjoy the ocean in Muizenberg, even at my age and shape. In the water I have come across all manner of persons — young and old, fit and the not-so-fit, those who are heavily overweight, and experienced as well as rank beginner surfers. I met a seventy-two-year-old woman from Pretoria thoroughly enjoying her first-ever surfing lesson. She incredibly managed to stand on her board for a few seconds.

They all had a sense a freedom and peace far removed from the laws and traumas of daily life. I wondered and researched whether, and if so how, the law and surfing intersect. What I discovered should not have been a surprise. There is a growing overlap.

The law concerns humans, our interactions with each other, with the environment, with businesses and with government. And surfing does the same. Beaches attract a unique mix of people: beach walkers, sunbathers, athletes, families, swimmers, bodysurfers, boogie-board riders, surfboard riders, kite surfers, sailboard riders, lifesavers and homeless persons to name a few. Surf schools, surf magazines and surf equipment have developed at a fast pace over the last decade. Safety measures concerning attacks by sharks and other marine wildlife are in some places regarded as government responsibility. Emergency medical care for injuries which occur in the water must be available, it is argued. And one of the

five new sports at the Tokyo 2021 Olympics will be surfing.

In law no two cases are ever the same. Every single case constitutes competing parties arguing why they, on the basis of precedent or simply logic, should succeed. That applies to divorce cases, criminal matters, commercial disputes and indeed all types of case. No human is exactly the same; so all cases are different, although earlier decided cases will guide and often bind the court hearing the dispute. In the ocean no two waves are ever the same. But, just as in the law, experience indicates when and how a wave will probably break, and how big it will be.

An interesting example in the law of defamation was decided in the Cape Town High Court a few years ago. *Zigzag* is a surfing magazine which has a readership of between thirty to forty thousand. It published a photograph of a twelve-year old girl from Port Elizabeth at the beach in Cape St Francis without her or her mother's consent or authority. The photograph was stamped "filth" and on the cover of the magazine a statement appeared saying "100% pure filth photos inside". The mother sued the magazine owner claiming damages because her daughter had received and been the target of social media unpleasantness. The girl had been labelled a 'slut' and "PE's little porn star." *Zigzag* magazine in defending the claim relied on the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and that in the surfing community the expression 'pure filth' had a positive connotation meaning something of great quality. The editor of *Zigzag* testified that the words 'pure filth' had a specific meaning within the surfing community; that is of something of good quality and was a phrase which was complimentary, either of a wave or of a young woman. The Court rejected the defence and held that the word 'filth' in any primary context, to any reader of ordinary intelligence, must hold a negative connotation. The High Court in concluding stated: "The photograph was not one which captured happy holiday-makers on a glorious South African beach, the type of photograph that appears from time to time in daily newspapers. Nor was it similar to the fleeting image of an attractive woman caught on television by the perennially sexist camera crews, recording a cricket match on a hot South African summer's afternoon but whose crowd shots are invariably of scantily clad young women as opposed to studious cricket spectators. In this case, the court is confronted by a photograph, to which a full page was

devoted, which was clearly designed to be a pinup shot." Although the mother sought damages in the amount of R 500 000 the Court only awarded R10 000.

To summarise, it is worth referring to a scholarly article in *California Western Law Review*: "Surfing has for many years been a sport or activity free from legal consequences and legislative regulation. The mentality and customs of surfing teach peace, love, and respect for fellow surfers. With popular surf locations becoming overcrowded and collision injuries

a saturation of common surf spots. This overcrowding,

combined with a disrespect for, or ignorance of, well-known surf customs designed to promote safety and order in the water are two possible explanations for collision accidents. A long-held custom is for surfers to secure their boards with a leg leash. But if they do not, and the board crashes into another person and injures him or her, should the surfer be liable. Proposals in California range from labelling a surfboard a dangerous weapon to creating 'surf police' who would patrol surf locations on jet skis and issue tickets for violations of leash laws and other beach community ordinances.

The life and experience of the somewhat small but growing community of surfers gives us pause when we consider the law and how it impacts our lives.

Perhaps the lesson is that no matter how free and easy humans may wish to live and be, there will always be necessary limits on what we may do. Ideally those limits should be narrow. The limits should only arise when our conduct (negatively) affects others, and the exercise of their rights and freedoms.

Surfing has for many years been a sport or activity free from legal consequences and legislative regulation. The mentality and customs of surfing teach peace, love, and respect for fellow surfers

increasingly prevalent, the idea of 'surfer liability' and the potential for a *delict/tort** damages claim in negligence is becoming more of a reality every day. Surfing, through an increase in worldwide publicity, has steadily grown in popularity yielding

* A *delict* is wrong committed by one person against another giving rise to a claim for damages by the victim of the unlawful conduct against the wrong-doer.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PO Box 4176 Cape Town 8000 or e-mail: chron@ctjc.co.za

Finding meaning in grief

My name is Lisa. I work as a child and adult psychologist in our community.

It's been almost eight years since my husband and child passed away. I survived the car accident, but they didn't. My broken bones healed, but my broken heart has been the biggest challenge to live with. Last year, my beloved father passed away. Like you, I'm no stranger to loss.

I see our community reeling from loss upon loss. I see how frightened many are as the distance between death and life has closed or narrowed for so many.

I have learned as a psychologist and survivor that death is as much a part of life as breath. I have learned that pain is a natural response to death, and that in life, pain is inevitable but suffering is optional. I understand that "suffering is what our mind does to us". (David Kessler).

David Kessler is an American grief expert. He has repeatedly been called upon to help the nation understand the psychological impact of COVID-19 and the loss on all levels it leaves in its wake. Kessler's latest book is titled, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*. It's our destiny to

make meaning, to learn from life. As I sit with parents and children in loss and hold my own, this is some of what I have come to understand:

Enjoy your children; enjoy your life; and teach yourselves how to take control of your mind.

As a parent, I remember how busy life can be. We take care of our children's physical needs. We provide, feed, clothe, educate, and stimulate them, but do we make enough time to enjoy them? To join a child in play is remarkable. Here we are able to delight in the joy they bring to our world. How precious they are, and how precious it is to be alive!

The more we are present in our lives, the less we fear death.

Now, I take the time to turn inward, to be still on a regular basis and ask: what gives my life meaning? Then I prioritise it.

When you are deeply engaged in life, there isn't too much space for fear and suffering. The pain will be there, but the living will be larger. In this way, we, too, reduce our suffering. My prayer is simple: may we have the capacity to allow loss to teach us all how to live a more meaningful life.

Lisa Michalson

Continues from page 17

MENSCH CHANGE-MAKER OF THE MONTH

I see teachers and principals who will stay at work until 5pm to keep the youth busy and 'out of trouble'. I see early childhood development practitioners who hold their smartphone still for an hour to catch the one spot of internet reception available — so they can join a training session on Zoom.

I see the smiles, the warmth and kindness. I also see the difficulties. I see the social illnesses and weak education system. I see unmotivated yet frustrated youth — millennials with a need for immediate results, tech-savvy, craving attention, with often little outlet in the slow pace of rural life. I see money going into nearby cities or towns, with little contributions to the circular economies of local communities.

I believe in the need to strengthen rural communities, to build local economies and social resilience. I hope for more small retail businesses, that can build local economies to directly benefit local people.

When I worked in the townships around Johannesburg and Cape Town and saw the numbers of migrants flocking from rural areas to these deprived areas in search of employment, I realised how difficult it is for any municipality to properly plan service provision for areas with

unknown population growth.

I met many economic migrants from rural areas, who had little choice but to move to a congested, urban life in search of income — but then to not even have continuous employment. It took me years to realise that life in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape offers so much more, that people would rather stay in their rural communities, put up with limited services — no running water, no electricity — if only there was economic opportunity for them.

And so *Ripples for Change* became my mission. We support early childhood development centres, emerging farmers, entrepreneurs and schools.

I believe that by reinforcing rural communities, we can slow down the migration to the townships and build a socially strong and more just society.

I guess it is the pioneer in me, the Israeli girl, a mix of innovation, entrepreneurship and that toiling of the soil mentality that drives me in this work, reinforced by the spirit of those I work with that too want to make their communities prosper.

When you are next in the Eastern Cape, contact me, and I can show you, and share with you all the potential that is there.



Talking to children about death and dying

Carin Marcus recently spoke to a Nechama audience about how to talk to children about death.

Carin is a psychologist with a special interest in oncology, palliative care, grief, loss and bereavement. Beside her many years of professional engagement with the subject, she has personal experience, having lost her father in the Helderberg plane crash when she was a young child. After working in the field for 25 years, she explains that she's developed a relationship with death as a teacher of life. While it brings up feelings of fear, vulnerability, impotence and anxiety, it also teaches us to appreciate and embrace the preciousness of life by teaching us about the impermanence of being.

We try to protect our children from conversation around death and dying, but they are aware of it, especially during this time of COVID. Often our discomfort stems from our own internal narrative, and our children witness us deferring the conversation or talking about it in hushed tones. This communicates that death is something to be feared. Honest and fact-based dialogue are key to demystifying this perception. They also need to see their parents experiencing and expressing appropriate emotions, but also to know that it passes and things will be ok again.

It is *always* important to be honest and factual. Euphemisms such as 'somebody *lost* a relative', is often taken literally and can lead to confusion. We need to use the "D-words" — death, died, dying — which can be difficult even for adults. Let your children know that they can ask you anything. If they are comfortable asking, you can take your cue from the question as to how much detail to give. When they are ready, they'll ask the next question.

Carin gives some great examples of how we can use concrete imagery to help children understand some difficult concepts around death. The seasonal nature of leaves teaches them that all living things have their natural lifespan — beginning, ending, and life in-between. This cycle of life is happening around us all the time. Different creatures have different lifespans.

Grieving can be compared to an injury. Initially it will be very sore and bleed, then a scab will form, and eventually there'll be a scar that's barely visible, and no longer painful.

To explain the difference between the body and soul, she uses the metaphor of a glove. The hand in the glove is the living part, the glove without the hand is like the body when the soul has left.

Ritual and creativity can be helpful in processing feelings, saying goodbye, and maintaining a bond with the deceased. For example, the child can decorate a stone and give it to an adult to take to the cemetery. If they ask what heaven's like, don't impose your vision, ask them to describe or draw what they imagine heaven to be. It is most important to communicate hope for the future. Acknowledge that it's hard now but that it will be ok. Let them tell you what they're looking forward to.

Carin gives a brief overview of the developmental stages, and stresses the importance of using these as a guide when addressing the topic with children, as this indicates their ability to grasp certain concepts.

Age 0-2/3: Children can't understand the concept of the permanence of death, but they will pick up on the mood in their environment. If a child this age has lost someone close, they might experience a "double loss" as they grow up, because they will not have a memory of that person. It is therefore important to help "build a memory" through pictures, conversation and ritual, so that the child has a sense of who that special person was.

Age 3-4: They start to understand life cycles, but have not yet developed concrete thinking. Life as quite magical, and anything is possible, so they are unable to understand the concept of permanence.

Age 5/6 to pre-adolescence: This is when they start to develop concrete thinking, and so they begin to understand that if someone has died, they can't come back. They also develop a sense of universality which allows them to understand that what happens to others can also happen to them. They might express grief through behaviour patterns of anxiety and regression. Carin confirms that this is the age-group that presents most often for therapy, but goes on to say that therapy is not always needed, and that the decision should be based on how severe and how long these behaviours present, and how much they impact the child's daily life. However there's no harm in seeking therapeutic help if unsure.

Adolescence: They are capable of contemplating the meaning of life, and engaging in existential thinking. While this allows greater capacity to find meaning, it can also result in increased anxiety. And while they are now more capable of empathy, adolescence is often a time of callousness. It is particularly important at this age for them to feel included in the conversation.

Sydenham Shul and Education Africa present *Sounds of Celebration VIII*

Sounds of Celebration is back for its eighth iteration and this year, it is more powerful and relevant than ever. For the first time, this unique collaboration between Education Africa and the Sydenham Shul will present an online concert to an international audience.

Sounds of Celebration VIII's online global social cohesion concert will feature both local South African as well as international stars and groups, singing and performing. In addition, there will be performances by the *Marimba Hub* bands as well as the cream of South African youth. The Finale will be a spectacular collaboration of all the featured artists in a celebration of social cohesion across the world!

SIMUNYE — *We Are One* will be available across the globe on Sunday 23 May as a packaged broadcast, streamed directly into viewers' homes and community spaces and will be available for a week after the initial screening.

"The pandemic has forced us to re-think how we present *Sounds of Celebration*, and whilst this may be our eighth edition, I am so excited to introduce an entirely new global audience to this incredible international concert of social cohesion and the remarkable work undertaken by *Education Africa*," says David Bloch, long-time patron of this project and this year's director and producer.

Education Africa are particularly proud and excited to announce features by South Africa treasures and multiple award winners — including Grammy Awards

— *Ladysmith Black Mambazo* and *Wouter Kellerman* as well as the *Vienna Boys' Choir* (Austria), *Nina Oud* (UAE), *Gad Elbaz* (USA), *The Solomon Brothers* (Israel), *Gregory Maqoma* (South Africa), *Pops Mohamed* (South Africa) and *Justin Wilman* (UK).

The concert will feature special appearances by *The Syrian Peace Choir* (Germany), *The Queen Victoria School Pipe Band* (Scotland), *The Peace Drums Project* (Israel) and *The Urdang Academy* (UK). In addition, *Sounds of Celebration* fans will recognise returning friends and performers *Choni G*, *Yudi Cohen* and *Neville Smith*. Finally, the concert presents *Education Africa Marimba Hub Bands* from Goede Hoop, Masibambane College, John Wesley Community Centre and The Dominican School for the Deaf performing alongside *King David Linkfield* and the *St Dominic's Boksburg Steel Band*. In a special feature, *Ladysmith Black Mambazo* will be presented playing on stage with the *Dominican School for the Deaf* and *Goede Hoop Marimba Bands*.

For the past eight years, *Education Africa* and Sydenham Shul have partnered in an annual fundraising effort to support the ongoing sustainability and growth of its 18 *Education Africa Marimba Hubs* in a wide number of disadvantaged schools and community centres, providing educator training and safe, creative spaces for learners. Joan Lithgow, *Education Africa's* resident marimba specialist speaks about the significance of this project. "Social cohesion is what drives us at *Education Africa* and in particular our marimba projects. Social cohesion

does not just happen! We need to create moments that enable this to happen. There are not too many international events which bring such diverse communities together on one platform."

James Urdang, CEO and founder of *Education Africa* notes, "We have been leading with innovation through the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to deliver on our project portfolio which benefits thousands of disadvantaged South Africans." By providing safe sanctuary and teaching new skills to young South Africans to express themselves artistically, the project strives to engender hope and provide an ongoing lifeline to potential realised.

The annual projects have traditionally culminated in a live concert comprising an ensemble of young South Africans celebrating social cohesion through music. Whereas these concerts have always sought to bridge gaps in background, and culture, the lessons learned during lockdown have taught us that while we may experience lockdown, we are not necessarily locked in. This year's concert strives to shatter more barriers than ever before, transcending the constraints of time and place and demonstrating, in a tangible way, that we are truly one.

This celebration of music is produced under the masterful directorship of David Bloch, international Creative Director, Show Producer and *Education Africa* Patron and Joan Lithgow, *Education Africa* Music Director and Marimba Specialist. David brings with him a wealth of knowledge taken from his television and broadcasting experiences with the likes of the SA Music Awards



Choni G and Pops Mohamed perform together.

(SAMAs), SA Film and TV Awards (SAFTAs) and the *KORA All African Music Awards*. David will co-host the concert with Layla Kardan (Dubai). The broadcast will include special messages from global friends and supporters of *Education Africa*.

The *Sounds of Celebration* team are looking forward to sharing this latest offering with a global audience and to inspiring patrons around the world. "Social cohesion is the mission behind the *Sounds of Celebration* project. I am excited that this year's online concert — with local and international performers — will spread this message around the world," Rabbi Yehuda Stern (Spiritual Leader, Sydenham Shul).

Tickets are priced at R85. Book at www.educationafrica.org and www.heroticket.co.za

Together we can make a difference by supporting *Education Africa's Marimba Hub* project.

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Choni G and Pops Mohamed onstage with the full cast

[back to contents](#)

USING MY NUDEL

Tradition!

By Craig Nudelman

Last month was the 50th anniversary of the premiere of the 1971 film adaption of the hit musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*.

JW3, a Jewish organisation in London, organised a plenary with some of the cast members from the iconic film. It was wonderful. It had four out of five of Tevye's daughters, Fruma Sarah, Perchek, and Chaim Topol's daughter, who represented him. There were stories and anecdotes about the making of the film (did you know it was filmed in Yugoslavia?!) and it was a delight to watch. *Fiddler on the Roof* was a seminal moment in showing what life was like in 19th century Russia for Jews. And the word I associate the most with the musical is 'tradition'. (Please picture me saying it with my index finder pointing up).

Tradition is what makes a culture and forms the basis and foundation of our society, which includes our families. It brings a sense of belonging, which is something I've written about in previous columns. It defines our past, our present, and our future. Without our traditions our value system isn't defined. Think about any of your family traditions and how they have played a critical role in shaping who you are today. Nevertheless, as Tevye comes to realise, our traditions have to change and become more suited to life in modern culture and society.

The same week that I saw the plenary, Prince Philip passed away. He represented the long-standing tradition of British monarchy and its place in society, not only in the United Kingdom, but also in the Commonwealth and broader global society. His death was felt around the world. I mean, it wasn't a shock exactly — he was 99 years old, three months shy of his 100th birthday, and had been married to the Queen for 76 years. From the Baby Boomer generation until now, five generations have known Prince Philip as the Duke of Edinburgh. But is the tradition of the monarchy still relevant today? Does the world, and the British especially, need a monarchy?

For me, the monarchy represents stability in the global world order. The Queen has been a force in the world since 1952, albeit in a passive manner. She has seen 15 British Prime Ministers come and go. I find that crazy. In the face of seismic shifts

that have taken place globally in the last 70 years, it is amazing that the world has had this one stable global figurehead for generations. There has not been an organisation or political system that has been as constant as the British royal family. We can only assume that even this will change eventually, as everything does.

Change can be good. We have changed from a society which was racist, sexist and was accepting of any form of bigotry. We are now aware that these issues are not acceptable. Unfortunately, it doesn't mean people have changed. The incredible technology that has been created in the past 40 years has seen our society change into one that is interconnected and globally aware. Of course, there are positives and negatives regarding this, but one can't deny it has changed the face of the world, influencing not only individuals but also creating political changes around the world.

These changes have also been seen in our Jewish community. For the past few months I have been working on developing a presentation to be shown at a conference for a Jewish organisation in the US. They approached me last November after seeing my segment on Simcha about my Jewish walking tours which I conduct for my company *Mother City Jewish Tours* (which you can see on YouTube). I had to film my tour (thanks Josh and Gabi for the help!) and went over the history of the community and how it's changed since 1841. The changes in the way Judaism has been understood since then and how many iterations it has been through are quite amazing. From the very British manner in which the community was formed to the influence of the heimishe Litvaks, we can understand what the community went through and how we ended up where we are today. But there are some things that haven't changed and seem to be a 'tradition', in a way. Herring and kichel, anyone?

I was asked the other day how to involve young Jews in communal events and how we can include them in the community. This is not only a question that I'm trying to answer currently. It's a question that's been



LEARN THROUGH CREATIVITY AT SALISBURY HOUSE

We have had so much fun celebrating our chaggim this year.

For our Pesach seder, the children 'bought' the food that was required and used their mathematical skills to work out what change was needed. We then cooked the food for the seder plate, laid the table and enjoyed the fruit of our labour with our parents.

This term we are focusing on *Food Around the World* at Salisbury House. Our first stop was Israel, where we learnt about Israeli street food culture and Israeli dancing. On Yom Ha'atzmaut we went to *Yoffi Falafel* in Muizenberg, where we were treated to a falafel-making demonstration by the owner, Greg. He taught us the importance of each ingredient and we got to taste all the salads and sauces that make falafel unique and delicious. After our meal we went back into the kitchen where Greg taught us how to make halva and once again surprised us with a taste of this scrumptious treat. We ended off this very special day with a swim on the beach.

We will be visiting each continent of the world in our world food travels, culminating in a Hollywood red carpet event where we will be showing the premiere of our first school movie, *The Friendship Quest*.

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Students and parents enjoy Salisbury House's first school seder.



Maya Schapiro, Tayah Weir and Endinalo Mhini waiting to tuck into the delicious food at Yoffi falafel

asked from my time at Habonim, the Jewish Board of Deputies, and Herzlia, and it's probably not the only generation that has had this 'problem'. I'm sure that from the 1940s until now Jewish youth have been 'apathetic', 'disengaged', and 'disinterested' in being active in the community. And yet, the community continues to run. It seems as though this tradition, worrying about the community's future, will always be there. The small majority who attend Shuls, Limmud, and Jewish youth movements are active. It seems that it isn't Jewish youth inactivity that is a problem, in my opinion, but rather emigration and the shrinking of the young Jewish community. But that's a different story altogether.

Tradition is important and is

the foundation of who we are, as individuals, families, and communities. Our role as parents and communal leaders is to strive to pass these traditions down to future generations. I want my daughters to have Shabbat dinner with my family. I mean, I also want them to read *Harry Potter* and watch *Star Wars* so that they value curiosity and imagination, but I wouldn't necessarily call that a tradition. I want them to share the tradition of watching the Manchester Derby, and watch Manchester United lift the Premier League trophy (BH it will happen soon). Sharing our unique Jewish and South African traditions and values will ensure that they, too, can pass these traditions down to future generations to reinforce the values and ideals that we hold so dear to our hearts.

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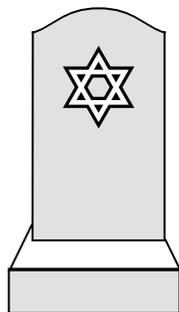
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Two different challenges for local open water swimmers

The Robben Island to Blouberg crossing is an ideal challenge for many swimmers, and on 18 April, Shaun Borstrock and Shaun Diamond were two of a group of twelve taking on this epic swim. While the route was the same for both men, their challenges were different.

Borstrock challenged himself to raise funds for CSO Cape Town. “The swim is just three or so hours of my life compared to many hours that the CSO volunteers give to be there for the community, and I have made it my mission to help create awareness for these selfless people by pushing myself to the limits,” he explained on his BackaBuddy page, where supporters have donated over R50 000 to his campaign to date.



Shaun with his parents, Jeff and René Borstrock, after the swim. Photo credit: Ivan Katzenellenbogen

Diamond had a different challenge altogether. He says “I was introduced to Triathlon by Brandon Maggen, some time back. I was an avid runner and cyclist at the time and triathlon seemed like the next logical step. After participating in a number of triathlons and two Iron Man 70.3s, in Durban, I was hooked. In May 2019, the unthinkable happened, I was diagnosed with Cauda Equina Syndrome, compression of the spinal cord. This resulted in me being paralysed from the waist down due to nerve damage. Through an extended period in hospital, intense physiotherapy and rehabilitation, I had to literally learn to walk again. To date, I have made significant progress, but remain partially disabled with nerve damage to my limbs and the need to use crutches to walk safely.”

“No longer being able to participate in triathlon,

but still being able to swim, I needed a new challenge. I chatted to my coach and together we planned my journey to the Robben Island Crossing” said Diamond.

Borstrock had been participating as an amateur triathlete, having completed a few Iron Man 70,3s and an Iron Man 140.6 in 2019, and the idea of open water swimming had always appealed.

“When lockdown finally eased, and the gyms opened and events started again, I decided to add the swimming to my exercise regime, in order to mix it up and get fit again” he said.

This is where the open water journeys of Borstrock and Diamond intersect. “[Shaun Diamond] suggested that I join him, and after a few weeks of procrastinating, I was committed! The training was intense, with anywhere between 7,5km and +15km per week in the pool, coupled with a weekly session of open water swimming to keep it real and assist with the cold water conditioning,” Borstrock explained.

Speaking of their open water training and the group that swam on the day, Borstrock and Diamond both trained with Britt Hyland and her squad at K8 Coaching. The group all swam as individuals, but since it wasn't a race, they trained and socialised as a unit. Diamond recalls, “I followed a rigorous training programme with indoor pool squad training sessions with my pool coach, Cara Lee, and regular open water sea swims with Britt. The month before was the hardest, with early 5am, 4km extended pool sessions and long open water sea swims. The sea swims trained me to acclimatise to the cold water, swell, strong currents and swimming through kelp, all elements of the Robben Island Crossing.”

Borstrock was given many tips and tricks from experienced swimmers to help pass the time during the swim, but he preferred the solitude and beauty of the silence, and used the time as an opportunity to focus on his breathing patterns,



Shaun Diamond swims alongside the boat. Photo credit: David Sullivan

stroke consistency and correctness. “This was sufficient to keep me well occupied for the three hours I was in the water!” Diamond added that “all I did was focus on the positive and that every swim stroke was getting me closer to achieving my incredible goal. I thought about my late mom a lot and how proud she would have been. So with all these factors, the monotony faded away.”

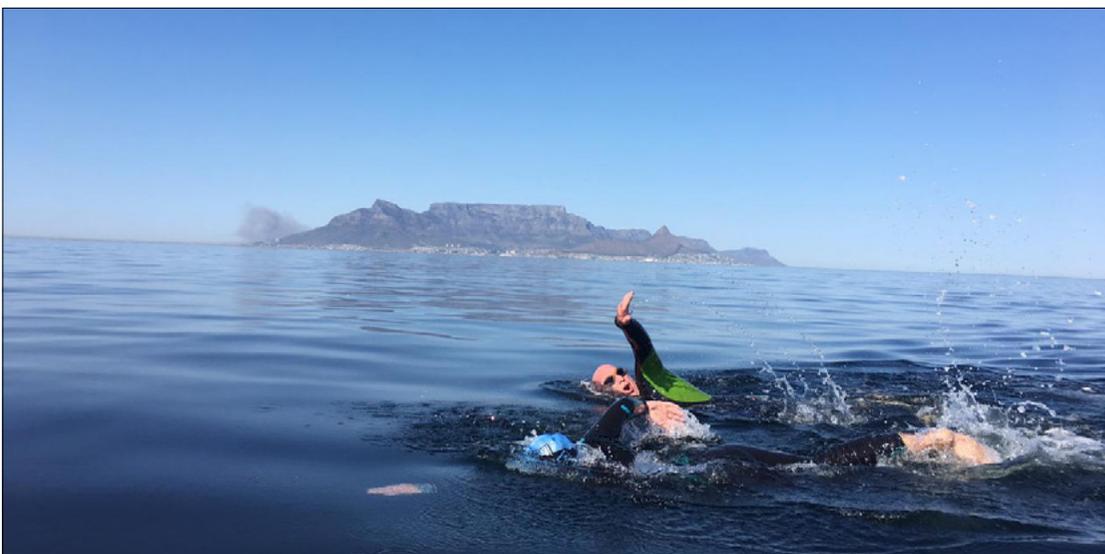


Shaun Diamond celebrates his amazing achievement. Photo credit: Karman de Lange

Describing the final stretch Borstrock says, “Within about 600m of completing the swim, I started losing focus and becoming somewhat disorientated and overwhelmed by the fact that the end was near. By the time I eventually got out of the water to see all the people on the beach, my family, friends and loved ones and of course the CSO delegation, I was overcome with pride, and tears of joy. I'd managed to accomplish my goals and bring more light into the world. I was happy, and it was a phenomenal day out.” He plans to support more of the local open water swim events in and around Cape Town in the future.

Diamond says of his finish “I was elated and super-proud of myself, and so grateful for the experience and all who helped me achieve this incredible goal. Arriving at Big Bay and seeing so many friends, family and supporters was something I will cherish forever. Right now I need to rest, but I am sure a swim in the future is a likely plan!”

Did you know? The first Robben Island swim was recorded in 1909 when Henry Charteris Hooper swam from Robben Island to the old Cape Town harbour. It took Hooper around seven hours to complete the swim of approximately 11km. Despite the relatively short distances (between 7km and 11km depending on the route) swimming from Robben Island remains a challenge mostly due to the cold water temperature.



Shaun Borstrock in the water Photo credit: David Sullivan

Interrupted — a solo exhibition of paintings by Claudia Gurwitz

By Claudia Gurwitz

My most recent body of work was born during SA's lockdown and explores interrupted plant imagery. While I have always been drawn to the strength and potency of our natural environment, this series has taken a new direction, which stems from the feeling of collective disharmony that disturbs our existence during this COVID pandemic.

As organic beings in this world, we are intrinsically part of our natural world. While humanity feels off-centre during this time, we are having to find new ways of navigating this altered reality, of engaging with each other and with our environment. While we feel a disconnect, our environment, in turn, feels out of sync. My *Interrupted* series alludes to a subtly distorted perspective of natural form, reflective of a disturbed environment.

Attention to detail is vital to me. I have always observed and captured the detail of structure and shapes in nature; the parts that make the whole. Through a micro-setting, I capture a magnified perspective of seemingly unremarkable plant matter. It is in this detail that my painting exposes the sacred geometry of each form and explores the relationships between these structures; how they connect with one another. Through my painting I have always experienced the intrinsic unity that pervades nature. This gives me a sense that we live in a beautiful and orderly world.

During this pandemic crisis, I no longer experience a complete sense of calm and clarity engaging with nature and its forms. While being outdoors still provides me with some sense of grounding, I deeply feel the unease that now shapes our reality and environment. I express this through deconstructing, cropping and isolating my subject matter. I further reassemble and realign this imagery in fragments. These subtly uncomfortable combinations of reconstructed plant matter disjoin these vital structures, redefining my plant imagery. In this way I create a revised hyper-real landscape which is slightly unhinged. Somewhat disturbed, these landscapes reflect our disharmonious reality. Even our natural surroundings do not offer us refuge in this disrupted world.

Interrupted, a solo exhibition of paintings by Claudia Gurwitz, will be on display at the AVA Gallery, 35 Church Street, Cape Town from 2 June to 8 July.

From 1994 Claudia studied for two years at UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Art, after which she trained as a yoga teacher and completed national certifications in various therapeutic disciplines. Since 1997 she has run her own established yoga centres in Cape Town and Riebeeck Kasteel.

In 2005 Claudia returned to painting and a three-year mentorship under Julia Teale at Spencer Street Studio. In 2007 she relocated to Riebeeck Kasteel where she embraced life as a professional artist; holding her first solo exhibition entitled *Plant*, curated and hosted by Julia Teale in 2008. Since then her career as a painter has grown (pun intended) from strength to strength, winning the SASA (South African Society of Artists) Merit Award and holding her 2nd solo exhibition, *Rooted*, at the Irma Stern Museum.

She also participated alongside other local Riebeeck Kasteel artists in the town's annual collaborative art event *Solo Studios* from 2016 to 2019, after which she returned to Cape Town where she now lives and works.

Claudia's work features in collections such as Old Mutual, Spier Estate, University of Cape Town, Countess Antonia Labia Hardres-Williams, Hout Bay Manor and Nando's UK.



Solitude (2020), oil on canvas, 300x300 mm



Interrupted no.3 (2021), oil on canvas, 1m x 1.4m



*Synthesis no.3 (2020)
oil on canvas
400 mm diameter*



*Fusion no.3 (2020)
oil on canvas
650 mm diameter*



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