

★ JEWISH CAPE CHRONICLE

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And so, the rollout begins...

Thursday 27 May was a milestone day at Highlands House, as residents received the first of their Pfizer vaccines.

A three-step system was implemented, with residents taken through registration, inoculation, and then a 15-minute waiting period, where they could be monitored for any potential side-effects.

Staff and residents alike are looking forward to the increased freedom that this will bring, although

Highlands House is taking a cautious step-by-step approach to loosening restrictions.

Earlier in the month, Highlands House and Cape Jewish Seniors Association staff were vaccinated, and many members of the community took the initiative of going to sites that catered for walk-ins. (proof of registration was required)

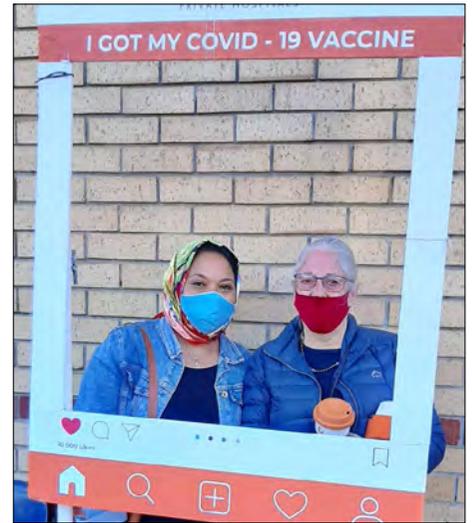
For David and Hazel Cohen, this development means that they are that much closer to meeting their 5-week-old grandson in person for the first time.



Highlands House residents Carrol Schonberg and Mavis Lee receive the first of their Pfizer shots.



Photo: Ashraf Hendricks, GroundUp



Cape Jewish Seniors Association's Psychological Counsellor Hajiera Safiedien-Maloon and Director Diana Sochen proudly declare their status, after receiving their COVID vaccines. The CJSA team had their shots at Gatesville Mediclinic last month.

Faltering hope on the Israel-Gaza border

Path to Peace is a collaborative mosaic artwork, expressing a dream of hope and love.

It is located on the border wall that divides the Gaza Strip and Israel, adjacent to the homes of Moshav Netiv HaAsara. It can be seen from both sides of the gray security wall, completely transforming the environment. Artist Tsameret Zamir has lived on Moshav Netiv HaAsara for 20 years and is the creator of the project.

Sadly, the recent war has had a devastating effect on the optimism that was created by this project.

In an email to the *Chronicle*, Tsameret wrote, "The decoration on the border wall was meant to create an atmosphere of hope. Each visitor wrote a wish on a mosaic they chose and pasted it on the wall. It was a place that brought optimism for a safe life in the area.



I am traumatised and scared of the hard experiences I went through, a powerful terror that repeatedly threatens my life. I have difficulty functioning, breathing and I'm crying all the time. I stopped working, I am afraid to leave the house... Hoping for quieter and better days."



David and Hazel Cohen received the first of their two Pfizer vaccines on 20 May at Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospital in Mitchells Plain.

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Des Says...

By Desrae Saacks, acting editor Cape Jewish Chronicle



Time to exhale

I've been agonising over what to write in this column.

Partly because I'm not used to the discipline of having to share my thoughts publicly on a monthly basis. (Will I ever be?) Another reason that this month was particularly challenging is because there were two politically charged and fast-moving stories, that were changing minute by minute, almost faster than I could type.

It was difficult to pin anything down this month as the news changed so rapidly. No sooner had I written something than it was overtaken by new developments. But that just reasserts the brief of the Cape Jewish Chronicle — it is a chronicle, an archive of the story of our community. A meeting place, where we find each other and showcase our active and creative community, all the organisations and individuals of which it comprises.

The Cape Jewish Chronicle is not, and has never claimed to be, a newspaper, in the sense of publishing up-to-the-minute breaking news. But this month there was an elephant in the room.

For two weeks it rained missiles in Israel. Yet another round of death, destruction and trauma for all who live there.

As I write this, there is a ceasefire in place. But who knows what the

situation will be by the time this is being read? The ceasefire is merely a chance to stop, rest, and exhale! Let's hope the diplomacy being carried out in the background bears fruit, and that all those who want peace, sanity and dignity, prevail.

Speaking of exhaling, it is tempting to breath out a sigh of relief as we see the vaccine rollout finally take off. But a word of caution from Dr Gary Kantor on page 22 — make sure you exhale *outdoors!* Gary fills us in on important information, only recently publicised by the World Health Organisation and the Centre for Disease Control, regarding a previously overlooked way in which the virus spreads. It's both a fascinating story, and a critical update in the fight against COVID-19.

If all this is too stressful, and you feel the need to escape to a tropical island, turn to page 24. Maiyan Karidi writes with humour and whimsy of her time living in Mauritius.

Or if you prefer a more arid landscape and wide open skies, you'll find these on page 9. Gwynne Robins takes us to the beautiful and oh-so-quiet Namaqualand town of Okiep, and the story of the Jews who settled there, and left their mark on the region.

This issue has plenty to occupy you as winter and the third wave approach, keeping us indoors. (but with the windows open please)

Let's hope that this next wave is the lightest, and the last.

We want to hear from you!

We welcome your news, opinions and stories. If you have anything to share with the community, please email editor@ctjc.co.za

Shabbat and Yom Tov Times

Date	Portion	Candle lighting	Ends
4 June/24 Sivan	Shelach L'cha	5.27pm	6.21pm
11 June/1 Tammuz	Korach	5.26pm	6.21pm
18 June/8 Tammuz	Chukat	5.27pm	6.22pm
25 June/15 Tammuz	Balak	5.28pm	6.23pm

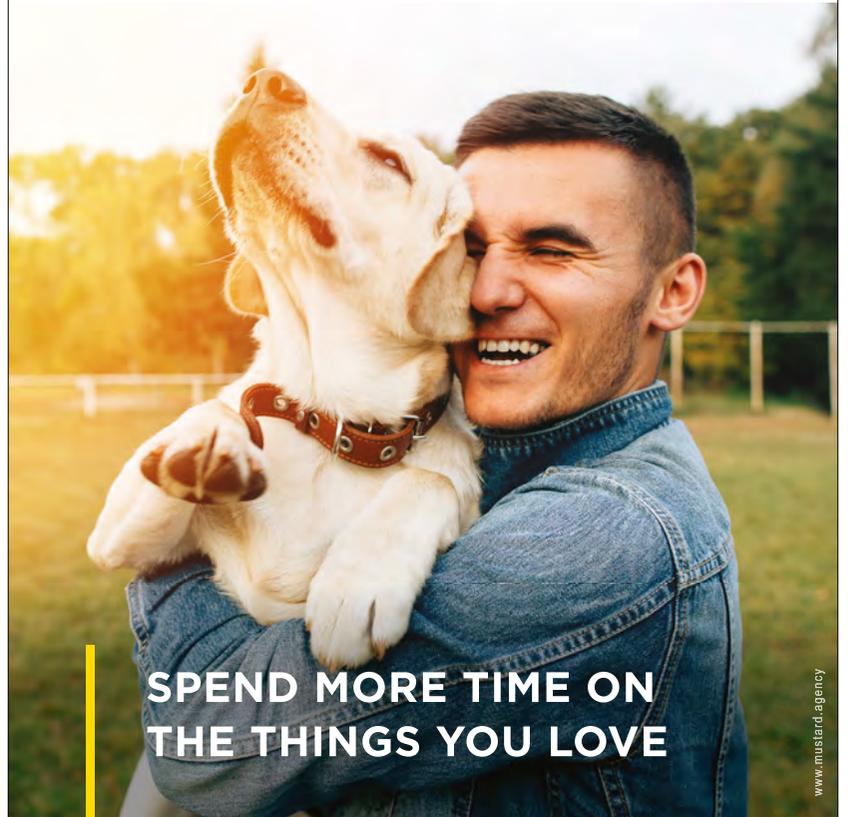
N.B. Please note that the times indicated are the earliest times for candle lighting. Please consult your Rabbi.

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Background experience in counselling or facilitation or moderating, especially young adult

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Have a love for Education and believe in creating a sustainable change in South Africa

Read about the position and apply online here: <http://bit.ly/SouthAfricaCoordinator>

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Family Announcements

RECUPERATION — THANK YOU

TRACY FITZPATRICK

Thank you to my wonderful and caring family, friends and community for their love, support and prayers during my recent illness.

CONDOLENCES — THANK YOU

MAXINE LANDY SILVERSTONE

We wish to thank everyone for the outpouring of love, calls, messages and meals after the passing of our loving mom, daughter, sister, aunt, warrior and teacher, Maxine.
A special thanks to Rabbi Ziegler of the Camps Bay Shul, and to the Milnerton Shul.
Our mom will be missed and is deeply mourned by her children Robyn, Grant and Bianca, sisters Renee, Desray and Marissa and mother Jeannette

BEREAVEMENT

PIERRE VAN TONDER

9 September 1959 – 9 May 2021

It is with profound sadness that we mourn the passing of our dear friend, Pierre.
A man with a huge heart and endearing smile.
A leader of immense talent, loved by all who worked with him.
He was a close friend to so many in our community.
Our hearts go out to Jane, Margot, Jordy, and his family.
Pierre, you are now gone to a place of peace, we will never forget you.
With love,
Your Friends in the Cape Town Jewish Community

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



Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute celebrates another cohort's journey

"The Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute has just celebrated its second graduation in three years and our Advisory Board is ecstatic.

We are particularly excited by who EOLI has attracted to its year long Leadership Development Programme (LDP), and the impact each participant makes in community organisations thereafter. We are seeing very diverse applicants with a wide range of skills and talents. What has been rewarding is to monitor the professionals who transform their organisations post the LDP experience, plus the embracing of new and emerging lay leaders who put up their hands to serve on committees across the community.

The 2020 LDP had five modules on Community Leaders and Leadership: *Self, Community & Context, Ethical Leadership, Toolkit for Leaders* and *Action Learning*. They all include theoretical models, best practice and immersion.

Our graduates must commit to serving the Jewish community on completion of the LDP. This is a game changer and these results speak for themselves.

The vision for EOLI is to recruit a pipeline of leaders for succession and to upskill current lay and professional leaders, all for the benefit of Jewish communal

organisations. Each year has brought different challenges, but our mandate remains the same. The Covid crisis forced our team to take our offers online and tackle different challenges experienced by our leadership. It was heartening to see how our programmes continue to be relevant and how our organisation has set an example by adapting to the needs both internal to the community and external.

Our expert faculty from academia and business schools, as well as global thought leaders have enriched our programmes, which has elevated our status as a leadership trendsetter.

It is encouraging to feel our impact on the community as it embraces our focus on leadership. Almost weekly we are being consulted to collaborate with organisations on problem solving, designing workshops, sponsoring and endorsing their lay leaders and professionals to step up to what is on offer, plus recruit new leaders for new positions.

In particular I need to thank Viv Anstey (our director), Melissa Zolty (EOLI Project Manager and 2020 cohort graduate), and the dynamic EOLI faculty, all of whom have served to build an excellent reputation for EOLI."

Ronnie Stein, Chairman of the Advisory Board

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020 COHORT: Cindy Bacher • Benjamin Blumenthal • Lauren Cohn • Danielle Daitz • Janine Davimes • David Epstein • Tammi Glick • Nicola Harris • Glen Heinrich • Jonathan Hoffenberg • Shana Isserow • Karen Kallmann • Melanie Levy • Shimpa Moch • Rivkah Myburgh • Howard Richman • Janine Rodgers • Sasha Sanders • Laila Saven • Karen Schwartz • Lee-Anne Singer • Ariel Sumeruk • Dana Tadmor • Karen Tollman • Lara Utian • Melissa Zolty



Howard Richman



Glen Heinrich



Karen Kallmann



Shana Isserow

2020 Cohort Voices - [click here to watch](#)

EOLI welcomes your interest to work with us. For information on workshops or extended programmes, and to nominate members of your organisation for our next cohort, please email info@osrinleadership.org to ensure you are on our mailing list.

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Mishpacha, Sifrei Torah and Yiddishkeit

By Daniel Bloch, Executive Director, Cape SAJBD

In the past few weeks, I have been inundated with good wishes on my appointment as the Executive Director of the Cape SAJBD.

The numerous offers of support and words of encouragement from our community have been heartfelt and so welcoming that the transition into my new role has been an easy one. I feel that this warmth epitomises the unique characteristic of our Jewish community — a feeling of *mishpacha* or family. Just like families encourage, support, and protect the ones they love, so does our community, and recent events are indicative of this community spirit.

During the raging and almost unstoppable fires that rocked Cape Town towards the end of April, destroying parts of UCT, burning down the famous Rhodes Memorial restaurant, incinerating a large portion of our beautiful mountain, and causing many people to evacuate their homes — our *mishpacha* rallied together. Whilst our brave firefighters were battling the fires, various Jewish organisations, as well as countless individuals, collaborated to raise funds and gather up supplies which were donated to the firefighters and students who were displaced from their homes. Social media was abuzz with photos of people delivering water, food and other essential items, to fire stations across the Cape.

Amidst this turmoil, several *Sifrei Torah* were rescued from both the Kaplan Centre and the Herzlia Highlands Campus. Whilst some would try to save photo albums and other material items, our community focused on our *Yiddishkeit* and history. Saving the *Sifrei Torah* illustrates



how the Jewish community, despite adversity, remains connected and committed to its roots. Just as the Torah connects us to Judaism, so too does the Cape SAJBD, whose function it is to provide information to our community and connect people.

Recently we received a request from a researcher who had some letters written by Jerry Berman, a civil engineer who had found a job building bridges in Ukraine in the 1930s. This was during the time of the *Holodomor*, a man-made famine imposed on the Ukrainians by Stalin to punish them for their nationalism. Jerry's letters are among the few first-person narratives that exist. A British PhD researcher plans to make a short

animated film based on the Berman letters, and Kyiv's Holodomor Museum wants to hold an exhibition based on this collection. The Board was asked to assist in finding out if Jerry had any relatives in Cape Town, and of course, we jumped at the opportunity to assist! A wonderful connection was made between Jerry's son living in

Cape Town and the previously unknown letters of his father. All in a day's work for the Cape SAJBD.

The incredible collaborative efforts within this Jewish community must never be taken for granted. They have not only ensured precious items connecting our religion were rescued but that Jews from different parts of the world were able to connect and find lost family.

I would love to share more stories of how our community has collaborated in the past, what connections have been made and what the future opportunities are. Email me at danielb@ctjc.co.za and share your stories.

The incredible collaborative efforts within this Jewish community must never be taken for granted. They have not only ensured precious items connecting our religion were rescued, but that Jews from different parts of the world were able to connect and find lost family.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity

By Tzvi Brivik, Chairperson, Cape SAJBD

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

These are words found in the preamble to our constitution. The purpose of such a comprehensive constitution was, as is set out in the preamble, described as laying the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law. This includes a right that all citizens are equally entitled to rights and the benefits of citizenship.

The benefits of citizenship in turn includes the freedom of religion, thought and belief. On 26 April, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies expressed its disappointment in the manner in which the judicial service commission conducted certain of the interviews for judicial appointments.

We had asserted that Jewish applicants were targeted in the interviews. We further asserted that the Jewish candidates were singled out for questioning based on their Jewish belief and, in the case of one of the applicants, his association with the SAJBD. It was asked of him whether as a former member of the SAJBD he felt he was still qualified for an appointment to the bench. Another candidate was asked what his attitude would be to taking on work over Shabbat.

Our own Cape SAJBD constitution confirms that as the representative body of the Jewish community, we are to safeguard the religious and civil rights as well as the status of the Jewish community. That includes matters affecting its relationship with the government in different spheres.

The Judicial Service Commission's



(JSC's) response in a media statement is most worrying, as it states that the association with SAJBD was raised as it concerned an organisation —our organisation— which was seen as supporting Zionism, which the media statement goes on to record

is viewed as a discriminatory form of nationalism and potentially in conflict with the values contained in the South African Constitution. This is the most alarming position for members of the JSC to adopt and one which requires further engagement and response.

A candidate for employment cannot be asked their religious affiliation or political viewpoint, and exclusion from employment on that basis would be discriminatory. The SAJBD is a

Our own Cape SAJBD constitution confirms that as the representative body of the Jewish community, we are to safeguard the religious and civil rights as well as the status of the Jewish community.

democratic body, with democratically elected representatives, and which is representative of all members of the Jewish community, whatever their varying points of view. We will need to assess how this impacts our community.

We are deeply saddened also by the tragedy on Mount Meron. Celebrations of a chag such as this for Lag Ba'Omer should never have turned into such a disaster. A photograph and short biography of each of the souls that were lost is available on the Chabad.org website. The ages range from 13 up to 56. Each soul lost in this tragedy is a life and a soul lost to the world. We extend our condolences to the families and the State of Israel.

Finally, I wanted to wish the Beit Morasha Shul/Arthurs Road, Sea Point congregation a huge mazeltov on the reopening in the week ending 6 May. We recognise the incredible effort of the committee as well as the community, and wish the congregation success in the future.

25 Years of the Constitution unpacked with heavyweights Judges Albie Sachs and Dennis Davis

By Tyla Dallas

On Thursday 18 March, the Cape SAJBD commemorated the 25th anniversary of the South African Constitution by hosting an online discussion around its many highs and lows.

Two retired heavyweights, Judge Albie Sachs and Judge Dennis Davis were asked a series of questions by our moderator Advocate Anton Katz (SC) that focused on their personal experiences, trials and tribulations under this constitutional dispensation. The Judges spoke highly of one another, recognising each other’s respective contributions to the rule of law and democracy in South Africa.

Davis implored South Africans to “be proud” of our Constitution, as it “gave us the best possible hope at constitutional democracy, and a country built on equality, dignity and freedom.” It is for this precise reason that we should all defend this document, but we need also understand that it can not “lift itself into legality.”

Sachs went on to note all the ‘highs’ of our Constitution, namely that we have an “open society”, a “great judiciary”, “free and fair elections”, and “a government that [actually] steps down when removed”, all of which he said we must not take for granted. He agreed that these highs don’t make up for corruption, crime and job or home insecurity, but the Constitution does “give us a framework to challenge, [to] speak our minds and [to] feel free in this country.”

We need to develop a “new South African identity in which [we all] can be united in difference and diversity”, Davis said. However, this is no easy task. Both judges recognised that this would take time and a collective drive to realise.

When asked where Jewish people would fit into a future South Africa, and whether it is better to stay and fight for democracy, or leave, Davis asserted that the Jewish teachings bestow on us a duty to “purify the world in the image of G-d”. He understood this to mean we must “inculcate into society fundamental justice.” Sachs felt this “community-orientated group” added to this country’s diversity and had an “important presence” in South Africa.

Sachs aptly dubbed himself an “activist judge”, and refers to our “activist Constitution”, which was ahead of its times with regards to sexual orientation and gender rights, and the abolishment of capital punishment. This document allowed us and will continue to serve to “humanise society, [and] achieve fairness and justice in constitutional ways, [by allowing] transformation through [our] Judiciary.”

It was truly spectacular to hear first-hand from such humble, yet distinguished, persons. The message I take away is that we must not let a few rotten apples spoil the bunch; that by honouring our Constitution, its values and its transformative aims, we can create a more just and equal society for all.

The webinar was well attended and has had over 1 600 views on our Facebook page. To watch this webinar, follow us on Facebook @CapeSAJBD, click on our ‘videos’ tab and open the ‘25 years of the Constitution’ video.



Judge Dennis Davis



Judge Albie Sachs



Advocate Anton Katz SC



At the Cape SAJBD, we hope that you can celebrate your identity, expression and freedom this International Pride Month.

“The abuse of persons of different sexual orientation goes against the core of what we stand for at the Jewish Board of Deputies and against our constitution. We support the Hate Crimes Bill as it passes through Parliament and on its way to promulgation.”
— Tzvi Brivik, Cape SAJBD Chairperson

We mourn with South Africa these lives lost in 2021

- Bonang Gaelae
- Nonhlanhla Kunene
- Sphamandla Khoza
- Nathaniel ‘Spokgoane’ Mbele
- Andile ‘Lulu’ Ntuthela
- Lonwabo Jack
- Lucky Motshabi
- Phelokazi Mqathana
- Lindokuhle Mapu
- Khulekani Gomazi

#EnoughIsEnough



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The swastika symbolises hate to us, but what about others?

by Gwynne Robins

What happens when a member of the public complains to us about a swastika? Do we ignore it? Investigate its meaning to the organisation displaying it, or go to the Human Rights Commission to complain about it?

The logo of the 1910 Pageant held at Cape Town to mark the opening of the first Parliament of the Union of South Africa was a swastika. Many prominent Jews sat on the pageant committees, including Rev Bender (Gardens Shul), the wife of advocate Morris Alexander MP (Board founder), Mrs Friedlander (Oranjia founder), the wife of former mayor Hyman Liberman, and Mark Cohen, principal of the Cape Town Hebrew Public School.

The organisers chose the swastika as the pageant emblem and official committee badge because its four

arms denoted the four colonies: Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal, and it was also a Sanskrit formula of good wishes and approbation used by the Egyptians and the Hindu.

We frequently get reports from people who have seen a swastika on an Indian handbag, on jewellery, painted on a fruit and vegetable truck, on a tile outside a neighbour's house. We get reports of skinheads' swastika tattoos, on flags, on motorcyclists' leather jackets or school or university floats with people giving Nazi salutes.

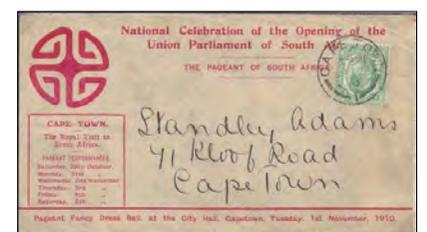
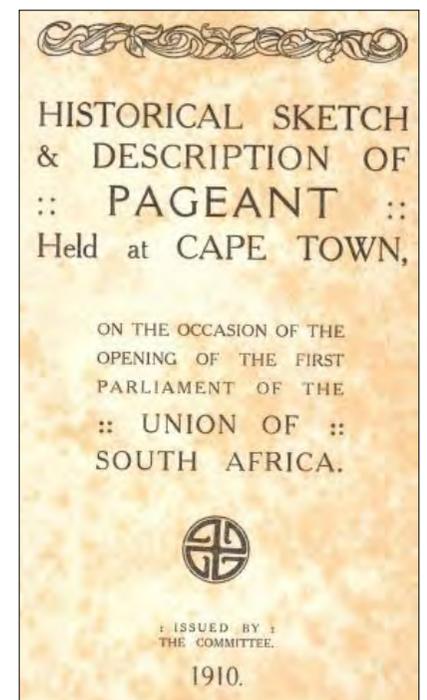
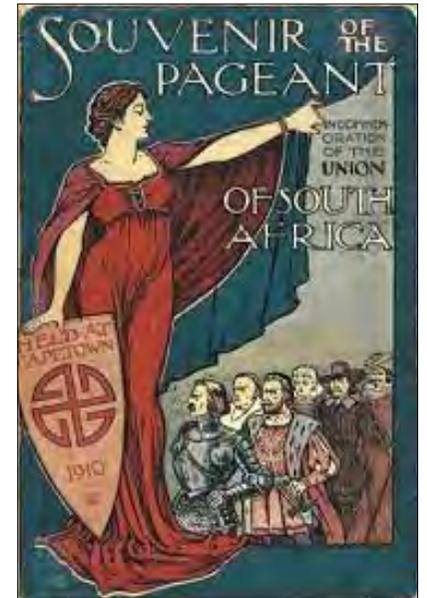
However, not every swastika denotes antisemitism. It is even found carved into one of the stones in a Kfar Nahum synagogue near Tiberias dating to Roman times.

In the cases described above, the Cape SAJBD investigates carefully and often arranges tours of the Holocaust Centre to boost awareness.

In India, it is the universal and revered symbol of good luck and wellbeing — so if the handbag or jewellery is Indian or the truck belongs to an Indian company, the swastika holds no antisemitic significance whatsoever. The swastika tile outside a house is similar to a mezuzah.

We complain that it's insensitive to display a swastika because of what it signifies to Jews, but it is not banned in South Africa as in Germany. We would be seen as insensitive, even entitled by our past suffering if we prevented religious Hindus from displaying their good luck symbol. They too had their suffering — 50 000 Hindus were killed in sectarian warfare in 1947 in India because the world had not learned the concept of 'never again'. There are 550 000 Hindus in South Africa and 52 000 Jews, and Hindu rights to religious beliefs and opinions are equally protected in our constitution. Many South Africans might also be ignorant of what happened to the Jews 80 years ago, and what the swastika signifies to us.

An Indian scholar complained that the "Swastika or Svastika, the universal and most revered symbol of auspiciousness, good luck and wellbeing has been portrayed as the symbol of horror, hatred and racism by the Western world after World War II. World politics have brainwashed the new generation and created unnecessary hatred towards the Swastika by portraying it as the symbol of evil, demise, destruction and ruination, and kept the public aloof from the true meaning, significance and history of Swastika. Due to its misrepresentation, many... consider it today as a symbol of hate, terror and a reminder of the atrocities committed by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party. The swastika was not invented or designed by Hitler. He merely stole it from the most ancient human civilisations of the Vedic period and used it as the emblem of his party... and annihilated the significance of this most ancient symbol, respected as the sign of good luck, fortune and auspiciousness... The swastika is an ancient symbol of Vedic Aryans Of Aryavarta (India) that has brought luck and joy for centuries to all mankind globally and continues to do so in the present days. The symbol stands for truth, compassion, tolerance and happiness."



He concludes the article with, "Hitler be damned, this is our sign since 6 000 years before Christ!"

The Board investigates all complaints carefully, as part of our role in monitoring and preventing antisemitism, while remembering that not every report of a swastika indicates antisemitism. It might just represent a religious symbol.

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The Jews of Okiep

by Gwynne Robins

The name Okiep, originally O'okiep, comes from the Khoikhoi word U-gieb meaning 'large brackish place'.

It has a brackish spring, beautiful spring flowers and copper. In the 1870s it was thought to be the richest copper mine in the world with a railway line built from Okiep to Port Nolloth in 1866, with mules pulling the train because there was not enough water for a steam engine.

Mines attract economic opportunities, and economic opportunities attract poor Jewish immigrants wanting to earn a living even if the place is as hot, dry and arid as Namaqualand. The first *smous* to arrive in Namaqualand in 1881 was Moses Schur from Chavidan. It was said that the first time he came, he was on foot with a pack on his back. The next time, the pack was on a donkey. The following year, both man and pack were on a cart with two donkeys, and the next year, he opened a shop in Bowesdorp, later expanding into Okiep and other villages. His daughter Clara, who was born in Okiep, later joined the Jewish Joint in Paris, Budapest and Prague in post-Holocaust Europe working in DP camps, assisting survivors,

and aiding illegal immigration into Palestine. The Joint had to hastily evacuate her when they were tipped off that she was about to be arrested as a spy and smuggler, as the Hungarians decided the Joint was a front for the Protocols.

In 1890, Joseph Dembitzer from Cracow arrived in Namaqualand and started the first store in Springbok, Okiep and other villages. By 1898, the economic success of Jews was attracting antisemitic attention, and John X Merriman, later Cape Premier, while canvassing votes in Okiep, criticised Jews in a speech at a banquet in honour of Jan Hofmeyr of the Afrikaner Bond, whose support Merriman wanted.

Then came the South African War, and Okiep's copper mines, defended by 700 British soldiers, was besieged for 30 days by Boer forces under Jan Smuts. The Jewish traders had a tough time, as both sides looted their shops and they were forbidden by the British to trade with the Boers. Dembitzer, Schur and other Jewish shopkeepers required passes. Schur, who was fined £500 for trading with the Boers, said he would have been a fool not to, as the Boers paid him while the British only offered future

compensation. Dembitzer's shop was looted and his naturalisation papers stolen.

In 1904, there were only 40 Jews (including two women) living in the whole of Namaqualand. In his memoirs of pre-1914 District Six, Harry Schrire recalls the arrival of Namaqualand *bochers* for Rosh Hashanah. They could be easily "recognised by their large-brimmed hats, yellow boots, very shy and raw nature," and they were made welcome by the *shammes* and fathers of marriageable daughters. Sometimes they were found to have a wife in *der heim*.

The numbers had risen to 135 by 1918 when copper prices dropped, Okiep copper mines closed and the place almost became a ghost town, with 113 Jews in the whole of Namaqualand by 1922. Later, when prices rose again, mining was resumed.



Okiep copper mine pit

The earliest Jewish traders were religious and Zionist and had a significant impact on the growth of businesses like Trencor and the Lewis chain of stores, which operated not only in the area but in the whole of South Africa.

One of the first things a Jewish community does is to establish a cemetery, and a Jewish cemetery was opened in Okiep, the first funeral taking place in 1913 followed by one in 1918. The first High Holy Days services in Namaqualand were also held in Okiep in 1917, with Mr Paskovsk officiating — people came from all the neighbouring villages. The next year, the Namaqualand Hebrew congregation was formed with a catchment area covering several hundred miles. Three people from Okiep were on its committee: B Albert, JC Kaplan and S Hurwitz. In 1919, the congregation donated money to the Palestine National Restoration Fund, the Cape Relief Fund for Jewish War Victims and the Hebrew University Building Fund. During the years, they contributed annually to 10 different charities.

Their synagogue was in Springbok, 8km from Okiep, in the first Dutch Reformed Church (built in 1877 as a dance hall). This was available as the new dominee, regarding the building as immoral, insisted that his flock build him a new church. Boris Saharin became the reader and Jack Sovijnsky, a former choir boy at the Roeland Street Shul, the cantor. People would gather outside the hall to listen to him sing. The first official High Holy Days services were held in 1922 (although a photo exists of a 1919 service, taken on the second day of Rosh Hashanah).

continues on page 10



The new Synagogue in Springbok, now the Namakwaland Museum with Colonel David Teperson and his brother, 2007



The old synagogue in Springbok



The gravestones of Joseph (Joe) Jowell (1905-1973) and Rebecca (Bessie) Jowell (1901-1987)



Okiep in Spring



continues from page 9

The Jews of Okiep

With the approval of the Cape Copper Company, the congregation obtained the land next door to the original synagogue and built their new synagogue, having accepted a quote of £3 724 from M Klawansky, with shul chairman David Gelb laying the foundation stone. It opened in time for Rosh Hashanah 1929 and could seat 80 men, with 40 women in an upper gallery. There were boxes for the rabbi and the chairman, wooden benches in front of the raised *bimah*, further benches at the sides and room at the back for additional chairs if required. During High Holy Days, a special cantor was imported from Cape Town. Okiep being so close to Springbok, they were in effect one community with a synagogue in the one centre, the cemetery in the other. They had an active Namaqualand Women's Zionist Society which started in the early 1930s, whose raffles and annual Zionist Balls attracted Jews

and non-Jews, with music from the band started in 1927, comprising Abe Schapera, Julius Gordon, Mick Farber and Sydney Windisch.

Antisemitism was often a feature, and as early as 1924 General Manie Maritz, a Nazi sympathiser (later prosecuted for his antisemitism) told a public meeting that the poverty of the Afrikaners in Namaqualand was due to their "archenemy the Jews who come to this country with a bundle on their backs and always manage to amass a large sum of money," so, he argued, that the Afrikaners were "virtually the servants of the Jews." By 1936, when they appointed Rev Segal, the Grey Shirts and later the Ossewabrandwag were holding meetings in Namaqualand villages trying to pressurise the farmers to boycott Jewish stores. In September 1937, Dr Malan toured Namaqualand warning that the Jews had not heeded his warnings against an influx of Jews greater than the

country could assimilate. It caused enormous friction and even English speakers felt their territory was being encroached. Yet there were only 150 Jews in Namaqualand in 1940! The Jewish Board of Deputies Country Communities Rabbi undertook regular pastoral tours, and in July 1940, Chief Rabbi Israel Abrahams visited Springbok and met with the Women's Zionist Society. A Union of Jewish Women branch was started by Sybil Sovinsky with Thelma and Beryl Gelb as secretary and treasurer in 1951 (when there were 116 Jews in Namaqualand). The women raised funds for both WIZO and UJW and organised annual Yom Ha'atzmaut picnics on a farm.

By the late 50s, the congregation was finding it difficult to raise a *minyán* for the Friday evening service and Joe Jowell, the mayor of Springbok, who was known as "the Mayor who makes up a Minyan" would fly home by plane to do so.

One cannot look at the Jewish community in Okiep and Namaqualand without remarking on the major role played by the Jowell family. Joe Jowell was president of the congregation from 1959 until it closed down in 1972, with his sons Neil and Cecil acting as secretary and treasurer. When the SA Railways terminated its unprofitable road motor service in 1930, leaving the villagers without access to supplies, Joe Jowell, who had taken over the Namaqualand Chevrolet sub-agency the year before, converted an old car to a truck to fill in the gap, and this developed into a road transport business (now Trenchor) which became a leading nationwide carrier in South Africa, branching out into trailer manufacturing, tyre merchandising and retreading, and container manufacturing. Joe Jowell was elected president of the South African Motor Trade Association, vice-president of the international

body and served on both municipal and divisional councils.

In August 1966, tombstones in the Okiep cemetery were vandalised and a committee of residents headed by Cecil Jowell arranged for the municipality to repair the damage. The tombstones were cemented together flat and the cemetery was fenced off.

There were 65 Jews in apartheid Namaqualand in 1961, dropping to 23 by 1971 but even with so few Jews, there was still antisemitism, with Jews being accused by the Afrikaners of being "too liberal". There was a campaign by professional rivals and a dominee, and an election slogan that read: "Don't vote for a Jew, vote for an Afrikaner." Despite such campaigns, Joe Jowell again topped the poll for election as Mayor in 1967, and celebrated his 30th year as Mayor with a Mayoral Sunday in the synagogue, followed by a tea party. Although the dominee urged his followers to boycott the event, the citizens attended in droves — their respect for Jowell trumping their respect for the dominee. (The dominee apologised after Jowell's death.)

Joseph Jowell was buried in the cemetery in 1972. In 1978, there were only two Jews left in Namaqualand, Rebecca Jowell and Kurt Nussbaum.

Rebecca Jowell, who passed away in 1989, was the last Jew to be buried in the cemetery. By 1990, the Board acting on behalf of the defunct Namaqualand Hebrew Congregation donated the new and old synagogue buildings to the Springbok Town Council on condition that the municipality undertook to maintain the cemetery in Okiep.

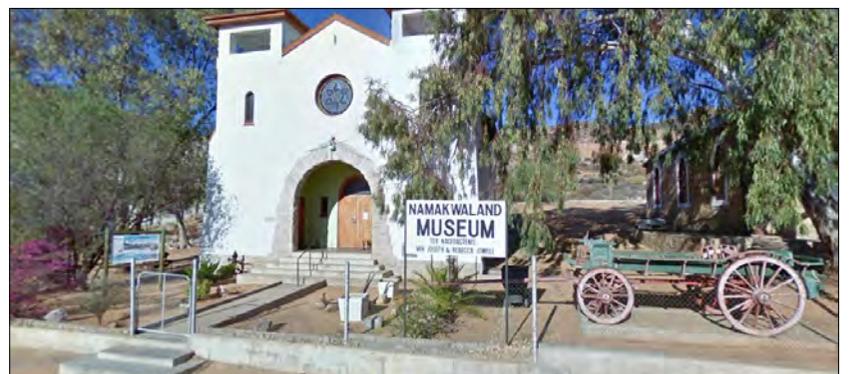
The Country Communities Subcommittee of the Cape SAJBD looks after the cemeteries of the defunct country communities. Contact daniel@ctjc.co.za for more information.

CAPE SAJBD
Engage | Educate | Empower

Need help with the COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Process?

Contact the Cape SAJBD Over Sixties Vaccine Helpline

 sajbd2@ctjc.co.za



The new Synagogue in Springbok, now the Namakwaland Museum

CHAI TO CHAI

EIGHTEEN TO EIGHTEEN



Herzlia pupils often arrive at our pre-schools at 18 months and graduate with their Matric from the High School when they turn 18. We fondly refer to this life-cycle as 'Chai to Chai'.

This year, when Herzlia Grade 1s arrived for their very first day of 'big school', this auspicious day was also the beginning of their journey to becoming part of Herzlia's Matric Class of 2032. Matric results truly are a culmination of a 16 year education – starting at pre-school and ending at the end of Grade 12.

Fortunately, we were once again able to host our annual Chai to Chai event this year which connects some of Herzlia's oldest – and youngest – pupils. The Matrics organise fun activities like science experiments, dance, drumming and crafting, but, most importantly, spend quality time together.

The Grade 1s get first-hand experience of what it truly means to be a proud Herzlian... and the Matrics get to reflect on the journey they have undertaken while they prepare for final examinations and launch into their next life chapter.

Herzlia lives the Jewish value of community (*kehilla*) where we believe it really takes a community's involvement to educate our children.

A Herzlia education is a journey of learning, growing and developing *menschen* that can confidently go out into the world and stamp their individual mark for the betterment of our global society.



Pictured below: Brothers, **Samuel Marcus** (Grade 12, Herzlia High School) and **Zachary Marcus** (Grade 1, Highlands Primary) - Living the concept of Chai to Chai.



www.herzlia.com



SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONIST FEDERATION CAPE COUNCIL

**WE STAND STRONG
WE STAND PROUD
WE STAND WITH ISRAEL**

In case you missed it

The SAZF recently hosted some excellent webinars: *Women Making Peace in the Middle East*; *Pandemics Polls and Politics Israeli Decides 2021*; JNF-SA/SAZF's *Hell or High Water*, and Mizrahi SA and the SAZF's *Yom Yerushalayim*.

You can still catch them by clicking on these links.



ALIYAH VIRTUAL EXPO 2021

Save the Date

20 June

Experts from the following areas:

- Aliyah and absorption
- Health
- Education
- Tax
- Local Municipalities
- And more



Some background to events in Jerusalem

By Dr Adam Carr, historian in Melbourne, via David Campanale, BBC journalist

This article first appeared in the Australian Jewish News, 12 May 2021, (<https://ajid.org.au/some-background-to-events-in-jerusalem-dr-adam-carr/>)

In 1875 some pious Jews bought some land in a semi-rural area just north of Jerusalem, which was then a small town largely consisting of the Old City and a few suburbs to the west.

The land was the site of a tomb believed to be that of Shimon HaTzadik, a rabbi of the third century BCE. (Archaeologists believe the tomb is in fact from the Roman period.) The Ottoman land register showed that the property was registered in the names of rabbis Avraham Ashkenazi and Meir Auerbach. A small religious Jewish community lived there.

Also in this area was the tomb of Hussam al-Din al-Jarrahi, physician to the Arab leader Salah ad-Din (Saladin). His tomb dates from 1202 and was a site of Muslim pilgrimage. The area was known as Sheikh Jarrah after him. (The Jews called it Shimon HaTzadik.) In the later 19th century, as Jerusalem grew rapidly under the economic stimulus of Jewish settlement and investment, an Arab suburb grew up around the Jewish-owned property. Jews and Arabs lived together, if not exactly in friendship, at least in peace.

It's important to note that these Jews were not Israelis and not Zionists, and that their Arab neighbours were not Palestinians. In 1875 political Zionism did not exist (Herzl published *The Jewish State* in 1896). Israel was a name from the Bible. Palestine was a name from the Roman Empire. Jerusalem was located in the Ottoman Empire, in the province (vilayet) of Syria. There was no conflict between Jews and Palestinians, because there were no Palestinians. Ottoman south Syria had a mixed population of Muslim and Christian Arabs, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Circassians, Druze and others. If we had visited Jerusalem or Jaffa or Ramallah in 1875 and asked people "what are you?", not one of them would have said, "I am a Palestinian."

Fast-forward to 1948. When the war between the emerging State of Israel and the five neighbouring Arab states ended, the Israelis held western Jerusalem, while the

Jordanians held the Old City and the suburbs to the north and east, including Sheikh Jarrah. All the Jewish residents were expelled, their synagogues demolished and their cemeteries destroyed. We now tend to think of the Jordanians as among the 'moderate' Arabs, but they were far from moderate in 1948. No Jew would be allowed to live in Jordanian territory. In 1950 Jordan annexed the territory under its control, including eastern Jerusalem.

Note that although all this territory had been part of the Palestinian Mandate, and had also been part of the Arab state proposed by the UN Partition Plan of 1947, Jordan did not establish a Palestinian state in the land it controlled after 1948, nor did anyone demand that it do so. No resolutions were passed at the UN demanding that Jordan end its occupation of 'Palestinian land'. Although a Palestinian Arab national identity had formed after the establishment of the Mandate in 1922, there was still no widely recognised 'Palestinian nation'. The Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem were thus Jordanians between 1950 and 1967 and seem to have been quite happy with that status.

Under Jordanian rule, the Jewish-owned properties in and around Jerusalem were placed under the control of the Custodian of Enemy Properties. In 1956, the office of the Custodian leased the property at Sheikh Jarrah to 28 Arab families who had been displaced during the 1948 war. The Custodian retained ownership of the property, and the Arab residents paid rent to it. None of the Arab families living on the Jewish-owned property at Sheikh Jarrah has ever owned any of it.

Forward again to 1967. King Hussein foolishly joined in the war between Israel and Egypt, and as a

result the Israelis swiftly occupied all Jordanian territory west of the Jordan. Jerusalem was re-united under Israeli control. Israel passed a law allowing Israelis whose families had been evicted by the Jordanians to reclaim their property, provided they could demonstrate proof of ownership, and provided also that the existing residents were unable to provide such proof of purchase or legal transfer of title.

In the later 19th century, as Jerusalem grew rapidly under the economic stimulus of Jewish settlement and investment, an Arab suburb grew up around the Jewish-owned property. Jews and Arabs lived together, if not exactly in friendship, at least in peace.

In 1973, ownership of the Sheikh Jarrah property was registered with the Israeli courts by two Jewish religious trusts which claimed descent from the original Jewish owners of the property. In 1982 the trusts sought to evict the Arab residents and return the property to the Jewish owners. But an Israeli court refused. It ruled that the Arab residents enjoyed Protected Tenant Status. As protected tenants, the court held, they could continue living on the property as long as they paid rent and maintained the property in its existing state. This arrangement was formalised in a signed agreement, in which the Arab residents recognised the Jewish trusts' ownership, in exchange for Protected Tenant Status.

After 1990, however, incited by the Palestinian leadership, the tenants stopped paying rent and began unapproved building on the property. They thus violated the terms of the agreement which they had signed in 1982. In 1993, the Jewish trusts began proceedings against the residents based on their non-payment of rent and illegal changes to the property. Since the Arab tenants have full access to the Israeli courts, and also have access to funds to hire good lawyers, and since the Israeli legal system is notoriously slow, these proceedings dragged

on through various courts for some years. In 2003, the religious trusts sold the property to Nahalat Shimon, an Israeli NGO that seeks to reclaim property for Jews evicted after the 1948 war. This body has since had carriage of the court case.

In October 2020 the Jerusalem Magistrates Court ruled that, in the absence of payment of rent, the Arab tenants must vacate the property. In February this year the Jerusalem District Court upheld the decision. The tenants appealed to the Supreme Court, whose final verdict is expected in the next month.

The Palestinian Authority has used these proceedings as a pretext to launch anti-Israeli rioting in Jerusalem, which has spread to other centres. The riots have given Mahmood Abbas a handy excuse to cancel (again) promised election to the Palestinian Authority presidency and legislature, which were last held in 2006. Abbas knows that his Fatah party would lose any free election in the Palestinian Territories, as they did in 2006. The riots are also convenient for Prime Minister Netanyahu, who can use them as an argument for why he should stay in office despite having lost the March election. This is presumably why some right-wing Jewish groups in Jerusalem have joined in the rioting by provoking the Arabs to further violence.

Most of the world's media has once again uncritically accepted and repeated the Palestinian version of events, either in ignorance of, or with disregard for the historical facts of the dispute which I have set out here. We are told that this is a story of the brutal Israeli occupation forcibly evicting innocent Palestinian families from their ancestral homes. In fact, the Israelis have shown quite astonishing restraint and compliance with the law. If they had wanted to evict the Arabs at Sheikh Jarrah by force, they could have done so at any time since 1967. Instead, 54 years later, the matter is still being litigated. This is remarkable considering that Jewish ownership of the property was acknowledged in writing by the Arab residents in 1982, and that their non-compliance with the 1982 agreement is undisputed.



Youth Movements roundup

Bnei Akiva

Bnei Akiva Cape Town has been able to resume school visits and we are so happy to see all our channies after so long. On Yom Ha'atzmaut, we had two school visits where we organised some cool activities celebrating Israel. We've missed the channies and are excited to rekindle our relationships with them.

Bnei Akiva organised two awesome events for the long weekend, we had an outdoor arts and crafts event where we made some amazing notebooks, and held a special outdoor movie night for Grades 7-9. A lot more safe, fun and special things are coming!

Eytan Labe, Chairman Bnei Akiva Cape Town



Bnei Akiva's outdoor movie night



Our Yom Ha'atzmaut thumbprint flag



Arts and crafts

SAUJS — Bumping-on during the pandemic!

The South African Union of Jewish Students has continued to run events for its members from a safe distance. Given the very real Zoom fatigue, we have slowly and very cautiously started encouraging those of our members who are looking for a safe and fun way to release energy, to attend our Bubble Bumping Sundays!

There are various games that are played in teams from the comfort of your bubble. This is an excellent way to meet new people, get some fresh air and get the body moving. If you would like to be involved, email saujscape@ctjc.co.za and be a part of our Bubble Bumping Sunday.

Cassandra Mayekiso, Western Cape Coordinator



SAUJS members after two hours of bumping



A game of five-a-side, with chairperson Deena Katzen putting up a great defence

Netzer

Our *Mazkirut* have been hard at work as we kick off the year with more virtual engagements as well as hoping for future in-person programmes this year. Follow us on social media to find out more about

what we are up to! From our *Mazkirut* to you, *Nilmad V'na'aseh* — We will learn and we will do!

Rachael Bootcov, Head of Cape Town – Netzer South Africa



Mazkirut 2021: Jason Bourne (Mazkir), Rachael Sara (Rosh Chinuch + Cape Town), Justin Michel (Gizbar + Rosh Johannesburg) and Eden Shapira (Rosh Durban)

Habonim Dror

April has been a successful period for Habonim in Cape Town. We have returned to our usual scheduling of our Friday Night Meetings which is helping to reinvigorate the movement and the leftist-Jewish space as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic. We had a very successful Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration, which involved the sampling of some of the best traditional Israeli dishes as prepared by our Shaliach Lee Salama, as well as a taste of the most current Israeli music and dance trends — all socially-distanced of course. We

also spent two days preparing hot meals, water and snacks for those students affected by the fire on the UCT campus, as well as the brave firefighters who helped combat the blaze — including our very own Sam Goldberg who acts as a volunteer firefighter. Overall, it was a productive and uplifting month for HDSA as we continue the process of restarting our typical operations after the disruption of the last year. *Aleh V'agshem!*

Aaron Kruss-van der Heever, Rosh Ken Cape Town, Habonim



Aaron Sherman, Jake Segal and Benji Joss taking part in festivities



Aaron Kruss-van der Heever enjoying homemade falafel

Diller — Leadership in action

From 9 – 11 April, Diller's Cohort 6 enjoyed a much-anticipated Shabbaton filled with meaningful Jewish experiences, engagement and exploration of leadership skills. Fellows had the opportunity to take leadership from 'theory to practice' in a group self-management experience.

dilemmas that challenged us in unique ways.

Our weekend together was incredibly purposeful, and we feel very grateful to have been able to share a Shabbat together during these very uncertain times.

Martine Kawalsky, Diller Teen Fellows Cape Town Programme Coordinator

We explored various leadership styles and techniques, personal role-models, and grappled with moral

COHORT 6: Aaron Schwartz, Adam Selikowitz, Darren Greenspan, Ben Vogelmann, Jared Daitsh, Doron Zinman, Jade Rubin, Elle Franck, Ilan Meltz, Olivia Diamond, Jonah Schwartz, Katya Golan, Lilla Fleishmann, Michaela Perkel, Rachel Castle, Ruby Kurgan, Sabrina Brivik, Silvie Richards, Yonatan Kuti-Alexander, Zoe Kaplan. Staff: Martine Kawalsky, Talia Scher, Julia Kaimowitz and Rachel Rod.



Come hell or high water: Why Cuba, and not world leader Israel to avert SA's water crisis?

by Kayla Rachbuch (This article first appeared in www.news1.co.za, 30 April 2021)

Through the 230 reservoirs that the JNF has built, up to a remarkable 85% of Israel's water is reused. Compare that with the next runner-up, Spain, which only reclaims 19% of its water, and Cuba's 4%.

South Africa has rolled out the red carpet for 24 Cuban engineers to assist the government in implementing a sustainable water delivery system for the country. This will cost South African taxpayers R64m at a time of serious fiscal austerity and has been lambasted by opposition political parties and civil society.

At a welcome ceremony held in Pretoria, South African Minister Lindiwe Sisulu said the Cuban specialists in various areas of engineering intend to share their expertise in water sustainability techniques, maintenance and infrastructure, and management of water supply – with particular emphasis on rural and outlying communities.

"Climate change, population growth, and lack of investment is putting increasing pressure on South Africa's water resources," said Michael Kransdorff, the chairperson of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in South Africa, the leading international Jewish environmental organisation.

For the last decade, South Africa has consistently fallen short of providing a steady supply of this vital resource. The severe water shortage and drought that plagued Cape Town in 2017 and 2018, is just one example of our poorly maintained water and sanitation infrastructure.

Now, the water and sanitation department has seconded the help of what they see as Cuba's 'top' engineers. According to Minister Sisulu, "Cuba has faced similar challenges. They have overcome them and the engineers are here to assist us. They will teach and show us how to overcome these challenges".

However, Cuba is far from a water success story. In fact, its water system is in a dire state.

Years of political malaise, drought and infrastructure decay, have made running water a rarity for



JNF and the Arava Agricultural Training Center in the Turkana region of Kenya, providing water and agricultural expertise and training. Source: JNF YouTube screenshots.

the vast majority of Cubans. Only 11 percent of the country's population of 11.2 million receive piped water at home 24 hours a day. For over 50 percent of households, water is available only sporadically, typically receiving around two hours of running water every five days.

These households are forced to rely on mobile water tanks, often drawn by horse and cart. Even the 'privileged few', who do have continuous water supply in their homes, because the water pressure in the system is so low, have had to resort to using garden hoses and private motors to connect a street-level water supply with their rooftop storage.

That is to say nothing about the drinkability of the water. In many areas, chemicals are not available for water purification, which has resulted in carnivorous fish being used to eat the parasite-carrying mosquito larvae that can be found in the drinking water.

Sanne Derks, an anthropologist and photojournalist, documented how public health workers in Cuba were trying to provide clean drinking water to citizens. In her exposé for the New York Times published in February 2021, she described seeing people "hassling with water pumps, the streets soaked because of faulty pipelines, water trucks continuously plying the roads...". She continued saying that having been "born and raised in the rainy Netherlands, where clean drinking water is taken for granted, I hadn't expected water to be a scarcity on a tropical island".



Despite these shocking conditions, the South African government still chose Cuba over the world-class assistance that many countries, particularly Israel, can offer. "There are many benefits South Africa could gain by partnering with Israel", said Kransdorff. "They have become the world leaders in water management and conservation".

Israel, through its technological advances in water-recycling and reclaiming water, is fulfilling the biblical prophecy of making the desert bloom. Through the 230 reservoirs that the JNF has built, up to a remarkable 85% of Israel's water is reused. Compare that with the next runner-up, Spain, which only reclaims 19% of its water, and Cuba's 4%.

Israel, and the JNF, have always gladly offered their expertise to other countries. Successful projects and partnerships throughout Africa are testaments to the professional and collaborative nature of the Jewish state. Communities throughout Africa have benefited greatly from the clean running water solutions and technology Israel has to offer.

Notably, Israel assisted the Turkana region of Kenya in developing successful water catchment areas and agriculture. Before this, water issues, unhealthy soil, and drought prevented the region from developing agriculture. The health deficits in surrounding communities were insurmountable. Now the Arava Agricultural Training Center, supported by the JNF, equips hundreds of students and

policymakers to learn modern techniques of agriculture and water conservation. The Arava Center has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of the Free State to facilitate the sharing of this knowledge in South Africa.

An incredible 132 successful farms have been established in Kenya since the collaboration began in 2015.

The Western Cape is estimated to have lost R5 billion in revenue during the drought of 2017-2018, largely due to agricultural losses.

Projects like those in Kenya would greatly benefit South Africa's agricultural industry, water management, conservation efforts, and rural communities.

Kransdorff concludes that "come hell or high water, the South African government seems determined to pay a failed state with a poor human rights record like Cuba to fix our water problems, but not to accept the generous help of Israel, the world's leader in water management."

Nevertheless, JNF South Africa remains committed to showcasing Israeli environmental achievements and facilitating the sharing of Israeli know-how and technology in South Africa.

"We promote Israeli know-how through our education programmes for learners at our JNF environmental centres in Mamelodi and Hammarsdale", said Kransdorff.

"Moreover, we organise tours, conferences and events around key environmental challenges facing South Africa. In fact, we held a webinar with an international best-selling author and other global leaders in water issues on 6 May called *Hell or High Water: the untold story of how Israel is sharing her water miracle with South Africa and the world* (see link on page 12). We hope Minister Sisulu and her team were listening".

Sources: <https://www.kkl-jnf.org/water-for-israel/water-technology/Between Drought and Floods, Cuba Seeks to Improve Water Management - Cuba I ReliefWe>



EQ, CANs, and reading via WhatsApp

MEET ARI POYURS. His organisations *Happy Schools* provides training and content in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Character Development to schools, teachers and parents. Ari graduated in 2012 and has worked in the King David Schools system since 2015. Read Ari's *Mensch Thought Leader* piece on [page 18](#), or [here](#) to read more about him.

MEET ISA JACOBSON, one of the earliest members of the Community Action Network (CANs) which sprung to life as COVID lockdown hit South Africa. Isa took on the responsibility of co-ordinator of the Seaboard CAN which has, and continues to, work closely with the Gugulethu CAN, supporting projects and with emergency relief efforts. [Read more about Isa's work here.](#)

MEET PAMELA KANTOR, the founder of *Read For Hope*, an organisation that creates meaningful change in the lives of children through a love of reading and learning, sparking their imaginations. During COVID, this passionate educator has been collecting stories read aloud by friends and family, WhatsApped to her, that she shares directly with learners. [Read more about Pamela's work here.](#)

For more info or to join the Mensch Network: www.mensch.org.za
or email jodi@mensch.org.za

Make a life-changing difference — interest free!

The roof leaks. There is no ventilation. Some of the many holes are awkwardly sealed with pieces of wood. There is no place to study, read or write.

When you enter the shack, you walk into the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, it's one room, where the family of five sleeps on one bed raised off the ground to avoid rats. There is one toilet shared by six families. How are they expected to survive Cape Town's cold, wet winter and notorious winds, let alone COVID-19?

Millions of people don't have a secure roof over their heads, and live in unsafe, temporary structures. There are 437 informal settlement pockets in Greater Cape Town, and it is likely that someone working in your home or

business lives in one of them.

Housing challenges in our city are substantial, and informal settlements or backyard dwellings are not going away. As such, the most effective solution to address the issue is in-situ upgrade of shacks. *Ikhayalami* and *Mensch* have teamed up to offer a solution to Jewish community members who want to make a difference in their employees' lives.

Flexible in design, the upgraded shelters are easily constructed to fit different layouts and dimensions. Though basic, the quality and integrity of the *iKhayalami* builds are a dramatic improvement on self-built structures. They are built with stronger materials that are less susceptible to fire, flooding, and break-ins. A cement slab floor can be added, and where possible, running water can be connected.

To find out more about making a difference in someone's life, [click here](#)
or email gina@mensch.org.za.



Before and after: Maxwell and Melissa Dick's new home

Project Bayit is a joint initiative of Mensch and Ikhayalami, supported financially by Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies.



Hilda Shenker celebrates 95 in the beautiful garden she created

Astra hosted Hilda Shenker's 95th birthday party. Hilda has been a volunteer at the Centre for over 30 years, lovingly tending to the garden.



During the celebration, Hilda recounted how it all began. Shortly after moving to Cape Town, while walking on the beachfront one day, she bumped into Sara Pascal. After telling Sara how she had given up her beautiful garden in Pretoria for the sea, Sara suggested to Hilda that she (Hilda) do the garden at Astra Centre! And so she did! Watering, planting and weeding with passion, enthusiasm and dedication. One of the guests mentioned that when Hilda started, there were only two pots on either side of the steps. She brought plants from Pretoria which today are now trees. While fulfilling her passion, Hilda also made lots of good friends during her frequent visits to Astra.

And then came the challenge of the garden for the coffee shop. Hilda rose to the task and created the most stunning setting. This has played a big part in Coffee Time becoming a popular venue for functions including weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, anniversaries and birthdays. Daytime patrons all enjoy the beautiful garden — appreciating it especially during these COVID times!

"When you do something with beauty, it adds another dimension to your life."

Director Merle Furman recalled the re-opening of Coffee Time where the guest of honour, Chief Rabbi Goldstein, said "When you do something with beauty, it adds another dimension to your life."

Attending the party were Hilda's daughter, Michelle, her son David and two of her three sisters, Queenie Sender and Dora Pick. Queenie related how she had worked as a volunteer speech teacher at Astra in the 1950s.

Referencing his mother's and aunts' longevity, David told the guests that part of "the recipe for a long and healthy life was to be of service to others," and "to have a passion." This of course was an accurate description of Hilda who, he said, "would get so excited every time I would bring her here."

Hilda's son Stanley who lives in Canada wrote, "The garden has grown to be her grand masterpiece and has provided enduring happiness that gardens bring to garden-lovers."

Hilda has certainly created a most beautiful legacy for all to enjoy and appreciate.





Celebrations across Israel with Telfed's regional committees

With the number of COVID-19 cases on the decline, thanks to an effective vaccination rollout, life in Israel is gradually returning to 'normal'.

Pesach 2021 was truly a holiday of freedom, and our Olim community throughout Israel was eager to reconnect (while adhering to the gathering restrictions still in place).

Telfed's Haifa Regional Committee took the lead with the first in-person event of 2021 and welcomed new Olim and veteran Olim in the northern city to a community braai. Haifa Municipality Project Director for Olim from English speaking countries, Smadar Stoller Porat, joined in the fun. Rabbi Doron of the Kiryat Eliezer community shared insights on the significance of the approaching celebration Yom Haatzmaut immediately after commemorating our Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror.

Former Telfed Chairman, Dave Bloom, represented Telfed at the annual Yom Hazicharon memorial with World Machal (Mitnadvei Chutz La'aretz or overseas volunteers). In 1948, over 800 South African men and women volunteered to defend the newly established State of Israel in the War of Independence. These volunteers played an invaluable role, and we remember those who paid the ultimate price.

As a day of mourning leads to a day of celebration, Israelis across the country celebrated the State of Israel's 73rd birthday. Telfed's Rishon LeZion Regional Committee arranged a community



Telfed's Youth Committee enjoying a festive Lag Ba'Omer braai with young Olim in Tel Aviv

picnic at Gan Ha'Ivri. A wide range of outdoor entertainment and activities were arranged by the local municipality, and our Olim in the Rishon region had a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Yom Haatzmaut with friends and family.

Over 35 young adults joined our Telfed Youth Committee for a La Ba'Omer braai in the gardens of Telfed's Amishav Street building in Tel Aviv, and Telfed's Jerusalem Regional Committee will be hosting an event with writer and publisher, Murray Greenfield.

In addition to upcoming regional events, the Telfed Team has already begun preparations for our first

post-Corona country-wide event, scheduled for Chol Hamoed Sukkot.

As we slowly resume in-person events and welcome visitors to our offices (by appointment only), we are still making the most of our virtual events.

Hundreds of participants joined our entertaining Yom Haatzmaut Family Quiz, where we laughed and learned and celebrated our remarkable country. Topics ranged from the founding of the State of Israel to award-winning Israeli TV series. Thanks to the generosity of our Olim community, thousands of shekels in prizes were up for grabs, including coffee, biltong, books, photoshoots and personal training sessions.

A virtual event commemorating Yom Yerushalayim was arranged by Telfed's Beit Shemesh Regional Committee. Telfed CEO Dorrn Kline, a former 'machalnik' spoke about the events leading up to the Six Day War and Israel's miraculous victory.

Twenty-seven new South African Olim landed in Israel in time for Yom Yerushalayim. Telfed's Regional Committees will be welcoming them to their new communities.

Those considering Aliyah are invited to contact our regional volunteers to learn more about Israel's dynamic and diverse communities. As a Klita organisation, we strongly recommend advance preparation for a successful absorption and integration into Israeli society. More information is available on our website: www.telfed.org.il.

MENSCH THOUGHT-LEADER OF THE MONTH

by Ari Poyurs

In 2016 I was teaching my first group of Grade 5 students. While we had a wonderful relationship and fantastic classes, there was a problem. There was a clear hierarchy within the class. Anyone who was lower in the hierarchy did not get a chance to express themselves and was often mocked.

I had to intervene!

I came into class holding a stress ball with a smiley face on it. I asked the students to sit in a circle on the floor. I began by holding up the stress ball, "This is Jimmy, what do you think Jimmy is feeling?"

"HAPPY!"

"Now, I want you to say something horrible to Jimmy and throw him on the ground or at the wall as hard as you can."

Confused, the students listened and giggled while they bullied the unsuspecting stress ball. Once they had all finished and things had settled, I continued, "I was Jimmy at school..."

"I was skinny, had acne and people used to mock me for it. My family didn't have a lot of money so sometimes we didn't get a lot of food. I also struggled with a lot of subjects in school.

"One day, my classmates and I were playing at break and one boy (who was actually struggling with family issues at the time) decided he was

going to start kicking the ball as hard as he could at a few of us. It sucked and I felt worthless."

"I was often mocked for being skinny and I remember feeling so ashamed. Every day I put on a smile, hid my pain and just wished school would be over."

"My dear Grade 5s, there are people in your class who have that same pain and can't share it! They are hurting and struggling and feeling bullied because we mock them and don't give them a chance to speak. But the thing is, they don't show it! They put on a smile like Jimmy."

I finished off by urging them to be kinder to one another and respecting those around them!

A little boy named Jake walked up to me after the class. He said in a soft voice, "Mr Poyurs, I know it will be okay for me because it turned out okay for you..."

With tears in my eyes, I handed the smiley stress ball named Jimmy to Jake and said, "You are a hero for sharing that with me, Jake!"

My story was painful at times, but it has shaped me into who I am today. Of course, my classmates could have done with a little more emotional intelligence, but they all turned out to be great guys... which shows that they just needed a bit more guidance at that age, a bit more awareness, a bit more empathy.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to teach people how to be kind, empathetic, self-aware, and most importantly

how to be a mensch. There are so many factors involved and it is difficult to place this burden solely on schools when they already have so much on their plates. That is where I come in! I founded *Happy Schools* — an emotional intelligence consultancy — where we work to develop Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) solutions for parents, teachers, and students.

Through meaningful connection, engaging and relevant content, and behavioural science techniques to create sustainable change, we aim to challenge all our stakeholders and to re-think education.

The world needs problem-solvers, agile workers, creative thinkers, empathetic leaders, and engaging listeners if we want to create a world that is worthwhile for future generations. So I urge you, as parents, employers, leaders, educators, and humans, to think how you can leverage or develop your emotional intelligence to ensure that there is space for Jake, a space for him to nurture his unique talents and make a meaningful contribution to the world, a place he can feel safe and call home.

I look forward to connecting and learning together with you!

Learn with a smile!



Ari Poyurs is a valued member of the Mensch Network. To read more about his work, [Click HERE](#), or log onto www.mensch.org.za, and scroll on the 'Network' menu to find out more about Happy Schools and to connect to his Facebook blog.

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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

Ensure that you live your best life — take care of yourself by being one step ahead!

So many unforeseen events have happened during this pandemic. CJSA professional staff are really having to reinvent themselves in so many ways, and we are constantly having to stretch ourselves in order to cope with the different requests and issues that come our way.

Many of our seniors are entirely alone without family members in Cape Town. Having to cope with daily issues is hard enough for many of our members, but when major problems arise, it can be catastrophic.

It is very important to have structures in place for every eventuality, much like preparing for retirement which is best done from an early stage, during your working career. The same goes for planning for your ageing needs whilst at optimum health, and while you have family or trusted friends to help you plan.

Getting your affairs in order

No one ever plans to be sick or disabled. Yet it's this sort of planning that makes all the difference if an emergency does arise.

- Put your important papers and copies of legal documents in one place. You can set up a file, put everything in a desk or dresser drawer, or list the information and location of papers in a notebook. If your papers are in a bank safe deposit box, keep copies in a file at home. Check each year to see if there's anything new to add.
- Tell a trusted family member or friend where you put all your

important papers. You don't need to tell this friend or family member about your personal affairs, but someone should know where you keep your papers in case of an emergency. If you don't have a relative or friend you trust, ask a lawyer to help.

- Discuss your end-of-life preferences with your doctor. He or she can explain what health decisions you may have to make in the future and what treatment options are available. Talking with your doctor can help ensure your wishes are honoured.
- Give permission in advance for your doctor or lawyer to talk with your caregiver as needed. There may be questions about your care, a bill, or a health insurance claim. Without your consent, your caregiver may not be able to get the information required. You can give your okay in advance to your bank, or your doctor. You will have to do this in writing, in the presence of both.

Advance care planning is not just about old age. At any age, a medical crisis could leave you too ill to make your own health care decisions. Even if you are not sick now, planning for health care in the future is an important step toward making sure you get the medical care you would want, should you be unable to speak for yourself and doctors and family members are making the decisions for you.

Think about the type of decisions that may need to be made in such cases, and questions that may arise, so you're prepared later. It can help you decide who you would want to make decisions on your behalf if

you can't make them yourself. It will also discuss ways you can share your wishes with others. Appointing someone to make decisions for you, and knowing how you would decide might take some of the burden off family and friends.

Advance care planning involves learning about the types of decisions that might need to be made and about your preferences. These preferences are often put into a written advance directive, a document that goes into effect only if you are incapacitated and unable to speak for yourself. This could be the result of disease or severe injury — no matter how old you are. It helps others know what type of medical care you want. It also allows you to express your values and desires related to end-of-life care. You might think of it as a living document representing your expressed wish — one that you can adjust as your situation changes because of new information or a change in your health.

The drafting of an advance directive is your responsibility. It is, however, recommended that an advance directive be drafted in conjunction with medical advice and counselling. It is further advisable that patients discuss the specific terms of their advance directives on a continuing basis with their medical practitioner(s).

You will need to talk with a lawyer about setting up a general power of attorney, durable power of attorney, joint account, trust, or advance directive. Be sure to ask about the lawyer's fees before you make an appointment.

This document ensures that your

family and doctors know what your wishes are if the time comes that you are unable to express your needs and wishes. It is important to note that an advance directive and living will are not regarded as a legal document in South Africa, but it is definitely a good way of expressing your care wishes, as often these issues are not discussed for fear of repercussions and upsetting family members.

Diana Sochen, Director

Social and Personal

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

We welcome new members
Angela Butlion, Mervyn Friedland, Joan Fried, Robyn Meyerowitz, Selwyn Horowitz and Linda Symons

Welcome and Mazaltov to the families celebrating births.

Hannah Sofer – great-grandson

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.



Consider This

By Rabbi Greg Alexander

This too shall pass



How do we cope with struggles and challenge? What guides us in the confusing world we find ourselves in today?

In the big picture, 2021 is not looking that different to 2020. Yes, there is talk of vaccines and by the time you read this I hope that many of our over-60s will have had the jab, but we know that this is far from over and we need to draw on our reserves of patience and resilience once again. Many people respond with anger or even distrust of the vaccines (and the government/big Pharma push for them) and many respond with helplessness that there is 'nothing to do', COVID can't be beaten.

There is a great tool that we have for these times and it is summed up in a story set 3 000 years ago in the court of King Solomon the wise. Of all Solomon's most reliable advisors, none was more trusted than Benaiah ben Yehoyada. He was a proven soldier, general of the king's army and someone who not only had performed heroic acts like killing a lion but had also stood by Solomon against his enemies even when it was not in his interests to do so. Check out the *books of Samuel, Chronicles and Kings* for more Benaiah stories.

This one, which is not in the *Tanakh*, begins at Pesach when King Solomon calls for Benaiah with a strange request. He asks him to find a special ring. One that has the power to make a sad person happy and a happy person sad. What he doesn't tell Benaiah is that the ring does not exist. He wanted to test his truest general and see how he would respond. Would he refuse the task? Would he try and then give up, or hope the king would call it off? Would he pretend success and hope Solomon would not notice his failure?

The king gives him until Sukkot to bring back the ring, a period of six months. Of course, Benaiah accepts the challenge and heads off into the world to seek the ring. If we had pages I would describe the adventures he had along the way, but in short, it is nearing the end of Sukkot, and he is on his way back to Jerusalem ready to admit defeat.

He passes through a poor village where he sees some merchants have set out a market. One catches his eye and calls him over, asking if she can provide what he seeks. Benaiah describes the ring and the merchant thinks for a while and then nods. "You have the ring?" asks Benaiah, amazed. "I have this ring," says the merchant and produces a simple plain gold band, and then in front of Benaiah she engraves three letters. *Gimmel, zayin, yud*. "What do they stand for?" asks the now suspicious Benaiah. Was this woman just trying to con him seeing how desperate he was to find the ring?

"For the words '*Gam Zeh Ya'avur*' – this too shall pass" answers the merchant. After a moment's thought, a broad smile breaks over Benaiah's face. "Thank you, thank you," he says, and, paying for the ring, he rushes off towards Jerusalem.

The morning of the last day of Sukkot dawns and Solomon welcomes Benaiah back to court. "So Benaiah, how have you managed with your quest?" Without a word, Benaiah produces the ring. Without any explanation Solomon understands immediately and shakes his head in amazement. "You have done well, my friend, and this ring will be my most treasured possession."

The ring is not the treasure. The story is. Summed up in those three words – *gam zeh ya'avur*. When things are good, we should be humble enough to know that our lives are fragile. And when things are hard, we should realise that this won't always be our state in life. This too shall pass. The wheel will turn. And we will move on. There are so many things beyond our control, out of our hands. We are not in control of COVID, or even of the way that governments of the world respond to it. We can't control the weather, or the traffic or the neighbour's barking dogs.

What we are in control of is our response. If we respond with anger, with fear, with frustrated seething fury, we not only do not stop COVID, we also add another problem to our already difficult day. When we try to work on what we can control – the support structures around us and our loved ones, keeping safe, making sure we do things that bring us joy, connecting to people who inspire us and make us smile – then our burden is less.

Lag B'Omer 5781 at Temple Israel

The topic of our *Difficult Fireside Conversations* for this year's Lag B'Omer celebrations was *Lemba and Judaism in South Africa*.

Rabbi Malcolm interviewed Dr Mahlodi Mantlha and Ishe Oded Stephen Maramwidze. Mahlodi is a member of Temple Israel and has roots in the Lemba community. She is a member of the Hamisi Clan of the Lemba Nation. Oded is of the Dumah Clan of the Lemba Nation and as a leader of the community bears the title Ishe. He is from Zimbabwe and based in Johannesburg.

Mahlodi and Ishe Oded discussed the history of the Lemba people, their rituals and liturgy and their connections to, and interaction with the South African Jewish community, both Progressive and Orthodox. The contentious topic of the necessity to complete an *Introduction to Judaism* course in order to become members of the broader Jewish community was discussed. It was pointed out that there is a difference of opinion amongst the Lemba about the need to formalise their Jewish status.

The speakers also talked about the Lemba community's relationship with the State of Israel. Ishe Oded described the Lemba's desire to make aliyah and contribute positively to the Jewish state, and mentioned the dream of establishing a Lemba school in Israel. It would admit students from other Jewish communities, from the Arab community and other religious or ethnic groups as well as Lemba students, thereby actively expressing the idea of unity within diversity.

"The Lag B'Omer discussion with Ishe Oded and Mahlodi was really wonderful, and insightful. It was great to see these two Jewish worlds come together, displaying respect for each other and listening to the other without the need to be right or prove anything. I'm proud of the progressive community for showing respect and not dismissing." – Jessica Jantjies.

The discussion was followed by a (virtual) *Fireside Song Session* led by Rabbi Emma Gottlieb, Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked (via video), Will Rivlin and Hannah Taylor.

Celebrating Pride in June

By Rabbi Emma (She/Her)

Temple Israel will be celebrating Pride throughout the month of June, with special events and PRIDE-ful moments during worship services.

On 2 June we begin with a webinar on LGBTQI+ Inclusion in the Progressive Movement, the last in our series of webinars co-hosted with the SA Jewish Museum on contemporary aspects of Progressive Judaism. Later in the month there will be an event for parents and loved-ones of the queer community who may be looking for some basic information, education and resources to best support their loved one. This event will be co-hosted with Gender DynamiX (GDX), the first registered Africa-based public benefit organisation to focus solely on trans and gender diverse communities. The event will be online and is open to all. Details of date, time and how to register can be found on Temple Israel's website and social media. Temple Israel is also partnering with the Gitlin library to feature books written by LGBTQI+ authors and will be fundraising to ensure that all of these books can be made available at the Gitlin Library. Temple Israel's rabbinic team will also be contributing to the purchase of these books. Each Shabbat in June, we will also be taking a moment in our online services to celebrate Pride, as well as to have moments of remembrance, focussing on inter-generational themes as well as highlighting the global LGBTQI+ community. All of this will culminate in our annual Pride Shabbat, on 25 June. Details and registration links for all of our services can be found on Temple Israel's website and social media and all events and services can be viewed on our Facebook page. We look forward to a month of affirming our values of acceptance, inclusion, diversity and equality throughout Pride month in our community.

Mazaltov to those who celebrated Bnei Mitzvah with us last month



Danny Katzeff
1 May



Tyron Katz
8 May



Daniel Chaimowitz
22 May



Lex Blank
29 May



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Habits for Building a Strong Family Bond

By Lauren van Zyl (Social Worker)

What is a habit? According to Wikipedia, a habit is a routine of behaviour that is repeated regularly and tends to occur subconsciously. Families, whatever form they may take, are under great attack in the modern world and families who are able to stay together and have strong bonds, need to build various habits into their daily life. This takes work and is not always easy in the beginning, but the long term pay offs are well worth the sacrifices that we sometimes need to make.

Let us take a look at a few of the habits you can build into your family life.

1. Eat Together Every Day

A family who eats at least one meal together every day can improve communication skills and build relationships between family members. This does not always have to be supper, although that is a good meal to try and have together. Put away your devices, set the table and spend the time catching up with each other.

2. Make Family Traditions

A family who has taken the time to build a tradition puts a stamp of uniqueness on their family. It is something that defines a family and builds a sense of belonging. This can be as simple as a joke that only family members understand, or having pizza and board game evening every Saturday night.

3. Spend Time Together

I can see the eye rolls and hear the sighs of all working parents as I write this, but it is so important for a family to do activities together. A walk on the beach, a short road trip, visiting a museum, playing a multi-player game or starting a garden, even if it is only two or three pots on a windowsill. Be creative and keep in mind the ages and interests of your family.

4. Kind Words

This habit is a difficult one to build but we as parents need to set an example for our children. What you say when you are angry or upset may cause untold damage within a family and words cannot be unspoken. Take a moment before you reply when you are angry or upset. Use 'I' words when communicating your feelings. An example

of this is: I feel angry when you... Avoid words such as always and never, as these absolutes can just inflame an argument. Using kind words does not mean being a doormat or allowing another person to be abusive towards you but it does mean that you show respect towards the other person and attempt to hear what is being said and not just reacting. Most importantly, it means being willing to say sorry when you have made a mistake. This includes parents apologising to children, as we are not perfect and children need to see that parents are able to admit their faults.

5. Do Chores Together

Everybody shares a family home, whether there are only two of you or whether you live in a large extended family. Doing household chores together gives every family member a sense of pride and belonging in their home. It also takes away the resentment of one family member doing all the household work. There are age appropriate activities for all household members and the earlier you start involving your children, the easier it will be as they get older, as it will be an established habit. This gives an opportunity for informal discussions between family members while hanging up the washing or cleaning the car and has a twofold purpose of building relationships and teaching children valuable skills.

6. Volunteer Together

We live in a country where the needs are great but often there are not enough hands to do the work. Giving time and goods makes us feel grateful for what we have and happier in ourselves. It teaches our children compassion and is a great learning experience for everyone. There are so many opportunities for volunteering. Find a project that you all feel passionate about and get involved.

7. Have a Family Vision

A family with a vision is a family that is working toward together towards a common goal. Contributing to a common goal says that I belong to this family and am part of the decisions that impact the family. Saving together for a new fridge, planning an overseas trip or poring over Pinterest as you revamp your home are all activities that can build family bonds.

Building strong family bonds takes time, energy and purpose. It will involve planning, sacrifice and discussion but the benefits that are reaped as a family are far beyond the hard work it takes to build the bonds. Family is the backbone of a healthy society and the responsibility for building a strong family starts with you. For more information please contact a JCS social worker on **021 462 5520** or email info@jcs.org.za.

Family is the backbone of a healthy society and the responsibility for building a strong family starts with you.



Photo by Volodymyr Hryshchenko on Unsplash

#JewishCommunity #SocialWork #Family



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The cutting of electricity

By Anton Katz



What happens when local government becomes dysfunctional?

Municipal services, such as electricity supply, water, sewage and garbage matters aren't properly managed. How can local residents be protected from catastrophe?

This important issue has recently arisen in the Courts in relation to electricity supply. Eskom is tasked with the generation and supply of electricity. It does not supply electricity to individual users. Electricity is supplied by Eskom to municipalities throughout South Africa, and the municipalities in turn supply individuals and businesses within their territory. This scheme is long-standing and is historically a hold-over from the infrastructure set up by the apartheid government.

So, consider the following facts. An individual user (a business, factory or single family) uses and pays the municipality for all electricity used. But the municipality fails or neglects to pay Eskom for months and sometimes for years. The unpaid amounts escalate and eventually the municipality owes Eskom many millions or billions of rands. The debt is so large that the delinquent municipality cannot even keep up with paying the interest on the massive debt it owes to Eskom.

Eskom, a state-owned enterprise sues the defaulting municipality for the unpaid debt, obtains a judgment and unsuccessfully attempts to recover the monies owed. It enters into agreements with the municipalities to the effect that the municipalities will pay for future electricity supply, and slowly pay off the debt.

But Eskom's tactic of adopting 'a carrot and stick approach' to extract payment from the defaulting municipalities failed to yield the desired outcome. It then decided to interrupt the bulk electricity supply at scheduled times: from 06h00 to 08h00 and again from 17h00 to 19h30 during the week; and from 08h30 to 11h00 and again from 15h00 to 17h30 on weekends. These times were to be extended, incrementally, until the point of a

total termination of electricity supply, unless the municipalities made substantial payments to Eskom to reduce their indebtedness.

A number of businesses, through their Chambers of Commerce, and individuals challenged Eskom's interruption decision in court. The Chambers put up solid evidence that the electricity interruptions would have a devastating effect as they 'threaten the very fabric of society', with hospitals, schools, households and businesses severely disrupted. The Chambers elaborated on the effects of electricity interruptions: Firstly, when the power supply is cut, all sewage works immediately come to a standstill. This means that sewage is not pumped to the sewage processing plants but instead, will simply sit (and will eventually spill into the streets) for the duration of the cut-off, with the associated, serious risks to the health of the community.

The lesson to be learnt is that although the Courts cannot run and administer governmental functions, they can in appropriate circumstances hold government to account and protect the rights of affected individuals.

Secondly, the minute the power is shut off, the water purification and processing plants as well as those pumping water to the community to ensure adequate water pressure come to an immediate standstill. This means that taps run dry, households run out of water, and critical water-based facilities will cease functioning. Even worse, when the supply is reconnected, it will take some time for an adequate reserve to be generated to enable the community and business to recommence.

Thirdly, any process (industrial, commercial or domestic) that is dependent on electricity will immediately cease. And 'the proposed interruptions will lead to the rapid collapse of the entire Emalahleni water network within 48 hours, and it is likely that a human and environmental disaster will follow; interruptions to the electrical supply to the water purification system will lead to raw, unpurified water flowing into reservoirs and creating a serious health risk to the

community; there is a real risk that Eskom's planned interruptions will lead to a total collapse of the entire sewer system; interruptions to the electrical supply to the sewage works will result in a situation where raw sewage flows into the natural waterways and ultimately finds its way into the Olifants River catchment system, creating an environmental hazard way beyond the boundaries of Emalahleni."

In Court, Eskom defended its intended interruption. It argued that it had no relationship with the private users. Its only commitment and obligations were with and to the municipalities. If the municipalities did not pay, then it (Eskom) was entitled to cut. Therefore, the private users had no standing to challenge their decisions. It was only the municipalities who could sue them in Court. And the rationale for the cuts was based on a legitimate basis.

First, the interruption in supply avoided or limited further delivery without payment and secondly, was used as a tool or mechanism to "encourage" the municipality to start paying. Eskom testified that its objective in resorting to the drastic measure of interrupting the bulk supply of electricity to the municipalities was to contain the spiralling of the electricity debt which, over the years, had increased exponentially.

Eskom also contended that failure to take the drastic measures it had adopted would ultimately impact negatively on its overall capacity to generate electricity. And that if it were pushed to a point where it could no longer generate electricity, so its argument continued, the whole country would be plunged into darkness, with disastrous consequences on many fronts.

The Supreme Court of Appeal rejected Eskom's defences for three separate reasons.

Firstly, the interruption of supply decision was irrational and therefore unconstitutional. The Court accepted the Chambers' argument that to try to extract payment from a municipality that cannot pay is counterproductive. Indeed, it make things worse. Electricity cuts would make it harder for the municipalities to generate income to pass on to Eskom.

Secondly, the municipalities had constitutional obligations to its residents to supply basic services. Eskom could not undermine the municipalities' constitutional obligations to provide basic services by cutting. And the Court referred to the notion that: "the provision of basic municipal services is a cardinal function, if not the most important function, of every municipal government. The central mandate of local government is to develop a service delivery capacity in order to meet the basic needs of all inhabitants of South Africa, irrespective of whether or not they have a contractual relationship with the relevant public service provider. The provision of electricity is one of those services that local government is required to provide."

And thirdly, and in any event, before cutting, Eskom had to at the very least attempt to obtain assistance in the recovery of payment from the provincial and national spheres of government. It needed to exhaust every possible avenue available before taking the drastic step of interruptions. The Court ruled that Eskom's decision to interrupt was unconstitutional and invalid.

The lesson to be learnt is that although the Courts cannot run and administer governmental functions, they can in appropriate circumstances hold government to account and protect the rights of affected individuals.

Anton Katz is a practising Senior Counsel, former United Nations special rapporteur on mercenaries and human rights, former Acting High Court Judge, and an admitted attorney in New York. He was born and raised in Sea Point.

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Miasma is no myth — how to stop a pandemic

by Dr Gareth Kantor

The Great Stink, London, 1858. Human effluent overflows the streets and gutters of the biggest metropolis in the world. The Thames has become a frightening, murky cesspool at the heart of the great city.

In response, parliamentarians, holding their noses against the foul aroma, approve a giant public works programme that results in London's brilliantly engineered sewer system. Fixing *the Great Stink* in this way reduces cholera and other waterborne disease, and leads to huge improvements in public health, saving many lives. It helps discredit the ancient, terror-inducing 'miasma' (bad air) theory of disease transmission, replacing it with a new idea — germs — and a successful ongoing focus on clean water and sanitation.

January 2020: COVID is about. The Chinese government cuts off the city of Wuhan in a desperate attempt to contain the disease. As the pandemic shuts down most of the world, the World Health Organisation tells us to wash our hands, scrub surfaces, and maintain social distance. Nothing is said about masks or the dangers of being indoors. We are told that a sick person can cough droplets onto your face, or shake your hand, which you then use to rub your nose. The virus can survive on surfaces for hours or days. But the WHO decides against advice to wear masks. Droplets fall to the ground within a metre or two. Just cough into your elbow, and social distance. Wipe surfaces frequently.

April 2020: The WHO affirms that COVID-19 is not airborne, insisting on additional evidence to justify any official change in that view. Meanwhile numerous superspreading events are reported — in restaurants, cruise ships, choir rehearsals — strongly suggesting that SARS-CoV-2 virus in breathed-out air can cross large expanses of indoor air.

May 2021: A little noticed but hugely important change: The WHO says that SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted not only by large droplets, but by tiny particles (aerosols) that can float in air, infecting people many metres away. The miasma theory is back!

The story of this change and what it means for the battle against COVID-19 is a fascinating one. Its late arrival delayed important interventions which might have saved millions of lives.

The aerosol scientists

A year ago, 35 scientists wrote a letter to the WHO. They were concerned about the misunderstanding of the likely mechanism of the spread of COVID-19 by the infectious disease and public health specialists who advise governments and world bodies. The standard public health

teaching is that anything under five microns in size can become airborne, and float. Everything else sinks.

The scientists insist that particles expelled from the respiratory tract of infected patients come in a range of sizes, some large droplets likely to fall to the floor, others (up to 100 microns) able to float in trapped air in an enclosed space, depending on heat, humidity, and air speed.

History of an error

In 1934, Harvard engineer William Wells analysed air samples and showed how particles bigger than 100 microns sank within seconds, while smaller particles stayed in the air. But the chief epidemiologist of the *Centers for Disease Control*, Alexander Langmuir, dismissed Wells' ideas about airborne transmission as a reversion to the ancient, irrational miasma theory. Langmuir cited studies on miners and factory workers, which showed the mucus of the nose and throat able to filter out particles bigger than five microns. Only the smaller ones could enter deep into the lungs and cause permanent damage. Experiments with rabbits and the TB bacteria confirmed this.

Langmuir emphasised that the problematic particles were smaller than five microns. Scientists misunderstood his observations, taking the size of the particle that transmits tuberculosis (five microns) for a general definition of airborne spread, leaving Wells' 100-micron threshold behind. This error became accepted as fact. Langmuir later admitted he'd been wrong, but by this time outdated science had underpinned public health policy for decades.

Error correction

Dislodging the error from decades of doctrine would mean convincing health authorities not only that they were wrong, but that the error was important. Many scientists and researchers have been involved.

During the first SARS outbreak in 2003, investigation of an outbreak at a Hong Kong apartment complex provided strong evidence that the coronavirus could be airborne. The scientists showed that during coughs or sneezes, the heavy droplets are too small in number and the targets — an open mouth, nostrils, eye — too small to produce much infection. They concluded that most colds, flu, and other respiratory illnesses must spread through aerosols instead.

July 2020: 239 scientists and physicians warn that without stronger recommendations for masking and ventilation, airborne spread of SARS-CoV-2 will continue unchecked. A WHO spokesperson resists their use of the term airborne but days later the WHO releases an updated scientific

brief, acknowledging that aerosols can't be ruled out, especially in poorly ventilated places. However the WHO sticks to the 3- to 6-foot rule, advising people to wear masks indoors only if they can't keep that distance.

October 2020: Another group of scientists and doctors publishes a letter in *Science*, urging consensus on how infectious particles move, starting by abandoning the five-micron threshold. The same day, the CDC updates its guidance to acknowledge that SARS-CoV-2 can spread through aerosols that persist in the air.

December 2020: The WHO recommends that everyone always wear a mask indoors wherever COVID-19 is spreading. They also promote ventilation, but avoid using the term *airborne*, instead emphasising the types of settings that pose the biggest risks.

30 April 2021: The WHO quietly updates its website, now stating that the virus can spread via aerosols as well as larger droplets. This may have been one of the biggest stories of the pandemic but it passes with no news conference, no major declaration.

May 2021: The CDC makes similar changes to its COVID-19 guidance, placing the inhalation of aerosols first on its list of ways that the disease spreads. But there is no news conference, no press release.

Airborne transmission — avoiding the avoidable?

Current best estimates: while talking, singing or coughing, SARS-CoV-2 is shed: via droplets (55%), short-range (1 – 2 m) aerosols (35%), and long-range aerosols (10%).

Airborne disease transmission means a shift in focus for public health. It would require, for example, good quality face masks to be made available to all; and for public spaces to have their ventilation assessed and possibly upgraded. To combat droplets, the chief precautions are distancing, barriers (masks, visors) and hand hygiene. To fight infectious aerosols, air itself is the enemy. Fortunately, SARS-CoV-2 doesn't often infect people over long distances if the indoor space is well-ventilated. And the virus definitely spreads most effectively in close proximity to a coughing, talking, or shouting person.

The Third Wave is upon us, what do we do?

What does all this mean to South Africans? We are tired of COVID but COVID is not tired of us.

We watch while COVID infection rates inexorably climb the peak for a third time. What else could we do?

The recognition that COVID-19 can be spread at a distance, by bad

(stale, trapped) air, points to new opportunities.

What we need to do



Improve the ventilation of enclosed spaces. i.e. buildings and public transport. Open doors and windows to ensure a current of air that will replace stale, rebreathed air with fresh air from outside.

Assess ventilation objectively e.g. by means of CO2 meters and analysis by specialist occupational hygienist and industrial engineers. Design or modify HVAC systems to provide cleaner air using filters.

In indoor spaces, wear masks, with good filtering and a snug fit over the nose and mouth. Cloth masks are less protective but can limit spread from infected persons.

Continue to clean hands. No need for deep, frequent, obsessive sanitising of surfaces. No fogging.

Keep a distance from people and avoid crowded indoor spaces. Outdoors is generally safe although close contact with potentially infected persons is unwise, even outdoors.

Quarantine and isolate. i.e. stay home if sick or closely exposed. Get tested; testing is readily available, with rapid turnaround times. Antigen tests are cheap and sufficiently accurate to detect infectious cases.

Last but definitely not least: vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate.

Wiping out TB, influenza and stopping the next pandemic

Airborne disease transmission has enormous implications for long-term health policy. By improving ventilation and other factors, it may be possible not only to suppress COVID's third wave, but to greatly reduce TB and influenza — both major killers in South Africa — as well as to stop runny noses, chest colds, and flu which regularly sweep through society.

Acknowledging the history, and how it has hindered an effective global response to COVID-19, could allow good ventilation and cleaner air to become a pillar of public health policy, a development that could not only hasten the end of this pandemic, but stop future ones; and reduce the enormous disease burden of TB and influenza.

Dr Gareth Kantor is an anaesthesiologist based in Cape Town, a health industry consultant and a health system improver. He is also on the expert panel of [GreenFlag Association](#), a new group that aims to give people the peace of mind that they live, work and relax in safe, healthy, well-ventilated spaces.



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The Samurai, the last tree and a miracle

By Maiyan Karidi

We were honoured to collaborate with a wonderful contemporary dance company in Mauritius.

They are unique and magical. They dance outside in nature, inside banyan trees, in the shallows of the lagoon and on volcanic rocks. This particular event was for the launching of their company. The location was perfect. All the elements at their finest.

My husband got the challenging task of doing the sound with his speaker innovation (another story for another time) and I created a mosaic on a kayak with a tree swaying in the middle like a mast, which was to be launched into the lagoon. Two mirrors among the mosaic caught the reflection of the azure sky. "The last tree".

The theme was nature's elements and the climax of the dance was timed exactly with the sunset and the music of Gladiator's *Now we are free* by Hans Zimmer. When Mozart's *Requiem* played, the fisherman near the coral reef in the far distance could hear it. The atmosphere was electric. During the rehearsal, a tropical storm warning didn't stop us. We hoped for the best. Black clouds gathered. On the day of the performance, the trade winds arrived together with heavy rain from the east. We desperately covered the music system and speakers with umbrellas and tarpaulin. The show must go on.

The rain came down and the dancers, all in white, gave their everything. As they danced in the torrential rain the tree on the kayak swayed back and forth more and more vigorously and we held our breath. The sun was nowhere to be seen.

The performance was magnificent and everyone felt the power of nature. We were exhausted, happy and hungry. We would celebrate with pizza in the village, but first we needed to protect all the equipment

piled up in an open shelter. Cecile, my favorite choreographer in the world decided to go and fetch her two dogs to guard the equipment. I offered to take her.

As we climbed into our little Samurai jeep, my husband warned, "It's Shabbat Maiyan, be careful, you shouldn't be driving." This may sound like superstition, but he had his fair share of disasters happening when firing ceramics on Shabbat. We always tried to stay at home on Shabbat, it became a family tradition. A family day or 'freedom day' as we call it. I told him, "its ok, don't worry, this is not work, this is dancing for the sky".

So, off we went. A simple twenty-minute drive along the motorway, we collected the two black Labradors, loaded them into the jeep, left the back open for them and started the return journey in the dark and rain, slowly making our way along the motorway.

The Samurai was slow, which suited the low visibility, the dark and the rain. We could only just see the tall sugar cane leaning into the road on our left.

Headlights appeared in my rear view mirror. It took three seconds to realise they were looming towards us at breakneck speed. We had nowhere to go, nowhere to pull over, it was too late. We screamed... and CRASH!

We were in the air. Everything turned to slow motion. Black and white, sugar cane, rain, stars, sugar cane, rain, stars. We were flipping in the air. My thoughts were that these are my last few seconds on this earth, when we land, its all over. Sadness washed over me together with a strange sense of acceptance that this was it. I was sad because my children would have to grow up without their mother and I would miss seeing them grow.

THUD! Darkness.

I opened my eyes. My mouth was filled with earth. The jeep was on it's

side. My torso was outside the side window frame of the car in the dirt, the window panes laid elsewhere, shattered. Cecile was on top of me. I felt my body and it was all there. I looked at her and she was crying. I said "We're alive!"

She didn't want to move. I convinced her to pull herself through the front window frame. We had to get out. She was worried about the dogs, they had vanished. She thought they were dead. She pulled herself out and put her hand on her phone, lying in the dirt. We had landed in a pit, surrounded by sugar cane and black rocks.

We were dazed and confused. We stumbled out of the car and started searching for the dogs. Nowhere to be seen. People has begun to gather around. The car that crashed into us was in the middle of the road, the front smashed in. The driver and the passengers had run off. The car was filled with empty beer bottles. Hit and run.

I was still dazed and confused, walking around with my trembling friend, searching for the dogs in the dark of the sugar cane field. All I could think of was that this was a miracle. It didn't make sense, being thrown a hundred and twenty meters, turning in the air and landing with such impact, and we were whole. Our family arrived to take us to hospital to

check us out.

My tailbone was numb and badly bruised and her shoulder was out of alignment, but that was all.



I felt we had been spared by angels. We still had work to do on this earth. The following morning we found one dog in the field and the other had walked all the way home and was waiting there patiently. Not a scratch. They had jumped out of the open back seconds before impact. Another miracle.

I don't question the reasons anymore. Superstition? Universal truth? We will never know. All I know is that Shabbat is a family day for us, a day of rest and freedom from the mundane every day struggle and as far as possible we try to keep it that way. The seventh day is sacred, whether we acknowledge it or not.

Maiyan is an artist and writer who has lived and worked on creative projects in Cape Town, Israel, Fiji and Mauritius. She recently returned to Cape Town and continues her quest for artistic collaborations.

Anyone interested in creating art projects with Maiyan can contact her at kmaiyan@gmail.com.



USING MY NUDEL

We all need a laugh

by Craig Nudelman

It's been a tough year and a half. The outbreak of COVID-19 around the world and all that came with it has made everything very grey.

Even though the government has finally started Phase two of the vaccine rollout, it seems unrealistic that their aim of five million vaccinated 60+ year-olds will happen. And then, just to be as mediocre as possible, the government aims to vaccinate 40 million people by February 2022. I don't have words to express how low they have set the bar.

Not only that, but Israel has just entered into another terrible conflict with Palestinians, and that is truly heartbreaking. It's not just the loss of lives that makes me distressed, but also how this ongoing conflict continues to demonstrate blatant antisemitism in all corners of the globe. Although the conflict in Israel-Palestine is awful, the effect on Diasporic communities is just as disturbing.

But as always, the Jewish community has one thing at our disposal when it comes to *tzorres*. We laugh through the tough times to get ahead.

And laughter is not just a nice-to-have. Laughter and humour have many different benefits for a person's mental, psychological and physical health. Laughter releases: dopamine, which helps the brain process emotional responses as well as enhances the experience of pleasure; endorphins, which regulate stress and pain and induce euphoria; and serotonin, which lifts moods. Dr. Cynthia Thaik, writing in the *Huffington Post*, says that not only does laughter lift your spirits but it also causes physiological responses in us. She states that, "A good laugh can be compared to a mild workout, as it exercises the muscles, gets the blood flowing, decreases blood pressure and stress hormones, improves sleep patterns and boosts the immune system." Research at Johns Hopkins University Medical School "showed that humour and laughter can also improve memory and mental performance."

And it's not just adults who need a little lift, but children too. A little laughter can brighten a family's day.

When I hear Livi laughing hysterically because Jessie is doing a silly dance, I can't help myself from joining in the laughter. And according to Dr Mary Gavin, writing in *KidsHealth*, laughter is not only a way to make a family closer. A good sense of humour can make children healthier, smarter, and more resilient to challenges that they will face later in life. According to her, humour is not part of our genetic makeup, but is a learned quality that can be developed in children.

The ability to recognise what is and is not funny is an incredible tool that can help children throughout life. It can allow them to see things from different perspectives, grasp unconventional ideas, be spontaneous, partake in more playful aspects of life, and not take themselves too seriously. It has also shown that children who have a well-developed sense of humour will be happier and more optimistic, have higher self-esteem, and will be able to navigate the tricky waters of playground politics.

The Nudelman household is not known for its austere and conservative nature. I am especially silly, revelling in word-play and puns, dad jokes and funny accents. With Gabi, I have successfully created two very silly children. It's wonderful to hear your own daughter tell her first terrible knock-knock joke, again and again and again... It's amazing to see our little girls having fun and enjoying life.

Jokes are so necessary in the world in which we live today. They are weapons against the harsh reality in which we live — and we need them so much today. We live in a time where there is an unprecedented amount of hate and anger, sadness and tragedy. So, I feel like it is my duty to put down some dad jokes down on paper.

You may guffaw, grunt, groan, or grimace as you feel fit.

I used to work in a shoe recycling shop. It was sole destroying.

This bouncy castle's twice the price of last year. That's inflation for you!



LEARN THROUGH CREATIVITY AT SALISBURY HOUSE

This term is all about food and travel at Salisbury House!

After Israel, our first destination last month, we moved on to Central America where we learnt about Mexico. We played traditional children's games and listened to some Mexican music. The highlight was preparing and celebrating a fiesta. We made a piñata out of papier mâché and decorated it. We then filled it with sweets and broke it apart at the party. One of the parents joined us to make guacamole and salsa. Sombreros and bright colours were all the rage.

We are now learning about Kenya and look forward to learning about

its culture and making some traditional Kenyan food.

We were fortunate to have a talk with legendary educator, Nodi Ipp. He spoke to us about virtues and bringing out the best in ourselves and others. We each chose a virtue for ourselves to cherish and work on, and then mentioned virtues that each of our friends have. It was a most uplifting and thought-provoking lesson for us all.

Last week we hosted our red carpet movie premiere for *The Friendship Quest*. Parents came to watch, and everyone enjoyed the snacks provided for the occasion. Each child was awarded a trophy for their role in the movie.



Nodi Ipp explaining the meaning of finding your own virtue while Endinaldo Mhini looks on



Tayah Weir and Elijah Hoffenberg enjoy the Mexican fiesta with our piñata in the background

il had a job in a calendar factory but I got sacked for taking a couple of days off.

I told my wife she drew her eyebrows on too high. She seemed surprised!

My wife told me to stop impersonating a flamingo. I had to put my foot down.

Singing in the shower is all fun and games until you get shampoo in your mouth. Then it's a soap opera!

I am terrified of lifts. I'm going to start taking steps to avoid them.

How does a polar bear build a house? Igloos it together!

I ate a clock yesterday. It was so time consuming.

I'm reading a book on the history of glue. I can't put it down!

If you didn't have a little chuckle at any of these great one-liners, then here's something to end with; one of my all-time best jokes:

A Frenchman, a German, and a Jew walk into a bar. "I'm tired and thirsty," says the Frenchman. "I must have wine." "I'm tired and thirsty," says the German. "I must have beer." "I'm tired and thirsty," says the Jew. "I must have diabetes."

We can't control the big world around us, but we can control what we let into our small orbits and, to that end, I recommend letting in as much humour as possible. Can a one-liner stop wars and end pandemics? Probably not. But it can definitely ease our way through treacherous times and make life just a little bit more manageable.

Craig is a writer, learning designer, and tour guide extraordinaire. His deep bass voice has graced stages, synagogues and studios. He is an obedient husband, and father to two spectacular daughters, and is known for dad jokes and trivia.

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How I Lost My Mother, by Leslie Swartz

Leslie Swartz describes his mother, "A person who was ordinary, she had an ordinary life... Elsie Cohen was also an amazing woman, incredibly intelligent, wrote beautifully, was an interesting person, out there in the world, vibrant."

Dr Swartz is a Clinical Psychologist and professor of Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch, best known for his work in Disability Rights and Mental Health.

A prolific writer in his field, he has also written two memoirs. Ten years ago he wrote *Able-bodied, Scenes from a Curious Life* that examines his relationship with his late father Alfred; and this year, *How I Lost My Mother* was published — a candid, engaging and finely-wrought insight into the life of his mother, Elsie Cohen, his relationship with her, and the complex relationships she had with her immediate and extended family. The book also provides much to reflect on in the business of life and death, and Dr Swartz's field of specialisation speaks loud and clear throughout.

Interweaving the personal, psychological and political, he writes with humanity, humour and uncompromising honesty, conjuring a vivid image of his world growing up, a portrait of his beloved mother; and addresses issues that affect all of us such as identity, agency, caring, dependancy, ageing and dying.

In part one, aptly titled *Finding*, we get to know Elsie as an unconventional and highly intelligent woman, the *laatlammetjie* in a financially stretched immigrant family, whose choices in life are severely constrained by the social norms of the day, as well as the family's lack of resources.

As a young girl, Elsie loved to write stories, a passion that resulted in a trip to Springs one day to meet another little girl whose family also came from Zhager in Lithuania, and who also loved to write stories. The little girl's name was Nadine Gordimer. The two continued to send stories to each other, and both had their work published in the *Johannesburg Sunday Express*.

Swartz writes, "As I get closer to and further away from her as I write this, I think of Elsie Cohen as many things — but centrally as a writer, along with the more famous Nadine Gordimer and Anne Frank. Like so many other women before and after her, she has left the telling to others, and in this case to the old man who was once her son."

In another poignant and very funny anecdote, Swartz invokes the iconic *Goodwill Cookbook* as a reference point on which to pivot both Elsie's connection to her background, and her disconnection from the 'good Jewish housewife' that convention dictated she should be.

Part two is called *Losing*, and deals with Elsie's old age and eventual death. Although the book is divided into these two parts — *finding* and *losing* — the two concepts co-exist throughout the book as Elsie and Leslie continually find and lose parts of themselves, their connection to each other, and to their world.

Elsie loses her husband relatively young (she is 58 years old), and relocates from Johannesburg to Cape Town (where Leslie lives with his family), embracing this new life-stage with enthusiasm. She is strongly independent, making sure that she doesn't become a burden on her family, and we read of her joy and courage in finding herself anew.

However, when she becomes ill and needs regular care, she moves into Leslie's home. The relationship takes a turn once again as we read of the impact it has on Leslie. With enormous love, concern and distress at Elsie's worsening condition, Leslie is thrust into the role of carer, and employer of hired carers; and shares insights into the politics of this role, as he deals with a lack of understanding from colleagues, and the invisibility that characterises this important work of caring.

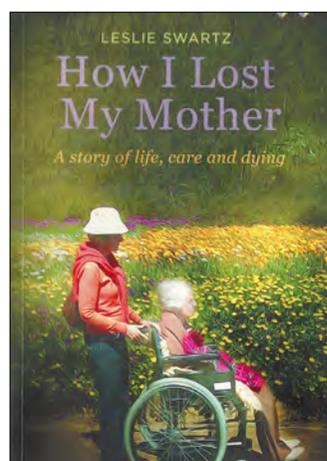
As Elsie approaches death, Leslie describes that liminal space between life and death that is familiar to anyone who has nursed a loved one in their final days.

The book leaves one with a sense of having met two very special people, and much to think about in terms of family, identity, love and everything else that makes us human.

This book can be borrowed from the Gitlin Library or purchased from The Book Lounge, Exclusive Books, Loot.co.za, Takealot.com and Amazon.com.



Leslie Swartz
Photo: Umesh Bawa



It's Not A Big Thing In Life, by Arnie Witkin

If ever someone was qualified to offer advice on how to navigate the inevitable challenges that life throws at us, it's Arnie Witkin.

Author of *It's Not A Big Thing In Life: Strategies for Coping, Considerations for my adult grandchildren*, Arnie has achieved extraordinary success as an investment manager and pioneer in the private equity industry in South Africa. After emigrating to the UK in 1989, he consulted to a merchant bank and a South African investment company for two years before becoming unemployed for a subsequent three years. After that, at the age of 50, he returned to South Africa and started again, founding another successful private equity company.

Since retiring from active business he has been a speechwriter, public speaking coach, executive coach and mentor.

In 2001, he underwent surgery for advanced thyroid cancer that cost him all but a whisper of his voice, but regained 70% of his vocal ability with corrective surgery in 2004. In 2009 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and discovered that the thyroid cancer had spread to his lungs. Eighteen months of chemotherapy medication muted the cancer, but in 2019 he began a second course of the same medication when the cancer became active again. In spite of all this, he lives an active life, travelling and playing golf three times a week.

He writes, "I am financially secure. I have a beautiful and accomplished wife, two sons, two daughters-in-law, six fantastic grandchildren ... and a wide circle of close friends. I've led a most interesting life. I was a distinguished business person and was referred to as the 'father' of private equity in South Africa. I've been a confidante to many and have rubbed shoulders with famous business people, sports stars and celebrities."

"However; the staggering reality is that, for as long as I can remember, my life has been a succession of problems, difficulties and conflicts, interspersed with successes, large and small. A never-ending obstacle course through the jungle of life. Much to my astonishment, at the ever so sprightly age of 76, it still persists. These days I am more accepting that peace of mind comes in spurts."

We are reminded that life is not smooth sailing, and that while circumstances are not always within our control, attitude and behaviour are. This book is a toolkit to manage any situation — personal, interpersonal or business — calmly and with integrity.

Some topics covered by the book are:

Principles of success • Love and relationships • Sex • Work and money • Facing difficult challenges and decisions • Taking responsibility for yourself • Humour as a coping strategy • Public speaking guidelines • Coping with illness • The power of vulnerability • Self-compassion • How to deal with sexting, cyber bullies, pornography, racism, drugs, anger, jealousy, envy, gambling, trust, etc.

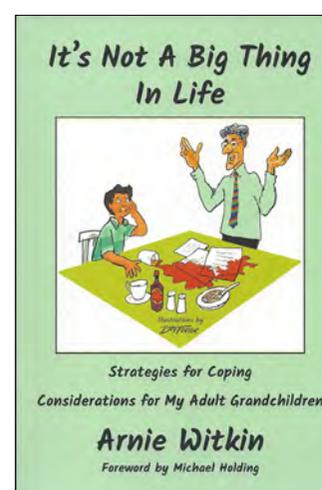
With a foreword by Michael Holding, and illustrations by Dov Fedler, Arnie has produced a very user-friendly, easy-to-read and comprehensive guide to living one's best life.

He writes in his introduction that it is written particularly for his grandchildren and grandchildren worldwide, but there is much to learn from this wise, practical, kind and witty guide to life, for children, parents and grandparents of all ages.

This book can be borrowed from the Gitlin Library, bought or ordered from any bookshop, or ordered on www.arniewitkin.com which has a link to an online South African store and to Amazon where South Africans can buy it on Kindle.



Arnie Witkin



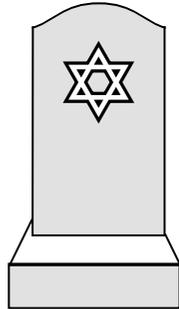
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Sports News

by Jaime Uranovsky

Jonathan Benjamin places first in SA triathlon championships

24-year-old Jonathan Benjamin came first in his age group in the South African Triathlon Championships in Bloemfontein this year.



Jonathan Benjamin, on the left

The race was Jonathan's sixth Olympic/standard distance triathlon, where he completed the 1.5 km swim, 40 km cycle and 10 km run in an impressive two hours and seven minutes.

The win qualifies him to represent South Africa at the World Championships in Edmonton, Canada in August (COVID dependent).

Currently, Jonathan trains between 12 and 16 hours a week and is competing in as many races as possible, all while studying towards his master's degree in Environmental Sciences at Rhodes University.

He also recently placed third overall in the Provincial Championships in Cape Town where he was given his first elite start — an

honour generally given to professional athletes.

"My dad did triathlons back in the day... so I've always been around and exposed to these sorts of sports — running, cycling and swimming. My sister was a big swimmer and water polo player at school, so naturally I started doing cross country and cycling."

Although training has sometimes been difficult during the pandemic, Jonathan made a plan. During the hard lockdown he cycled on an indoor trainer and received permission to use a local school's pool.

For Jonathan, training is about more than the competitions. "Running and cycling have always been my passions, so I enjoy getting out and living a healthy active lifestyle."

Jonathan's first 'triathlon' dates back to grade two at Herzlia Constantia, where pupils "did a quick circuit around the field and swam in the pool."

Hayley Landau's return to touch rugby

After more than a year's hiatus owing to the pandemic, women's touch rugby is finally being played again, says Hayley Landau, who has been involved in the sport since 1997.



While women's touch rugby is under-recognised in South Africa, various inter-provincial tournaments and social matches are played all over the country. Most notably, Hayley was one of 16 women in the over-27 team who represented South Africa in the 2019 World Cup in Malaysia. Hayley explains that six team members were in their 40s. Since there were not enough players to make up an over-35 team, Hayley tried out for the over-27 team instead. "Before the World Cup," she explains, "we had played in the interprovincial tournament as a Western Province B side, with our emphasis on developing the younger girls and helping them improve. So it wasn't as competitive as we were used to. We hadn't played for a while, so it took a year of hard dedication and training."

Hayley recalls her time at the World Cup, "I remember walking up and down the side-line, feeling emotional and thinking 'this is it'. My dream, at 42, had come true. I'm a Springbok and I'm representing my country."

More recently, Hayley played both for Western Province and for the Springboks, when they beat a visiting French team 12-2 and 11-1 in Cape Town in April. Hayley notes, "Their captain said playing against us twice on that day was better than two years of training for them. We always ask how we fare against Australia and New Zealand, who are in a completely different league, so it's amazing that France views our touch to be on such a high level."

Currently, Hayley says the goal is to get people playing again. Internal tournaments are being scheduled and she is hoping that the European Championships will take place next year, but she is otherwise gearing up for the 2023 World Cup.

For Hayley, touch rugby is pivotal, "The girls are wonderful, inclusive and warm people. It's a family and we all have the same goal. Most of us are moms ... so we all just go there as individuals, to play in a team where you have to work hard in a competitive environment. Everybody tries their best and encourages one another."

Jack Levin's bid to have padel recognised at the Maccabi Games

Padel can be described as a hybrid of tennis and squash.

Played on a court about a third the size of a tennis court, with a net in the middle and enclosed by glass and wire mesh, players can hit the ball off the wall. The game was invented in Mexico and is popular in South America and, increasingly, in the US and across Europe. It was played during the Pan American Maccabi Games, in Mexico in 2019. However, padel is not yet played at the Maccabi Games in Israel. Cape Town-born Jack Levin, who has lived in Houston for 44 years, wants to change this.

Jack, who turns 80 this year and has been playing padel for two decades, contacted the Maccabi headquarters to get padel

recognised for the 2022 Games. While the organisation says this is a future possibility, Israel lacks the facilities to achieve this in 2022. Jack is in touch with Jewish padel players all over the world and is looking for more players to add their voices.



Jack, a 1958 Herzlia graduate, says it is a dream of his to have padel included.

Contact Jack at jacklevin1008@gmail.com

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