

# ★ JEWISH CAPE CHRONICLE

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Seen at Friends of the UJC Cape Town year-end event: Neville Brauer, Doug Smollan, Carolyn Smollan, Henry Blumenthal and Arnold Basserabie

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Herzlia class of 2022 celebrate their results: Johan Schwartz, Darren Greenspan, Adi Ayache, Shelly Kramarz and Mila Smith

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Over 160 Capetonians attended Bnei Akiva's Machaneh Aloh Na'aleh (Photo: Uriya Kurtz)

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# Des says...



By Desrae Saacks, Editor Cape Jewish Chronicle

## Forty years

**The number forty is significant in Judaism.**

Forty years of wandering in the desert; 40 days spent by Moses on Mount Sinai; the Flood lasted 40 days and nights; the *mikveh* must be filled with 40 *se'ahs* (a measure of water); according to the *Talmud* it takes 40 days for an embryo to be formed in the womb; in *Kabbalah*, 40 represents the four sides of the world, each side containing the ten *Sefirot* (esoteric powers); there are 40 days between the first day of *Elul* and Yom Kippur — the annual *teshuva* (repentance) period. According to the *Talmud* (*Avot* 5:26), at age 40 a person transitions from one level of wisdom to the next.

I have been responsible for the layout of the CJC for the last 22 years. And for the last twenty-two February issues (we don't publish in January), I have been changing the volume number in the masthead on page 1. This number reflects the number of years that the publication has been in existence — so Volume 1 would have been the first year. This year I updated it to Volume 40!

In other words, The CJC has just entered its fortieth year! Forty years since Irma Chait (z"l) and her team produced the first Cape Jewish

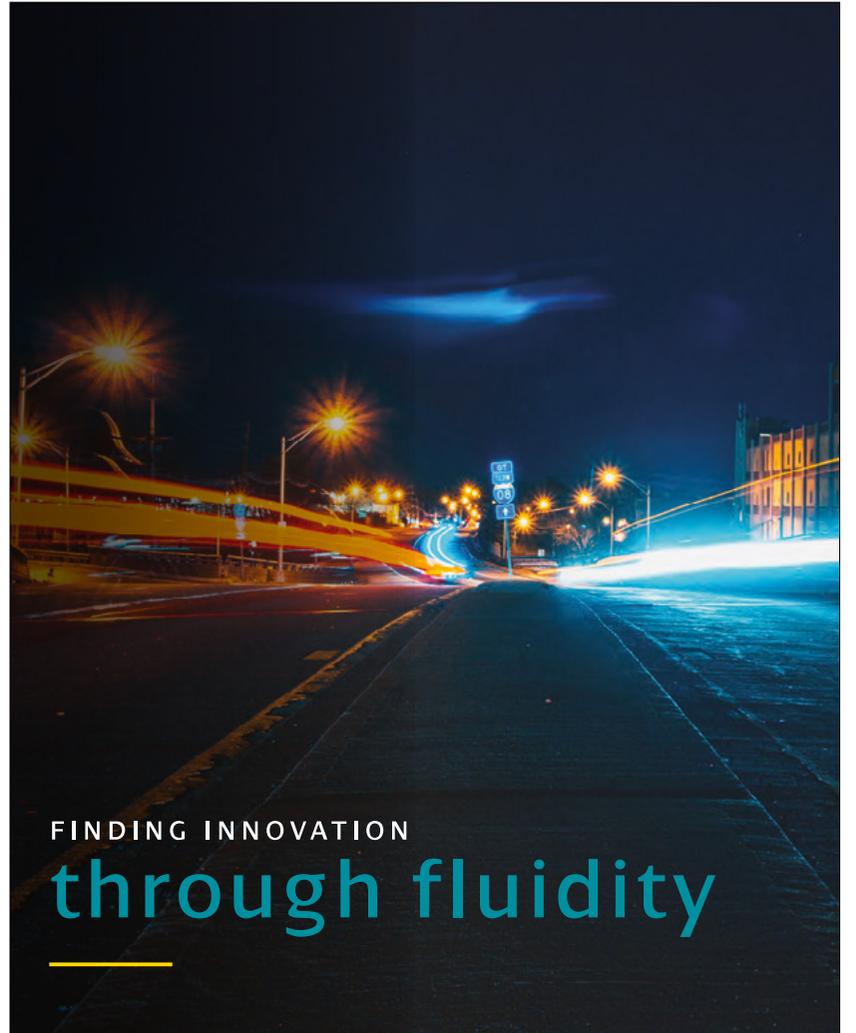
Chronicle in November 1984.

The Cape Jewish Chronicle was there for the end of Apartheid, the fall of the Berlin wall and of the Soviet Union, 9/11 (I could go on...). The CJC has witnessed the advent of emails, cellphones, the internet, social media, digital printing and AI; and expanded its vocabulary to include words such as load-shedding and Covid.

Forty years is somewhere between one and two generations. That means that you, our audience, have also changed. While some of you have been with us for the whole ride, others were not even born when this journey began.

These forty years have produced a colourful record of the social and communal history of the Cape Town Jewish community, and a window onto our changing world. The Gitlin Library and the CJC office each houses a set of bound volumes of all print editions of the CJC; and work is currently underway to include digital copies of these to the The Jewish Living Archive (see page 22).

In Judaism, the number forty is seen to represent growth, development and arrival at a new level of maturity. I look forward to seeing what the next forty years bring.



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		Earliest	Latest	
3 Feb/13 Shevat	Beshalach/Shira	18.25	19.26*	20.26
10 Feb/20 Shevat	Yitro	18.21	19.19*	20.19
17 Feb/27 Shevat	Mishpatim/Shekalim	18.15	19.15*	20.11
24 Feb/4 Adar	Terumah	18.08	19.11*	20.02

N.B. Please note that the times indicated are the earliest times for candle lighting. Please consult your Rabbi. \*Please contact your local shul to determine their Shabbat acceptance time.

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## Alison Katzeff – A true *Eishet Chayil*

By Joel Merris

**On Tuesday 31 January 2023 we said a final goodbye to a special friend and respected communal leader.**

Alison Katzeff was an outstanding communal leader, mentor and a generous philanthropist. She gave selflessly of herself to our Cape Town Jewish Community, and her kindness and generosity knew no bounds. The impact of her passing will be felt in the Jewish World, far beyond our borders.

Alison served our Cape Town Jewish community with distinction in various leadership positions; as a member of the United Herzlia Schools governing body, serving as chairperson from 2006 to 2008; trustee of United Herzlia Schools and a member of its Foundation Advisory Board; trustee and treasurer of the Yeshiva of Cape Town; executive committee member and trustee of the Claremont Wynberg Hebrew Congregation; and as a member of the Cape Town Jewish Community Priorities Board. Most recently Alison served as chairperson of the UJC from 2014, for six and a half years — the longest term in the organisation's history.

A passionate Zionist with a great love of Israel, in 2018 Alison was the worthy recipient of the Yakir Keren Hayesod Award for her vision, her extraordinary leadership and her unwavering dedication.

The Sages teach in *Ethics of the Fathers*: "One who runs away from honour will find honour chasing after him. One who chases after honour will find honour running away from him."

Never one to chase after *kavod* (honour), Alison always avoided the limelight and worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the viability and prosperity of our communal organisations. We will remember Alison for her selfless service and dedication to our community and for her unwavering devotion to promoting and supporting *Torah* and *Yiddishkeit* in Cape Town. An outstanding communal leader and a true *Eishet Chayil*.

On a personal note, on Sunday 29 January 2023 I lost a special friend and mentor. But Alison was so much more than that. She taught me about leadership; humility, integrity, pursuit of justice, selflessness, kindness and, above all,

the importance of being principled — defending what is right and being true to yourself. She often called me her 'little brother' — something I always held as a special compliment. On Sunday 29 January 2023 I lost so much more than a friend and mentor... I lost a 'big sister'!

Alison was an accomplished businesswoman, generous philanthropist and an outstanding communal leader. But, first and foremost, she was a devoted and loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt. We wish Howard, Yael, Oren and the Katzeff and Berk families long life. May you be comforted amongst the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and may Alison's memory always be for a blessing.



## Mazaltov to Herzlia's 2022 matric class

**Together with matriculants all over the country, Herzlia's matric class had a challenging start to their final phase of schooling over the two COVID years. Despite these challenges the results of the 2022 group are truly commendable.**

While there is often a focus on the number of distinctions and those who have excelled in their subjects, these results need to be interpreted in a broader context of an inclusive learning environment.

For many, the road has not been easy, with considerable obstacles to overcome, often invisible to others. For some matrics, the adversity has sometimes appeared insurmountable. Their achievements therefore, are an even greater testament to their determination, grit and resilience.

Shane Brorson, Acting Herzlia High School Principal explains, "the role of all their teachers, from the beginning of this group's school career, deserves to be recognised. It is necessary and



Assistant Head of Grade 12, Nicoleen Paule, gets a hug from pupil Tayla Harcombe

important to note and commend the dedication and unquestioned investment in each of our matric cohort of 2022's teachers, and a level of support far beyond the norm. It is also important to recognise the extraordinary work of the Counselling and Educational Support Department (SEED) which has helped and supported so many pupils (and their parents) and the teaching staff, not just academically but in every aspect of their last challenging years at school. These professionals

are some of the greatest strengths, privileges and resources of Herzlia's considerable educational offerings."

UHS Executive Director Andries van Renssen adds, "in addition to our teachers, our invested parent body has also played a vital role in supporting, encouraging and nurturing their children through this stressful time, supporting the school and helping their children navigate their way through the many challenges, and the ups and downs of their final school year. We are extremely grateful, and recognise and thank the Board for their support, as well as the departments which provide the integral support and administration for the school to run effectively.

"The results of our 2022 Matric cohort serve as testimony to the benefits of a truly holistic education which is not just results-focused, but about the values, skills and relationships that pupils develop over their time as part of our school community. Mazaltov to our Matric class of 2022!"

see more on page 11

83 Herzlia matric candidates • 99% Bachelor degree pass • 305 Individual subject distinctions • An average of 3.7 distinctions per candidate  
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## CONNECT, COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY

# Appreciating what we have, and working hard to retain this!

By Daniel Bloch, Executive Director, Cape SAJBD

### We often take for granted the life we live and what we have.

More often than not, we probably don't thank those around us for everything we have. There will always be someone else who has less than we do, and whilst your life may seem dark and possibly in the doldrums, believe me when I tell you that you are probably better off than most people.



In December, I was part of two initiatives that truly echoed that point and put my life into perspective. On 16 December, the Day of Reconciliation, I took my family with me on a District Six Reconciliation Day Interfaith Walk. Along with 50 other men, women and children from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds, we walked down Hanover Road, stopped at Krotoa (which is a religious site for the Khoi), and ended up at the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. The purpose of the walk was to remember the atrocities of Apartheid and the impact of District Six, as well as engage in dialogue with other interfaith and intercommunity members to discuss how we can 'heal' South Africa, and more importantly, the Western Cape, whilst also ensuring that we never commit the same mistakes as in the past. Reflecting on the past, we realise how fortunate we are to be living in 2023 (it was 2022 at the time).

Fast forward a week and I was honoured to attend a pre-screening of the documentary film about Ella Blumenthal, *I am Here*. This film follows Ella's incredible journey through the Holocaust, how she overcame the most horrific part of her life, how she found the courage to carry on, retain her belief in Hashem and more incredibly, her ability to forgive those responsible for these heinous acts of crime. Again, it was an opportunity for me to reflect and realise how fortunate I am to enjoy the life I have, and to not take anything for granted. More importantly, Ella demonstrated something truly remarkable. In order to move on, one must forgive.

Another incredible human being who shared the same belief was Nelson Mandela. I took my family on a tour of Robben Island — to be honest, I had never been. This is something every South African should do at least once. What Mandela and others went through to attain freedom and equality for all is inspiring, and we should never forget their struggles.

During the first two initiatives, I was joined by members of the Cape SAJBD. This has further inspired us to work harder in the coming months to ensure that we have a stronger and more connected community. We want to connect with as many as possible of the 13 000 Jews living in the Western Cape. We will be working closely with other Jewish organisations and partners to create opportunities for engagement and dialogue within the community; and we encourage you to engage with us as this is also your community and you should be an active citizen — have your say!

Whilst it is important to remember the past, we should also be working towards the future. We should be creating opportunities for our children, inspiring the youth of today to take the next step in leadership, and we should be including everyone in everything we do, including those members of our community who are not at a Jewish school or members of a shul. The more we connect with each other, the stronger our community can become.

Compliments of the season to everyone and wishing you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2023.

## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

# Reflecting on courageous leadership, chutzpah and resilience

By Adrienne Jacobson, Chairperson, Cape SAJBD

### One thing I am learning fast about community leadership in the political and interfaith space is that speaking up takes courage, carefully curated words and a fair amount of *chutzpah*.

Also, that forgiveness, faith, hope and dreams underpin resilience. Three events in the closing of 2022 resonated deeply with me and informed my observation.

Sitting on the National SAJBD Exec has been an incredible privilege, under the inspired and erudite leadership of National Chair, Karen Milner. I feel a deep sense of pride in the work we do — fighting antisemitism, hatred and prejudice; and building relationships in the national and international arena.

Karen's riveting report-back at our last national executive meeting, on the recent World Jewish Congress Conference in Rome, included an account of an historic invitation from the Vatican, and an audience with Pope Francis.

Strong words were delivered by Noemi de Sengi, Head of the Italian Jewish Community, in her powerful opening address in the inner sanctum of the Vatican. "In a place that represents the heart of the heart of the Catholic faith, these majestic walls of the Vatican City have always represented an insurmountable boundary. Prejudice, persecution, accusations, forced conversions, silences... and I wonder from '65 to today... how much effort has been made to convince that these walls instead represent solidarity and protection, translating defensiveness into closure, persecution into recognition, silence into dialogue."

Noemi went on to say, "And if today the Catholic Church were to announce the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, it would really be a gesture, an extraordinary act of far-sighted awareness of the church's own authority, responsibility and ability to turn the wheel of antisemitic hatred in the opposite direction." Finally she added, "I have a dream... that every Holy place; synagogue, church, mosque and temple becomes a place of serene prayer and never of massacre and terror."

Karen Milner's role in the South African Jewish community was further

entrenched at the ANC National Conference at Nasrec where, representing National SAJBD, she gave a most meaningful opening prayer before the conference began.

Her immaculately chosen words called on ANC leadership "to strengthen their commitment to build a just, peaceful and prosperous society, founded on the ideals of equality, human dignity and freedom for all", and for "the moral strength and wisdom to make this a reality." She asked of HaShem that "the task of leading the nation be imbued with insight and moral vision to realise the ideals of good, compassionate and ethical leadership."

My hope is that we as the Board of Deputies continue to impact these leadership spaces with the same integrity and courage, whether globally, nationally or locally.

Closer to home, Jordy Sank's award winning documentary *I Am Here* tells the story of our beloved Ella Blumenthal's survival of the Holocaust with poignant sensitivity and empathy. At a time when antisemitism is escalating and Holocaust narrative is being distorted across the political spectrum, and hatred abounds on social media, Ella's message of forgiveness, hope, transformation and resilience needs to be shared. Those who know Ella are inspired by the translation of forgiveness into her zest for life and enjoyment of a good party — she is the last to leave the dance floor at a simcha and her joy is infectious.

Adar is almost upon us, and we are reminded *mi shenichnas beAdar marbim be'simcha*. Wishing everyone a Chag Purim Sameach, joyous times and happy celebrations, the unmasking and unfolding of all that is good and true, and the realising of our deepest hidden potential. May the teachings of Malka Esther (archetype of courageous female leadership) that are mirrored in the remarkable women mentioned above, be an inspiration to speak up in overcoming hatred and prejudice with words of faith, hope, strength... and chutzpah too if you need it!



## Walking towards healing

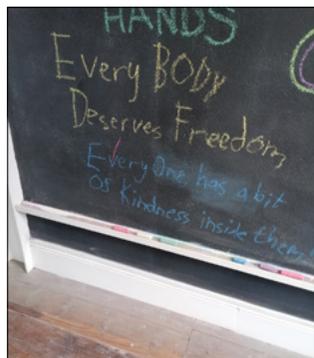
By Craig Nudelman

Sir Simon Baron-Cohen, the renowned British psychologist (not to be confused with his cousin, the comedian Sasha Baron Cohen) stated about reconciliation, “Empathy is a necessary step for truth and reconciliation”.

The Cape SAJBD regularly partners with various interfaith groups to find constructive solutions to improve the lives of our fellow South Africans in the Western Cape.

This was indeed the case on 16 December, when members of the District Six Restitution Walk Group (an interfaith organisation including the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative and other faith-based organisations and religious dominations) walked through District Six to understand the complex history, and necessity for reconciliation in one of the most contested spaces in Cape Town, if not South Africa as a whole.

The programme began with an introduction at the Holy Cross Catholic Church Hall by Laurie Gaum, a minister for the NG Kerk, and facilitator and project manager at *Genderworks*, who steered the group in prayer. Following a musical interlude, the group began its walk in stormy weather towards the Krotoa monument on Hanover Street, where a prayer of healing was read by Zebada January, for the indigenous people of the Cape on whose land we are still standing today.



Words of wisdom

The torrential downpour saw the group finishing early at the final stop — the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. There, our guide showed us the legacy of colonialism in the Cape and how we need to reconcile the past to move forward to a South Africa that is free of oppression and depression, and where hope can be found instead.

Finally, we were invited to write messages of peace and reconciliation on the blackboard in the conference room. It was an inspirational day, and we look forward to many more with our interfaith partners.



Zebada January delivers her address at Krotoa monument



Daniel Bloch, Imam Salieg Isaacs, and Nic Paton of the CTII.

## Hermanus cemetery reconsecration

By Daniel Bloch



Chairperson Adrienne Jacobson and Executive Director Daniel Bloch take part in the service

On 18 December 2022, the Hermanus Hebrew Congregation held a moving and special reconsecration service at the Hermanus Jewish Cemetery.

The ceremony was attended by more than 50 people from around the world, including Cape SAJBD Chairperson Adrienne Jacobson, Executive Director Daniel Bloch and Board member David King.

In 2021 the cemetery was vandalised, and the community came together with the support of Rav Moshe Silberhaft and the Cape SAJBD, to raise funds to restore the damaged tombstones and lay flat several others. During the ceremony, shul president Seymour Abrahams welcomed all the visitors, especially those who had travelled from Israel and Mauritius for the occasion. Seymour recalled the day he received the call informing him of the desecration. He remembered experiencing numerous emotions including anger and of course sadness. Who could do such a thing? and why target Hermanus?

The shul trustees immediately sprang into action and consulted with Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft regarding the restoration. The Cape SAJBD provided support through its social media platforms, highlighting what had happened in Hermanus. This exposure and awareness assisted the fundraising campaign with donations received from all over the world. The shortfall was made up by the shul.

Rabbi Silberhaft delivered a touching speech and then conducted the service. The group read aloud the names etched on each tombstone — a fitting tribute to loved ones who will always be remembered. The service concluded with a brocha at the shul, where stories were shared, memories relived and new friendships forged. Hermanus is a truly special community.



Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and Seymour Abrahams, president of the Hermanus Hebrew Congregation



Restituted tombstones



# The Cape Town Jewish community welcomes you!

**The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the David Sussman Community Foundation welcomes you to the Western Cape!**

If you or your family have moved to the Western Cape in the past few years, or if you know of anyone who has joined our community, then please connect with us. We would like to assist you as best we can to ensure your transition is as smooth as possible. Find out more about this incredible community and how we can work together!

**Let's continue to grow and strengthen our Jewish community!**



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## Bnei Akiva — stronger together



All dressed up and ready for Shabbat: Daniel Geva, Sam Frankal, Romeo-Noah Herskovitz, Nadav Buchalter, Brandon Schneider, Joel Shamley, Noah Criticos and Naftali Bei. (Photo: Uriya Kurtz)

Machaneh Aloh Na'aleh was a camp experience no one will ever forget. Of the 900 channichim on site, just over 160 were from Cape Town. The energy was electric. We sang, danced, learnt, and grew within ourselves as well as in our relationships with those around us. After two long years, Bnei Akiva was ready to have a comeback camp like no other. Everything was amplified — the quality of education, the activities, the connections, and the vibe

One of the highlights of camp for a madrich/a is the last night, where they sit with their channichim and reflect

on the three weeks prior, sharing and reliving their favourite moments — and cherishing them together for one last time as a family. As madrichim we saw a common thread in the majority of answers from channichim — all of their answers had to do with moments of hyper-togetherness and connection. Whether it was post-Shabbat *havdallah*, or our unbelievable *ruach* sessions, outings, or Shabbat meals, altogether it is evident that this camp experience, of being surrounded by like-minded contemporaries is essential for the growth and connectivity of the future leaders of the Jewish community.

Continues on page 13

## Habonim Machaneh — makes my life so beautiful



Sayarim (Grade 10s) having a jol at Ruach

It feels so good to say that after three years, the heartbeat of Habonim Dror Southern Africa was pulsing once again. Last year, we experienced a slow easing back into normalcy. We slowly re-learned how to interact with each other once again, Zoom 'waiting rooms' turned into classrooms, and masks were phased out with smiles instead. However, there was one thing missing from community life, and that was *Machaneh*. Although it felt great to breathe once again, the stagnation of our youth movements could be felt across the community. But this December, the final piece of the Covid relief package was put into place!

Continues on page 13

## Netzer SA — back in action

Netzer SA made sure to bring back the spirit this year. We tapped into the classic songs and sang for meals, *ma'amadim* and executed creative *peulot* for everyone to feel that nostalgia of the machaneh lifestyle. Our maddie guests from France and the UK lead our singing with passion.

Our theme was *Olam Metakun* (A world which we are repairing). Like a single hydrangea sprouting from a seed to become one within a bed, Netzer rebuilt itself after a lengthy pandemic in order to repair the community.

Some highlights included traditions like Shabbos and *havdallah*, hiking and cooling off at the dam, candle lighting and latka making on Channukah, colour wars, beach and channies day. — *Maya Reitstein*



Maddies and channies (blue team) prepping for colour wars song session

## Diller Teen Fellows Cohort 8: Jewish Identity Shabbaton



The teens and staff of Diller Teen Fellows Cohort 8

After much anticipation, the Diller Teen Fellows of Cohort 8 experienced their first Shabbaton together. Hosted at the beautiful Masada Guest House in Langebaan, the weekend was filled with learning, nurturing friendships and unforgettable new experiences.

At the *Jewish Identity Shabbaton*, teens are encouraged to explore their Judaism in an interactive and engaging way deepening their understanding and passion for our Jewish community. Walking out of the experience, teens felt refreshed and inspired for the year to come.

Don't forget to follow Diller Cape Town on Instagram @diller.capetown to keep up with the experiences of our brilliant young Jewish leaders. — *Martine Kawalsky Katz, Diller Teen Fellows Cape Town Programme Coordinator*



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7 Distinctions



## CLASS OF 2022 TOP ACHIEVERS

**83** HERZLIA MATRIC CLASS OF 2022 PUPILS

**305** INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT DISTINCTIONS

**3.7** AVERAGE SUBJECT DISTINCTIONS PER PUPIL



**Jacob Cohen**  
6 Distinctions



**Katya Golan**  
6 Distinctions



**Caitlin Cohn**  
6 Distinctions



**Sabina Kerton**  
6 Distinctions



**Jared Daitsh**  
6 Distinctions



**Shelly Kramarz**  
6 Distinctions



**Joshua Davies**  
6 Distinctions



**Yael Robins Kallmann**  
6 Distinctions



**Sophia Abrahamson**  
6 Distinctions



**Adi Ayache**  
6 Distinctions



**Alexia Feurig**  
6 Distinctions



**Mila Smith**  
6 Distinctions



**Benjamin Anstey**  
6 Distinctions



**Sabrina Brivik**  
6 Distinctions



**Benjamin Franco**  
6 Distinctions



**Ben Vogelman**  
6 Distinctions

## MAZALTOV TO THE CLASS OF 2022!

**99%**

BACHELOR DEGREE PASS RATE

**100%**

PASS FOR EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CANDIDATES

**77%**

MATRIC CLASS AGGREGATE

**13**

MATRICES ACHIEVED 7 DISTINCTIONS

**16**

MATRICES ACHIEVED 6 DISTINCTIONS

**8**

MATRICES ACHIEVED 5 DISTINCTIONS

We've respected pupils' choice not to be featured. Distinctions are listed in alphabetic surname order.

[www.herzlia.com](http://www.herzlia.com)

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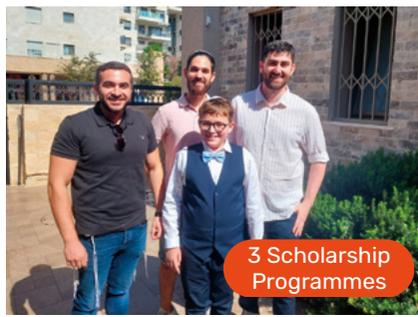


# 2022 Highlights



## THE PRAS FAMILY

Eden, a South African Oleh, invited his current & past PRAS students to his Barmitzvah celebrations. Idan, Uriel & Ben were integral in Eden's Aliyah journey through their weekly meetings. Eden's 'big brothers' were honoured to celebrate this milestone with him & his family.



3 Scholarship Programmes



105 Rental Apartments

## GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Tenants in Telfed's 2 Tel Aviv buildings arranged communal dinners to celebrate the chaggim, ensuring no Oleh was alone for the holidays. Telfed apartments are in high demand due to rentals below market value, a warm community & central locations.

## OLIM HELPING OLIM

145 veteran Olim joined Telfed's professional buddy programme, providing practical, relevant, industry-specific info to Olim as they build professional networks in Israel. Telfed continues to provide free employment counselling before & after Aliyah.



140+ active Volunteers



Klita Advice & Guidance

## WELCOMING OLIM

Telfed's Airport Welcome Crew, comprising staff & volunteers, greet new Olim on group flights as they take their 1st steps in Israel. Additional bureaucratic support is now available with a Klita (absorption) Hotline for navigating bureaucracy & IDF support.

- Rental apartments at 100% occupancy
- Monthly financial assistance for 451 individuals
- 478 Scholarships
- 2000+ employment consultations
- Gifts, events & support for 230+ Lone Soldiers

2022

24 Regional Committees

→

Advice, guidance & info before & after Aliyah

471 SA OLIM

54 welcome & networking events

[WWW.TELFED.ORG.IL](http://WWW.TELFED.ORG.IL)

/Telfed @telfed\_israel



# Jewish Literary Festival takes it up a notch

The Jewish Literary Festival (JLF) is taking it to the next level this year with acclaimed British historian and author Simon Sebag Montefiore as keynote speaker.



Denis Hirson

Dr Montefiore will be discussing his newest book, *The World — a family history*. This nuanced, historical epic has offered Montefiore the greatest satisfaction of his writing life, he says. The author focuses on power families — the Hapsburgs, the Nehrus, the Borgias and the Trumps — from their humble beginnings to greatness and power and finally to collapse — all related with a good dose of humour.



Aviva Pelham

Other internationally-residing but South African-born authors joining JLF 2023 include Denis Hirson (France), who will talk about his latest book *My Thirty-Minute Barmitzvah*, Louisa Treger (UK), author of *Madwoman*, and John Schlapobersky (UK), who wrote *When They Came For Me: The Hidden Diary of an Apartheid Prisoner*.



Patricia Schonstein

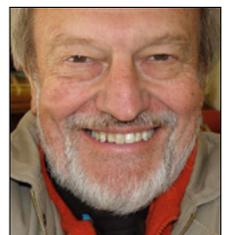
On the local front, popular authors such as Gail Schimmel, Kate Sidley, Jonathan Ancer, Steven Boykey Sidley, Nechama Brodie, Joanne Jowell and Patricia Schonstein join the line-up. Colin Coleman and Tony Leon discuss what's next for South Africa on the political front, while Des Lindberg and Aviva Pelham talk about how music crosses cultural divides. Entrepreneurship will be tackled by Spur Steak Ranch founder Allen Ambor and serial entrepreneur Rael Levitt. In total, more than 50 authors are participating, with popular moderators like Nancy Richards, Karina Szczurek, Mandy Wiener and Anton Harber leading the conversations.



Colin Coleman

This year, unlike previous iterations of the festival, writers and moderators will gather for a series of panel discussions rather than one-on-one interviews. Get ready for a profound and provocative range of sessions on business, politics, history, narrative, identity, heroes, villains and much more!

JLF has become a highlight on the local literary calendar, joining such iconic events as the *Franschhoek Literary Festival* and the *Open Book Festival* — and you don't have to be Jewish to enjoy the day. The festival enhances the Cape Town Jewish cultural experience without promoting any political or religious agenda. Festival goers will have the opportunity to talk directly to writers and fellow readers, playing an integral role in powering-up this otherwise under-represented category in the local publishing arena.



Des Lindberg

*The Book Lounge* is manning a popup bookstore; a delicious boxed lunch is part of the ticket price; and ample coffee stations encourage a casual relaxed atmosphere.



Rael Levitt

Partners for the Festival include the Jacob Gitlin Library, The Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre, the SA Jewish Museum, Fine Music Radio, the Cape Jewish Chronicle, The Book Lounge and Lift Airlines.

## HUMANS RIGHTS DAY, 21 MARCH 2023

**9am to 5pm (last session starts 4pm)**  
**Gardens Community Centre, Hatfield Street, Cape Town**

R350 includes lunch, access to all sessions and a coffee voucher.

**Bookings are open and tickets may purchased online through Quicket:**

<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/95371-jewish-literary-festival-2023/>  
 or by visiting the Gitlin Library during business hours.

Enquiries: [hipzone@mweb.co.za](mailto:hipzone@mweb.co.za)

Continues from page 10

## Habonim Machaneh — makes my life so beautiful

Being back on the campsite felt surreal — intellectual conversations and activities and funny experiences that made memories to last a lifetime. For three years we were going off past memories... but now new ones have been made.

Months of preparation by madrichim ensured the success and smooth-running of Machaneh. But more importantly, everyone had such fun and creative energy, which really set the tone for camp. Whether it was belting our lungs out during *Havdallah*, getting a tan at the beach, or making an 'outdoor slip and slide' during the rain, *Machaneh Hashivah Habayta* will go down in history as one of our best Machanot to date! Further, it signifies the beginning of an exciting chapter for HDSA. Now, we have something to build upon.

We can't wait to bring engaging activities covering Israel, Judaism, and South Africa throughout the year... as well as the insane fun for which Habo is known. Riding the momentum from Machaneh, we hosted *Veida* from the 20 - 24 January. *Veida* occurs every two years, and is when the Bogrim body comes together to make changes to our *Chukkah* (constitution), as we are always looking to adapt our constitution in line with the mindset of the current bogrim body, in an effort to avoid stagnation.

This will be followed by *Hanhaggah* seminar, where leadership will plan the year ahead.

Cape Town Jewish community, Habo is officially back! — *Brad Gottschalk, Rosh Ken Cape Town*

Continues from page 10

## Bnei Akiva — stronger together

From this, we take something crucial into the new year. Whilst camp is a priceless and fantastic experience, it's just not enough to keep our channichim emotionally and spiritually sustained throughout the year. Each member of the Bnei Akiva Cape Town team has a personal mission to ensure that camp is not the height of our community's Bnei Akiva experience, but that high-quality engaging, fun and consistent activities, Shabbatonim, and trips are on offer throughout the year. Bnei CT is coming in full force, ready to take this year on with all the opportunities it brings. I, Leah Hepple as the recently appointed Chairperson, plan on utilising my passion, ideas, and creativity to make this mission a reality. I look forward to connecting further with our old and new channichim and madrichim as well as the larger South African community! *Kadimah Bnei Akiva!* — *Leah Hepple*



The Green & Sea Point Hebrew Congregation presents

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An unforgettable evening of music and nostalgia



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Chief Cantor of the IDF and Israeli celebrity singer

**COLIN SCHACHAT**  
Internationally renowned performer

**IVOR JOFFE**  
Popular and renowned Cantor and Entertainer



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Conducted by Maestro David Sebba - Israel  
Arranger and Pianist: Raymond Goldstein

February 16th 2023

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Consider This

# We are water

By Rabbi Greg Alexander

## As I write this, it is raining on camp. Summer camp – machaneh.

Rain is a blessing, unless you are planning to head to the beach. Never pray for it *not* to rain. I did that in Winter 2017 when we had a leak in our roof — it stopped raining in Cape Town for two years and we nearly had Day Zero in 2018. I am not saying that I caused the drought, just that you should never curse the rain.

So, as I watch the rain, it gets me thinking of water. Firstly about waves on the beach — how the waves roll in and the waves roll out and the ocean is the same. It's like our relationship with G@d. As the 20th Century theologian, Richard Rubenstein said: "G'd is the ocean, and we are the waves. In some sense each wave has its moment in which it is distinguishable as a somewhat separate entity. Nevertheless, no wave is entirely distinct from the ocean... The waves are surface manifestations of the ocean." *Morality and Eros*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1970, 186-7.

I also thought about how rain is a

closed cycle — water falls, it sits for a while and then it rises with evaporation. Then it falls again. It's the same water cycling around. And has been for thousands or millions of years. In a recently published research article, scientists Cecilia Ceccarelli and Fujun Du show that the water we drink is roughly 4.5-billion-years-old! Wow, what a mindbend!

So the rain that is falling today, and the ocean waves, and the water you drink is actually the same water that our ancestors Abraham and Sarah drank in the land of Canaan. It's the same water that Rivkah gave to Abraham's servant and his camels at the well. And that flowed in the Jabok river next to which Jacob camped when he wrestled with the angel. And that parted for the Israelites to walk to freedom. And that Miriam made manifest in the wilderness for 40 years to water the tribes. And it's the same water that our ancestors sailed on from Lithuania and England and Germany and Rhodos to get to South Africa.

It is literally *Mayim Chaim*, living water. There are different words used in the Torah for different rain,

showing just how much our ancestors observed rain and depended on it for their very lives. You didn't want too little or too much and you didn't want it at the wrong time. There is *yoreh* (the early rains) and *malkosh* (later rains). There is *geshem* and *matar* and *tal* (dew). When they were slaves in Egypt they got water everyday from the Nile. When they were wandering for 40 years in the desert they got water miraculously on tap from Miriam's well. But when they entered the Promised Land they became farmers of the land and needed the rain to grow their crops.

And then it got me thinking that we are water too. Most of our bodies are made up of water — it depends who you ask and what part of the body you are talking about, but it seems that around 60% of our bodies are actually water. Not that you hear it sloshing around while you walk downstairs, because it's found in the cells that make up our body parts. Our brain is about 70% water. Our lungs are about 90% water. The skin contains 64% water, muscles and kidneys are 79%, and even the bones are watery: 31%. That's a lot of water. We *are* water. It's no wonder that

the mikveh, the pool of living water, was our primary tool for marking transitions (birth and healing, before a wedding, becoming Jewish).

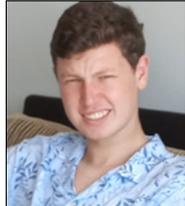


The water in our bodies connects us to each other and to our ancestors and to the future generations that will sit here after us. And we, right now, right here, have the responsibility to bless it, to be grateful for it and to look after it. Not to waste it. Not to pollute it. To use it sparingly and with conscious appreciation for its connections to present, past and future.

As you read this, know that the first shabbat in February is *Shabbat Shira* — the Shabbat of Song — when the waters parted for the Israelites and they responded in song. And soon after that is *Tu Bishvat*, the festival of trees, which connect us once again to the cycle of water and nature. Let us take this time to reflect on our connection to water and to each other, to be guardians of, and appreciators of the ancient and sacred rivers that flow in us.




**Mazaltov to December and January Bnei Mitzvah!**

 Miah MacDonald 3 December	 Josh Malia 3 December	 Levi Baran-Rothschild 10 December
 Carys Bloom 10 December	 Jody Tarloff 17 December	 Paige Marinus 17 December
		 Yasmin Kuti Alexander 14 January



# Friends of the UJC Cape Town year-end event

**On Thursday 22 December, for the first time in three years, guests gathered from around the globe for an in-person celebration at the Friends of the UJC Cape Town year-end Summer event. Overseas and Johannesburg-based Patrons and Friends attended this wonderful evening.**

The event, which has become a highlight of the festive season in Cape Town, was held at the Historic Old Shul in Gardens, indeed a spectacular venue with a rich cultural history. The Old Shul, built in 1863, is the oldest existing synagogue in South Africa and a beautiful Jewish heritage building that has been recently lovingly restored.

Guests mingled with others from far and wide and enjoyed the character of this unique location where they were treated to an enjoyable musical performance by recent Herzlia Matric graduate, Mila Smith, a singer-songwriter with a voice beyond her years. Gourmet food of the highest calibre, catered by Stanley Norrie

and Jacques Erasmus of Hemelhuijs, was enjoyed by all.

Henry Blumenthal, Executive Chairman of Investec Wealth, spoke on behalf of Investec, whereafter Wendy Fisher, President of the Board of Trustees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation introduced Guest Speaker Sir Bradley Fried. Among Bradley's many impressive achievements is his position as CEO of Investec Bank plc. Recently he was knighted by the Queen of England in the year of her Platinum Jubilee, in recognition of his public service. He has also held the Chair of the Court of Directors of the Bank of England, Chair of the Board of Directors at Preqin and has recently been appointed Chairman of Goldman Sachs International. It was a privilege to have him join this special year-end event and deliver a brilliant address.

Marco Van Embden, Chairman of the Friends and the David Susman Community Foundation (Community Foundation) addressed the guests and shared with them the successful 14 year journey. The main focus of the annual Friends event is to

ensure support for the sustainable future of the Cape Town Jewish community and to celebrate Jewish Life in the Mother City. The proceeds of the Friends event support the Community Foundation. These funds have grown significantly since inception, with dedicated oversight by a Board of Trustees. A number of important bequests and legacies have added to the financial strength of the Foundation. The Foundation is crucial to the Cape Town Jewish community, as it serves as a protection mechanism against any future adversity which may befall it.

Friends of the UJC Cape Town thank our Patrons, Friends, Donors and loyal supporters, and believe that the Friends, as well as the Community Foundation, will continue to grow from strength to strength.

A special mention and thank you to generous sponsor Investec, who have supported every event since inception 14 years ago.

For more information on the Friends of the UJC Cape Town contact Robyn Slot on friends@ctjic.co.za or call +27 21 464 6700.



*Sir Bradley Fried who was recently knighted in recognition of his public service by the Queen of England, delivered a brilliant address to the guests.*



*Henry Blumenthal, Executive Chairman of Investec Wealth, spoke on behalf of Investec.*



*Phillip and Wendy Press, Dori Weil and Lawrence Abrahamson*



*Jonathan Smidt*



*Prism Fine and Marla Sacher*



*Wendy Fisher, President of the Board of Trustees of the Guggenheim Foundation, introduced our guest speaker Sir Bradley Fried.*



*Natie and Frances Kirsh*



*Mila Smith, singer-songwriter and recent Herzlia Matric graduate*



*Sir Bradley Fried and Michael Kovensky*



*Nikki and Neville Brauer*



*Jonathan and Marla Sacher*



*Marco Van Embden (Chairman Friends of the UJC Cape Town), Andrea Dennis, Philip Krawitz and Wendy Fisher*



*Sacha and David Jowell*



*Lauren and Bradley Fried*



# 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

## Starting 2023 on a good foot



Nancy Krisch spoke to a group in Muizenberg.



Southern Suburb members enjoying a walk around the V & A Waterfront.



A morning at Starke Ayres Nursery for Sea Point members

**As we begin a new year, we look forward to a happy, healthy year, and hope that it will be the best year ever.**

This is especially applicable after the upheaval of the past couple of years. As our target market is 60-plus, aspirations for a special year should include ageing gracefully.

We need to look at how to live our lives both physically and mentally. With knowledge, and the right care and attitude, we can ensure that this year and going forward, our lives can get better.

Here are some easy tips to ensure that each one of us has the opportunity to age gracefully:

- Look after your skin — as your body is covered by skin, it needs to be treated with care, to protect it from the harsh elements. When going outside, wear sunscreen and protective cover. Have regular skin cancer screening and stay hydrated.
- Exercise regularly to maintain mobility, decrease the risk of disease, lower stress levels and improve sleep patterns and mood. We all enjoy different forms of exercise — walking, swimming, dancing, exercises to strengthen muscles or cycling. Even in moderation, this can achieve excellent results. It is important to remain active as being sedentary can predispose us to chronic illness and debilitating diseases.
- Diet — ensuring that we eat healthily is the way to go if we want to age gracefully. Dieticians encourage a healthy amount of fruit and vegetables, lean protein, whole grain cereals, rice or pasta, and a good serving of dairy, especially including Vitamin D. We also need to include healthy fats (not solid fats for cooking). To prevent elevated blood pressure, it is important to reduce salt intake.
- Mental Health: It is important to be happy as this lowers stress levels. Surround yourself with people who make you happy and cut out those who cause stress. It is a fact that we all age, and it is therefore important to accept this. We need to accept that ageing is a part of living. If we embrace it, we can enjoy the road.
- Sleep is important for both mental and physical health, and is also great for healthy skin. Sufficient sleep lowers the risk of heart disease and strokes, decreases depression and lowers obesity while improving concentration and focusing ability.
- Decrease stress levels by using relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, sleeping well and interacting with friends and family.
- Smoking and alcohol have both been seen to cause accelerated ageing and risk of disease. It is always preferable to cut out smoking and keep alcohol intake to recommended levels. It is also important to drink water regularly, to hydrate and reduce signs of ageing. Water consumption improves energy, keeps your pores open as you sweat, rehydrates and allows easier bowel movements.
- Hobbies increase enjoyment in life. They assist in widening friendship circles which increases endorphins and decreases depression. There are options to suit everyone.

- Practicing mindfulness encourages us to live in the moment, assisting with ageing better, improving focus and memory, lowering stress levels and improving daily functioning. Ways to practise mindfulness include yoga, tai chi and meditation. By focusing with intention, you are able to concentrate and cancel negative thoughts.

- Medical issues — it is important to have regular doctor checks and not to leave consultations until a crisis situation occurs. If you are concerned about anything at all, check it out. It is also important to care for your mouth by flossing daily, brushing your teeth at least twice a day and also using mouth wash regularly to prevent gum decay and teeth problems, which can in turn cause bacterial infections and cardiac problems if not detected or treated quickly.

This month sees the end of an era as we move from our home and office in Bellevue Road, Sea Point, to begin a new chapter with our Sea Point Centre now being in Albany Road with the Union of Jewish Women. Together we have completed some necessary renovations so that both organisations can function optimally. We look forward to an action-packed year, with new vigour from members

and participation in all the functions we have on offer. Our other branches are up and running with the in-house programme catering for all, as well as great outings to suit everyone's taste. Back on our agenda this year is our Goudini Break which is scheduled for October. It is most important that you indicate now if you are interested in attending, as we have to secure the accommodation. We will be drawing up a payment schedule so that the three-day trip can be affordable and enjoyed by everyone. Please contact your social worker if you are at all interested in this experience.

Lastly, CJSA is YOUR organisation. We welcome input and suggestions and love receiving requests, as this makes the planning of our programme so much more inclusive. Please submit your suggestions or requests. Please be proactive and pay your 2023 membership of R275. This is great value for what you receive in return.

Have a great 2023.

Diana Sochen

Executive Director

### Social and Personal

**We congratulate our members who have had joyous occasions during the last month.**

#### Bar/batmitzvah

Rabbi Greg and SR Andi Kuti Alexander – daughter, Yasi Issa Werb – grandson's barmitzvah

**Engagement:** Janice Bloch – engagement of granddaughter

**Anniversary:** Dinky and Lester Braun – 60th

**Special birthday wishes to:** Harriet

Baitz, Temma Gad

**Welcome to new members:**

Jill Lewin, Marion Lewis, Cheryl Salkinder, Bette Schlosberg, Jean Rudolph Zaidel.

**Well wishes to those who have been under the weather:** Freda Tucker, Bennie Katzenberg.

**Our wishes of strength to members who have recently lost loved ones:** Pauline Leeuw – mother Doreen Bloch



**2023 Membership is now open**  
**Kindly contact your CJSA Branch to renew**

**New Members are most welcome**  
**R275,00 Per Year**

**We thank you ALL in advance**

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# JCS@WORK

## TEAMWORK IS DREAMWORK

### JCS Needs You. Become a Mitzvah Meidele...or Mitzvah Mensch

#### Lynne Hendricks & Lynn Hotz

Over the past few years, the JCS client base has increased substantially, exacerbated by the reeling effects that Covid placed on the community. There has been a marked increase in the number of older, vulnerable and frail clients needing support. This has resulted in JCS having to establish an entirely new division - JCS Client Services. This division is committed to monitoring and providing care and support services to the elderly individuals who are not able to go to a home and remain in our care to assist them with their daily needs.

The Team at JCS consists of two dedicated staff members who check in with the elderly, on a daily basis. They ensure that these clients are safe in their homes, that they get to and from important medical appointments, have access to a food supply and are able to go about their day while knowing that we are only a phone call away should the need arise. Where required, they will accompany them to go shopping or assist in accomplishing tasks or errands that they are unable to fulfill themselves. They will also accompany them to medical appointments if needed. The Team liaise with the social workers regarding the clients' progress and continual assessments are made with regards to their needs as they evolve.

This database increases daily and is putting a strain on this department. With our limited manpower and resources, we are seeking the assistance of volunteers who are able to commit to assisting our vulnerable clients with daily activities - providing transport to and from appointments, taking them shopping or assisting with tasks that they are not able to do without assistance. Are you who we are looking for? Are you able to be that support we are looking for? Are you "that person" who is ready to become a *Mitzvah Meidele* or *Mitzvah Mensch*!

When becoming a *Mitzvah Meidele* or *Mitzvah Mensch*, you will be matched with an older person "to adopt". You will become a support system to this person in the best way you are able to. Contact can be weekly or daily or as much as you can dedicate. The older person will remain under the constant care of JCS and our social workers, who will be responsible for the client from a financial and welfare point of view.

In addition, most clients are not able to afford a medical aid and are forced to rely on the state for any medical intervention. At JCS we are fortunate to have several amazing doctors who offer their services *pro bono*. We are eternally grateful but very aware of overburdening them. As a result, we need more - a calling for our medical heroes in the community.

Help us provide our clients with the best care. Help us keep our elderly, vulnerable and frail clients safe, just like we would do for our own *bobba's* and *zeida's*.

Come and meet the team and see how YOU can become a *Mitzvah Meidele* or *Mitzvah Mensch*. Please email Lynne Hendricks on [lynne@jcs.org.za](mailto:lynne@jcs.org.za) for further information or contact Jewish Community Services on **021 462 5520** if you can be of assistance.

**"We are seeking the assistance of volunteers who are able to commit to assisting our vulnerable clients with daily activities - providing transport to and from appointments, taking them shopping or assisting with tasks that they are not able to do without assistance."**



**#JewishCommunity #ClientServices #SocialWork**



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SAAND



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PO Box 4176, Cape Town, 8000 or e-mail: [chron@ctjc.co.za](mailto:chron@ctjc.co.za)

### Reconnecting Sephardi roots

I had the pleasure of visiting the South African Jewish Museum last month, with the American delegation of IBSI (Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel) PEACE Ambassadors, where I collected your publication's current issue. Upon my return, I was pleasantly surprised to see the piece by Bonny and Debbie Feldman. (*Into the heart of crypto-Judaism in Portugal*, CJC December 22/ January 23) I immediately contacted my friends, and highly esteemed colleagues, whom I have cc'd on this correspondence.

After re-reading their opening, "As South African Jews of Ashkenazi descent, we have long realised that our education and life experience has not included much about our Sephardi brethren — their origins, their history and their trials and tribulations," I felt compelled to reach out and connect you to the work that is being done to document, preserve, and restore the rich histories and cultures of the millions, globally, who have been impacted by and are reconnecting to that which was forcibly taken, and then concealed.

First, I would like to introduce you to

Genie Milgrom. Her story of discovery and return is beyond providential. Genie's selfless, tireless, and profound work has made it possible for countless descendants of Conversos, to find glimmers of hope, whether that be in the form of re-connecting and having community, receiving recognition of Sephardic heritage, or making a full return to the traditions of our forefathers. You can read more at <https://www.geniemilgrom.com>

Next, is Ashley Perry (family name, Perez). He is the former Director General at the Knesset Caucus for the *Reconnection with the Bnei Anousim* (descendants of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews in the Diaspora), and the President of *Reconnectar*. You can see more at [https://nameyourroots.com/home/reconnectar\\_blog](https://nameyourroots.com/home/reconnectar_blog)

Finally, please meet Michael Steinberger. Michael is the Founder & CEO of the *Jewish Heritage Alliance*. His organisation is the umbrella of all things relating to the 'Saga of Sefarad'. Please see: <https://jewishheritagealliance.com>

Kindest regards,  
Elizabeth C. Kincaid

# Feeling lucky?

If you're looking for the ideal gift, come in and browse through our selection of artworks, crafts, and jewellery. You may just get lucky.

## The SAJM Gift Shop stocks a wide range of Judaica and Yom Tov gifts:

Candlesticks, menorahs, mezuzot, Jewish-themed books, cookbooks, prayer books, unique jewellery, gift cards, kippot, hamsas, taleisim, challah boards & covers and everything chag related.

### Opening times:

Sunday to Thursday from 10am - 5pm

Fridays from 10am - 2pm

Closed Saturdays & Jewish holidays

Open public holidays



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Email: [shop@sajewishmuseum.co.za](mailto:shop@sajewishmuseum.co.za)

## Time and the law

By Anton Katz SC

**As 2022 became 2023 people wished each other a better and prosperous new year.**

I wondered why it is only at a narrow and limited time of the year that we send these greetings. What is it about time that so regulates our lives. And that *time* issue led me to the topic — where does ‘time fit in the law’?

I can think of at least two dominant aspects of the law in which time features. First, and most obviously the direct reference in the laws, regulations and rules concerning dates and periods for filing and taking certain action. Secondly, the strategic and vital aspect of time affecting the case as a whole. In every single case, all the parties have a deep and sometimes decisive interest in when the case will be heard and decided.

I first discuss the time periods issue. Obviously, there must be rules for the running of cases. Can you imagine if a person could sue another person and the sued person could file their response whenever and however they liked? That would result in chaos and the law of the jungle. Thus if Mrs. A sues Mrs. Y in Cape Town, then Mrs. Y as the defendant cannot just file her answer wherever and whenever she wants. There are rules of court that compel her to file her answer in Cape Town and within a certain number of days. Generally a defendant will have something like three weeks to file their answer, and depending on the nature of the case and where the case is to be heard, the case could be set down for hearing anywhere between six months or sometime longer to be heard. The parties will have to exchange documentation, prepare for trial and

procedures can often take some time. Also, justice is expensive — there are only a limited number of judges whose work load is often super-heavy. It is not only unfair on the judges, but also on the parties for a judge to be given too much work. A judge with too much work will take a long time to hand down judgment, and the quality and competence of the judgment may be compromised.

Before turning to the actual laws and regulations, it is to be borne in mind that the rules of court are generally flexible. Time periods can often be shortened or extended if good cause is shown. So, if the rules require a party to file a document within 15 days, but they only file on the 18th day the court will almost always condone the late filing. But if the party defaults and files, say, nine months late, the late party will need a good explanation for their lateness; plus they would have to show that they have a solid case on the merits, in order to persuade the court that the nine month lateness should be condoned.

As far as the law itself (not just the rules) are concerned, time periods play an important role. For example, any court challenge to governmental action must be launched within 180 days after the action comes to the knowledge of the affected person. If the person launches outside the 180 day period, the Court can condone the lateness if it is in the interests of justice to do so. If a law

requires, say, a fishing permit or a tender for building a road to be applied for by, say, 1 December; and the applicant puts in the application on 2 December, the permit or tender application will not even be considered. I have seen countless persons overstay their visas only to be become ‘illegal foreigners’, with all the difficulties that entails.

The second and more interesting ‘time’ issue in the law is that in every single case one of the parties would wish the case to be hurried up, and the other for the court case to be dragged on and slowed down.

So, if Mr. X is charged with banking fraud, it may be in his interest for the case to be delayed and put on hold forever. A famous example is that of former President Jacob Zuma and the arms deal criminal trial. The trial has been dragged out for nearly 20 years. I wonder whether the evidence and

witnesses who were available 20 years ago are still available. One of the witnesses who could testify about the famous encrypted fax died of natural causes (old age) a couple of years ago. And of those who are around, a question is, ‘how good are their memories of what happened all those years ago’? I sometimes can’t remember with precision what happened last week, never mind last month or last year. And as the evidence gets watered down, the chances of a conviction become weakened. So, in that case, time is on the side of the accused (President Zuma) and against the

prosecution.

But what if President Zuma had been refused bail, and had been in custody all this time? The dragging on and delaying of his trial would have been completely different! He would have been in jail all this time, and time would have been against him. He would have wanted his trial to commence and be over with as soon as possible. And this applies to ALL cases.



In eviction cases it is always the landlord who wants the case to be hurried, whereas every tenant wants the matter to be dragged out and hopefully never happen. The same applies to money cases. When Mr. A sues Mr. B for R 5 million, on any basis time is on Mr. B’s side. If the case takes many years, or never happens, Mr. B effectively wins. I can’t think of any case in which ‘time’ is a neutral factor. In divorce cases, custody and access to the children is by their nature time-sensitive. Every day the mother or father has the kids is a victory in a contested case. In shipping, the owners of an arrested ship want the ship to depart, while the claimant against the owner will know that keeping the ship in port will cost the owner millions every day.

I’ve had some cases where the judge has taken so long to give judgment (a couple of years) that one or other party has effectively won the case. For example the child expelled from school is allowed to remain while her case is pending. The case takes so long that by the time judgment is finally handed down, the child had successfully matriculated and is completing her first year at university.

What is of importance in all this is that judges and the lawyers on the other side know, or should know about these time sensitive issues. And of course the ‘time’ will factor into their conduct and how the case is run. For example, a judge who doesn’t particularly like a party, but knows that the law is on the side of that party, could try to delay giving judgment to give the other (liked) party some or other advantage.

*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.*



## USING MY NUDEL

## A lesson in leadership

By Craig Nudelman

### Throughout 2022, I was privileged to participate in a Jewish leadership programme, the Nahum Goldmann Foundation's (NGF) Network Leadership Seminar.

It began in February last year and we graduated in January 2023 at the beautiful Tarrytown Manor Estate in Tarrytown, New York. It was an amazing opportunity for personal and professional development.

As part of the graduation, all 12 international participants had to prepare a Lesson in Leadership, reflecting on what they had learnt in the past year or providing a tangible project going forward. From revitalising their communities to providing platforms of Jewish learning, I was inspired by how we collaborated and provided each other with critical feedback after each presentation.

However, an NGF event would not be complete without sessions from the amazing faculty who had guided us throughout the year. Rabbi Dr Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi, the Senior

Rabbi of Har Sinai-Oheb Shalom Congregation in Baltimore, Maryland and Dr Daniel Fainstein, the Dean and Professor of Jewish Studies at the Universidad Hebraica in Mexico City, imparted their 'final' words on leadership, from *Tanach* and *Gemara* texts to those on postmodern Judaism (read *Renewing the Covenant* by Eugene Borowitz to gain further knowledge as to what postmodern theology and Jewish identity looks like). Text study and grappling with our sages' words, both ancient and modern, is critical to understanding concepts of Jewish leadership.

For my own Lesson in Leadership, I was supported by David Jacobson, the Associate Director of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. I used my Lesson to speak about the direction of the Cape Town Jewish community and ways in which we can learn from our global partners. My lesson was entitled *Think Global: Act Local*.

I shared my conviction that as a community, we need not reinvent the wheel when we see a potential crisis emerging. Rather, we should look

to our Jewish partners around the world to see how we can adapt their models for our local community. The text I chose to support this message was the Mishnah from Pirkei Avot 1:6, "*Aseh lecha rav. Knei lecha chaver*" – Make for yourself a teacher, acquire for yourself a friend. We need to find commonalities with our connections, local AND global. In this modern age where we can contact anyone almost immediately, it is easy to find teachers to guide us. We should use this to enable our growth as Jewish leaders today and beyond.

**"Aseh lecha rav. Knei lecha chaver" –  
Make for yourself a teacher, acquire for yourself a friend. We need to find commonalities with our connections, local AND global.**

My cohort's geographic and Jewish denomination makeup was interesting. The United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa were represented, as well as Orthodox, modern Orthodox, Conservative, Masorti, Progressive and Reform. Together, we were united as Jewish leaders. It was eye-opening for me, as I grew up in an 'Orthodox' home (or as Gideon Shimoni would put it, a non-observant Orthodox environment), as do most South Africans today. We don't have a Conservative or Masorti movement, and although I have participated in Reform services, I haven't embraced it as my own religious identity. This experience reminded me that we must learn from our Jewish siblings (brothers, sisters, and those who identify as neither) to move forward as a community and grow as interconnected, multicultural global Jewry.

I appreciated every second spent in Tarrytown and the leadership seminar in general. It was an incredible year of delving into the concepts of leadership, with all its positives and negatives, opportunities and challenges for self-growth. My Jewish identity has been altered by the amazing individuals in my cohort and by the faculty who facilitated this learning process. A special thanks goes to Rabbi Dr Jeni Friedman and David Jacobson, for giving me this opportunity. I can't express my gratitude enough.

After much thought and reflection, my

greatest takeaway is that the 'missing middle' must be appropriately engaged in the functions within the community. We have to allow key stakeholders who are not currently involved in the community to create a think tank and set up a system which could be seen as a disruption within the organised Jewish community, but which will be a positive force for change. We have incredible leaders who may not fit into the mould we see as Jewish Capetonians (or Capetonian Jews) due to their views on Israel, Judaism, or the future of the community in general. However, if their voices are not heard by the formal community structures, we will be all the poorer.

The people who are in leadership positions now need to empower the youth. There must be a real succession plan in order for the community to be in a stable position once their time within it is over. We can't rely on the same individuals to donate money and lead the community (and these two often go hand-in-hand).

**After much thought and reflection, my greatest takeaway is that the 'missing middle' must be appropriately engaged in the functions within the community.**

My dream for the community is that it becomes more democratic. Yes, the community can vote in elections for the Cape Board for its lay leaders. But how many people vote every two years? How are their constituents' needs and wants accounted for? It is something that needs to be addressed by more people within the Cape Town Jewish community – we can thrive to survive. With many individuals leaving the country due to other existential issues, this could be a way to make people want to stay.

I say to our leaders within the community — *Aseh lecha rav!* Find for yourself a teacher — maybe from a different generation and geographic location. Everyone can learn something new and it's time we gain new knowledge for our existing structures.



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## ISRAEL: A JOURNEY MAKING MEANING

## What on earth does Pondicherry have to do with Israeli politics?

Julian Resnick writes from Israel

**"Tis distance lends enchantment to the view, and robs the mountain in azure hue"**

Thomas Campbell was a Scottish poet who lived and wrote in the late-18th until the mid-19th century. He travelled a lot and wrote about many of the big issues of the day — the French Revolution, slavery and the partition of Poland.

Yes, I am writing about my home. My home today is Israel, and has been such for the past soon-to-be 47 years since I left Apartheid South Africa to live my dream.

My dream? To make at least a small contribution to — in my mind — the greatest project of the Jewish People since the Talmud — The State of Israel.

So why quote Thomas Cambell? I write this in South India, in the city of Pondicherry in the State of Tamil Nadu. It feels a lot like the South of France here. Pondicherry was once the heart of French India, and the physical memories are just beautiful. The names of the streets — we are staying on Rue de Saffren; the names of the accomodation — we are staying in Les Hibiscus; the architecture in the French Quarter; the Lycee; the convents; the Cathedral — shades of Marseilles, Lyon...

I am far away from home as the drama in Israel unfolds. No Thomas, you are wrong! Nothing about the view of Israel looks particularly enchanting from here. Ben Gvir continues to look like a thug. Smotrich continues to look like a very talented racist. Avi Maoz continues to look like a homophobic misogynist. Netanyahu continues to look like the arch political manipulator ready to sell us all down the river to keep himself ensconced in the Prime Minister's residence which, they say, is far more comfortable than Ma'asiyahu Jail where most VIP prisoners spend their jail time. (I have no personal experience of either of these two Israeli accomodation options, so going only on hearsay).

"Oy vey!! Julian, how can you write things like this?" I hear you say (assuming these words get to you), "You are writing about our beloved Israel! And Ben Gvir, Smotrich and Maoz all wear kippot, are all God-fearing religious Jews, like those of us who go to shul regularly in Claremont, Sea Point and Gardens."

Yes they do, but I would argue that

when they open their mouths and give vent to their hate-filled version of Judaism (not my version of Judaism, by the way; mine focuses on all human beings being created in the image of God; mine focuses on the command to be a light unto the Nations; mine is reflected in the language of the Declaration of Independence), they remind me of the trials of some of the heads of organised crime in Israel, who often appear in court, charged with violent crime, with sanctimonious expressions and a big kippah on their head.

Why am I so upset by the election results you may ask. Let me give you just a few reasons — not all, but a few which really rattle me (as an ex-South African).

**I am far away from home as the drama in Israel unfolds. No Thomas, you are wrong! Nothing about the view of Israel looks particularly enchanting from here.**

1. Private businesses (hotels for example) will probably be able to refuse entry to people they do not wish to host! For example, gay couples or Arabs. In July I am guiding two couples from NYC. My driver Mahomoud — you realise from his name he is a Muslim Arab — and I will be staying close to their expensive hotel in a B&B on a religious

kibbutz. What happens if they decide to not allow Mahomoud to stay in one of their cottages? This would be within their rights now, according to the plans of Justice Minister Levin. Remind you of anything?

2. I am just a little nervous writing all of this. For the first time in my almost 47 years living here — two in the army and 45 working (including schlichut in San Francisco, London and New York) — I am aware that there are those with political power, who would silence dissent. Whose plans include silencing those whose opinions differ greatly from the mainstream. More than anything else, what I have loved about my almost 47 years over here in Israel is that I have unlearned one of my earliest identity-building lessons that I was taught in my small town (Somerset West) Jewish community. I was taught to hide parts of who I was. In Israel I have never hidden any part of who I am. And it feels so good.

3. I ask myself, 'is this what a slippery slope looks like?' You know, 'When they came to take the gay people, I was not gay so I said nothing.' You know the rest. (BTW if you think I am exaggerating, just read what Avi Maoz is writing — not *has* written, but *is* writing. And remember, one man is responsible for him being in the Government, running a sub-ministry with an Orwellian name, *The Ministry of Education unit responsible for 'External Programs and Promoting Partnerships'*. Seriously? Doublespeak (in his book 1984, George Orwell coined the term *Doublethink* — using ambiguous or euphemistic language to disguise what one is actually saying).

One last thing. May I respectfully suggest to you that you read what has been written recently, in Israel, by three polemicists from the centre of the political map. Read Yossi Klein HaLevy, Rabbi Daniel Gordis and Matti Friedman.

If you care about the future of the State of Israel, now is the time to stand up and say something which needs to be heard by Bibi Netanyahu, especially as he thinks that you are all in his pocket: "Not in my Name".



*Bullocks all spruced up for the Tamil Nadu festival of Pongal*

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# A living archive for South African Jewry

Kathrine Garrun looks at the role that community archives — including digital archives — play in telling the story of South African Jewish life

By Kathrine Garrun (First published by Dafkadotcom, 12 January 2023)

**On Sunday, 18 April 2021, a devastating fire on Table Mountain spread rapidly to the University of Cape Town (UCT), and soon ignited the roof of the historic Jagger Reading Room, engulfing the treasured African Studies Library.**

The fire resulted in irreparable loss of historical collections. Although also situated on upper campus of UCT, and perilously close to the flames, the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, and its archival store, was untouched by the fire.

Such a loss would have been unimaginable. Our collections — personal papers, congregational and organisational records, oral histories, and photographic materials — tell the story of South African Jewish life. They not only connect South African Jews to their past but are crucial repositories for any future research on the community and South African Jewry.

## A community of collectors

Though much smaller than it once was, the South African Jewish community remains highly organised and vibrant. This is evident too in the community's commitment to preserving its history.

Very many families have preserved personal family records, documents, photographs and other memories, be it in family films, photographs or even in holding onto their great-grandparent's ship tickets to South Africa.

**The digital archive, assembled by the South African Jewish Museum, is largely dedicated to preserving family collections.**

This simple act of keeping family mementos is one of the many ways we as a community have maintained a close connection to our collective past.

Retaining documents and other historical paper materials from our forebearers, of course, is not unique to the South African Jewish community; many communities see the importance of keeping family documents and heirlooms. In my experience, as the Jewish studies archivist, however, there is something distinct in collecting for a group of people who have witnessed so much historical upheaval. Evident from the volume of collections held in our archive, experiences such as displacement, persecution, migration and varying degrees of acceptance in new lands, has led communities like ours to hold onto these concrete memories of the past. It is unsurprising that such an unsettled and unsure existence would result in commitment to preserve one's history.

## The role of archives: memory and history

At the Kaplan Centre's 2020 online conference, *Jews in South Africa: New directions in research*, Prof. Gideon Shimoni suggested that there is often a disjuncture between what historians know and write about, and the community's "collective memory" — that being how we, as a community, remember our history.

Archives, like the Kaplan Centre's, allow us to engage with that which has been remembered but also all that which has been forgotten. The Kaplan Centre's archive, for example, holds a series of some 400 interviews conducted with first-generation Jewish immigrants to South Africa, many of whom with memories of life in Lithuania and of South Africa in the first decades of the 20th century. Their experiences, today distant in time and largely forgotten, are now preserved as digital recordings and transcriptions.

Similarly, our digital archive holds multiple first-person interviews conducted with men and women who, in various ways and to varying degrees, participated in the anti-apartheid struggle. Listening to these accounts we are presented with insights that can sometimes push against mainstream communal narratives regarding the extent to which Jewish individuals and groups participated in the struggle against apartheid.

## A Jewish living archive

The Jewish Living Archive (JLA) combines the paper archive of the Kaplan Centre — collected since the 1980s — with digital historical documentation assembled by the South African Jewish Museum.

The Kaplan Centre currently holds around 200 collections of Jewish communal and congregational records as well as a plethora of personal papers. Essential materials we collect include minute books, annual reports, birth, death and marriage registers, academic writings, newspaper clippings, photographs and correspondence, to name but some. The focus of our archive concerns South African Jewry from 1880 to the present day.

Our digital archive is largely dedicated to preserving family collections. Here we preserve and publicly display digital copies of family photographs, films and text documents such as letters, certificates and memoirs.

**Often when primary source materials were generated, it was not known that someday they would be made available for public consumption.**

Although the JLA collects material relating to Jewish South African history, it also acts as a lens through which to view many universal topics of interest such as migration, displacement, identity, religion, business, arts, culture, academic, medicine etc.

## Challenges and conclusion

As evidenced by the scale of destruction wrought by the UCT fire, paper as a medium is vulnerable and always at risk. Although digitisation is one solution, it can be a complicated process that demands time, expertise and resources that are not always available.

**Holding the title of Jewish studies archivist has given me the rare opportunity to develop an insight into our history by being able to access 'the voices' of many generations past.**

The work of an archivist revolves around sensitivity. Often when primary source materials were generated, it was not known that someday they would be made available for public consumption. Personal correspondence, photographs, and films contain private thoughts and experiences. This may make them all the more important for historical research, but it also requests protection and consideration. This is especially so with Jewish history, which has occurred around much historical turmoil. The current climate has seen renewed instances of antisemitism and I am constantly mindful of how we present our digital archival collections. Part of my job is to make people aware of what it means to share personal family materials online. Our archives are primarily for research and community engagement, and as far as is possible we have systems in place to prevent abuse and oversharing.

Holding the title of Jewish studies archivist has given me the rare opportunity to develop an insight into our history by being able to access 'the voices' of many generations past. This could be in listening to interviews that were recorded before I was born, to reading letters sent across the globe before my father was even born. This is a position of responsibility and my aim is to bring to light these materials so that others — be they academics, community members or the broader public — are able to access these historical experiences.

*Kathrine Garrun is an archivist and researcher with a keen interest in open access knowledges systems and digital cultural preservation in the global south.*



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# Community represented at Reconciliation Day event on Robben Island

**On 15 and 16 December 2022, an event was held on Robben Island to mark the Day of Reconciliation, under the banner of 'Moving beyond our Past to create an inclusive meaningful future'.**

Cleansing ceremonies were performed and prayers, petitions and dialogues shared in an effort to process traumas from past and to clear the way for a peaceful future.

Two Jewish Capetonians, Marc Turok and Professor Leslie London spoke as members of the Jewish community. Marc is an activist in Environmental, Heritage and Civic concerns and has also been active in Jewish affairs over many years. He was previously Chair of Jews for Justice and is currently a representative of Observatory & Mowbray Hebrew Congregation and Chair of the Two Rivers Urban Park Association. Leslie is a social justice activist, UCT faculty of Health Science, and Chair of Observatory Civic Association. Both shared aspects of their Jewish identity, and Marc recited a Prayer for South Africa, adapted from the original by Chief Rabbi Prof. I Abrahams.

### Full text of the presentation delivered by Marc Turok

"It's a great honour to express Solidarity, as a member of the local Jewish community, on this historic Day of Reconciliation event on Robben Island.

This iconic heritage site tracks some harsh truth of our National Heritage.

We see beyond the ocean backdrop, are some Sacred Places: 'Hoerikwaggo', 'Camissa' and 'IGAMIRODI KHAESI' (Life generating Confluence of Two Rivers).

Our cultural landscapes affirm our heritage story over thousands of years.

While ancient life origins link us as Earthling people, unique cultures evolved over centuries. It is essential that our common humanity respect other forms of living heritage — tangible and intangible — to protect all our heritage stories!

We must also acknowledge the colonial pain that has not yet been healed. The full intangible truth, buried over hundreds of years, must be revealed so that reconciliation can be achieved as deep healing for us all!

Crimes against humanity, should be corrected. The dignity of our ancestors must restore the story of who we are. It's our heritage and memory.

The broadest consultation is needed to recognise and protect the traces of pre-colonial heritage, located in these cultural landscapes.

Our vision of building a non-racist, non-sexist, respectful inclusive democratic culture is a process still to be realised. Our Southern African indigenous heritage origins must be recognised in our constitution.

We need effective rule of law, essential to protect the rights of all in peace!

**Our Torah (Instructions for Life) implores 'not to do unto others as we would not want them do unto us! We need to learn to strive lovingly for peace.**

Places of integrated indigenous life had natural sustainable harmony over thousands of years. The Kung or San people, the Khoi or Khoena people and the Nguni people are all an integral part of this Robben Island Heritage Site. Reviewing the 1510 defensive victory over d'Almeida's invading Portuguese (512 years ago), our people are inspired to organise, protecting ourselves.

The places of first dispossession, the First Frontier War, the sin of slavery, and colonial plunder represent severe history, still needing to be HEALED!

These sacred places inspire recognition of the struggle for liberation that should enable deep reconciliation, restoration and as inclusive peace! Full respect following a co-design vision is urgently needed to end many years of disrespect towards other cultures! There is no place for abuse or hate!

Policy calls for protection of significant heritage so that future generations receive them as restored natural biodiversity of our planet in perpetuity!

Our Torah (Instructions for Life) implores 'not to do unto others as we would not want them do unto us!' We need to learn to strive lovingly for peace.

We pray for truth and reconciliation toward healing.

Lord of the Universe, who hast made the world and gives life to all its inhabitants, who by Thy providence, dost weave the tapestry of history on the loom of time, bestow, we beseech Thee, Thy bountiful benisons — spiritual and material — upon our beloved, Southern Africa and our living Planet.

In Thy grace and mercy, bless our Leaders to act with required integrity, building leadership capacity, to attain full public benefit and prosperity for all.

We pray Thee, O God of our salvation, shield our people and planet from all danger, prosper the work of our hands; grant us vision in our planning, courage towards inclusive wellbeing, commitment for our urgent tasks.



Marc Turok with his wife Arona Dison, boarding the ferry to Robben Island on 16 December

Teach us the way of duty and unity, to dwell together in goodwill and in peace.

Help us to make justice, truth and restorative FREEDOM the strength of our land, blessed with respectful fellowship and realisation of deep healing, free of the cruel colonial and apartheid past, blessed in restored calm and tranquillity

For "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Yea, spread Thou the tabernacle of peace over all the dwellers on earth and may we all find protection and redemption, restored under the 'Rainbow'.

Amen."

(Adapted, yet based on A prayer for South Africa by Chief Rabbi Prof. I Abrahams).



Marc sounds the shofar at a previous Freedom Day event



Khoebaha Arendse hands over a spear to the representative of the De Klerk Foundation as an act of reconciliation.

## BOOKS

## My Thirty-Minute Bar Mitzvah by Denis Hirson

By Beryl Eichenberger

**Anyone who has an even rudimentary knowledge of this Jewish rite of passage would know that the barmitzvah ceremony and subsequent celebration can most definitely last for hours.**

It is such an important milestone for both boys and girls (bat mitzvah) shaping much of their lives ahead. So it was with curiosity that I approached *My Thirty-Minute Bar Mitzvah* by Denis Hirson.

What a simply beautifully crafted book! A slim volume with an engaging cover that gives the feel of an old-fashioned read, this is a real gem of a memoir. Hirson grasps us from the first page as he recounts his rather odd ceremony but in lyrical prose giving nothing away. He intrigues us:

“There was no Hebrew spoken at my bar mitzvah nor did I read out aloud a portion of the consecrated biblical text. Everything happened in one language or possibly two but Hebrew was neither of them.”

“There were no guests.” And so we want to know more...

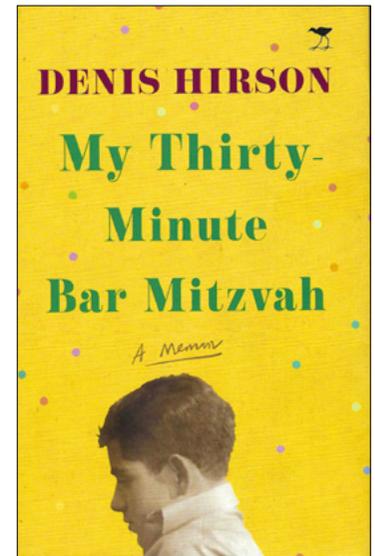
Growing up in Johannesburg in the 1960s, Hirson came from an Anglicised Jewish family. Father, Baruch, is a physics lecturer, and mother Yael a doctor. From an early age he realises he is different from his Jewish friends. His ramshackle home is furnished with towers of books, ‘adopted’ furniture bought from auction rooms and a moth-eaten garden, and the secrets... which he knew he should not ask about. And then there is the matter of the unkosher sandwich offered to a fellow Jewish boy at his school, discarded loudly and further cementing that Hirson’s family was not like other Jewish families in the area. His father never enters the home of his parents, Granny Lily and the terminally depressed Grandpa Joe; but it is the young Denis who see them often, attends Passover celebrations and is seemingly his father’s ‘message of conciliation’.

Hirson’s writing propels you forward — in many ways it is a dance as he moves backwards and forwards across the years, uncovering the secrets of his family and that of the South Africa of the early 60s. The

activism, the uncertainty, the menace of apartheid and his own awakening are poignantly written, with the sensitivity of the accomplished poet and author he is. But he employs a light humour that softens the edges of what he sees as a 13 year old boy and, as he matures and makes his adult choices, the understanding of that time.

This is a memoir to be savoured as each of his descriptions envelop you. As you ache for that sense of belonging, knowing that he will find that in later years; but how his earliest recollections remind him he is not ‘Jewish enough’, and yet, that really is enough. The book reads almost like a detective novel as strand by strand the younger Denis meets the older, and the circumstances of his bar mitzvah acknowledge the shape of the man he has become. It is a reminder that what we view as children, with the distance of age can take on a completely different hue.

Now living in France (since 1975) he is a self-confessed long-distance South African. In his acknowledgments he tells us that this book would never have been written had it not been



*My Thirty-Minute Bar Mitzvah, Denis Hirson, Jacana*

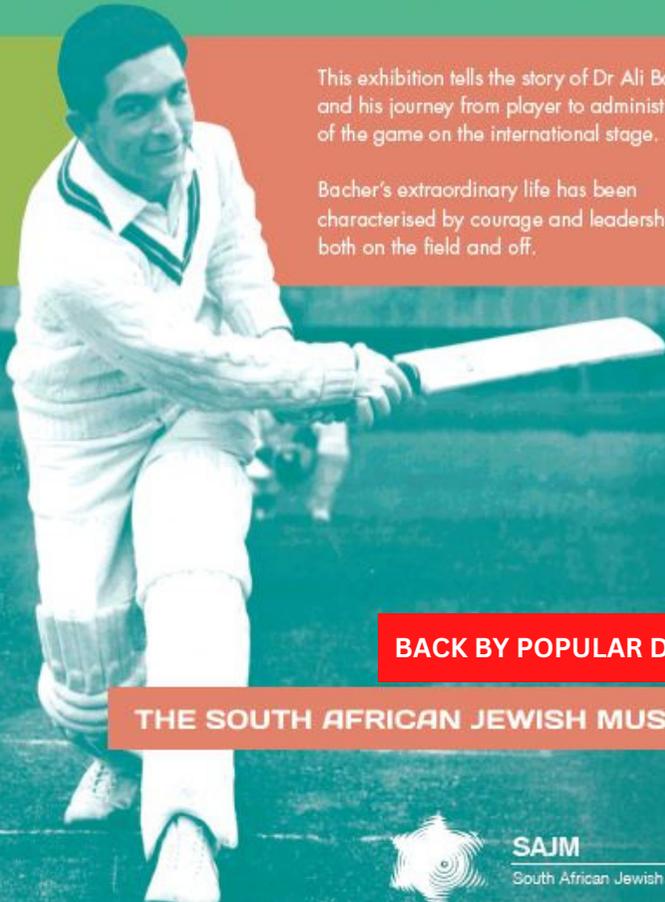
for his daughter Anna, who, when she turned eleven brought him back to looking closely at his relationship with his father. How fortunate for us, as this is a story that will resonate with so many, not only those who lived through the turbulent South African times but globally as we all piece together the childhood that made us the adult.

Denis Hirson will be presenting at the Jewish Literary Festival on 21 March. See page 12 for more information about what to expect, and how to reserve your spot.

# EXHIBITION

## The Life of Ali Bacher

From the Cricket Field to the Boardroom



This exhibition tells the story of Dr Ali Bacher and his journey from player to administrator of the game on the international stage.

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## Son of a Chazzan! Meet the Jewish father and son Cape football duo

By Justin Asher

**Sean Passman was a Maccabi football player in the 1980s, but like many, his life took a different direction.**

Now he and his wife Angie are watching in awe as their 18-year-old son David reaches for the stars.

David has been playing football for years, but it was his recent stint at Durbanville Football Club which really put him on the map and showcased his ability. I had heard stories that there was this young lad who was pretty good at what he did. Knowing that everyone needs a goalkeeper, I thought I'd investigate a little further.

I did not expect to find, at the bottom of De Villiers Drive, that a young Jewish chap was making waves between the poles for Durbanville Football Club, as one of the best up-and-coming goalkeepers in the city.

I've been working as an administrator in football for many years, and I'd like to think that if you're Jewish, we've said *Shabbat Shalom* at least once, alongside the pitch on a rainy Saturday morning. So imagine my surprise when I realised that this young goalkeeper was the son of the club's Junior Chairman, Sean Passman, a fellow administrator whom I'd gotten to know over a few years of football leadership, and not once guessed that we had — at the very least — our religion in common.

Sean grew up as the son of a Chazzan in a religious home. The Maccabi goalkeeper in the 80s made it to a final during a tournament held in Cape Town, but a serious knee injury put an end to his dream of playing professionally. After losing his dad at a young age, he lost his way religiously before meeting his wife, Angie, who showed a keen

interest in Judaism and converted through Temple Israel.

I asked Sean when he noticed David's passion for football, and how he came to be a goalkeeper. What unfolded was quite a fascinating story. Many believe that to become the best in any position on the football field, one must start (and end) in it. But, that's not the case at all.

"David started playing at age five, and was immediately ear-marked as a defender," Sean explained. "He played at the back until he got to under-13 when we needed a goalkeeper. He and another kid put up their hands, and they shared the role. When he started playing under-14, he decided to go into it more seriously.

"I got him a private coach, a chap by the name of Clinton Paul — a hard coach, but David was so motivated by him. Our under-16 coach at the time, Jonathan Boltney, saw something in David and arranged a trial for him at Ajax Cape Town (now Cape Town Spurs)," he continued.

But the opportunity came just before the coronavirus pandemic, and David's dream of playing for an academy would ultimately not materialise. Once football resumed, David was suddenly flung into an under-18 squad with the reality of having to play competitive football for the first time since the virus halted the game two years earlier.

David's senior (first team) debut for Durbanville, where he had started as a five-year-old in 2009, came against Saxon Rovers, and he was an instant hit. Sean's phone began ringing first thing the next morning as word got out about the shotstopper's performance. It was local third division outfit,

FN Rangers, with well-known local coach Arreshaat Daniels, who was finally able to get David to start training with them, with a plan to sign the paperwork and stay on.

Just a few months into the professional and semi-professional summer football preparations, it was back to the negotiating table for the Passmans, as Stellenbosch Football Club (the academy and premier soccer league side from the Winelands) made an offer which was ultimately accepted. It's now home for this aspiring goalkeeper.

During his short stint thus far with Stellenbosch FC, David has been part of the squad that finished as finalists for both the 2022 Bayhill Premier Cup and Engen Knockout Tournament, and were crowned winners of the 2022 Kapstadt Cup and the 2022 Stellenbosch Academy of Sport (SAS) Cup.

"I've never really had a hero, but I've grown up with many role models in my life, on and off the sports field, such as my first goalkeeper coach Clinton Paul, and of course my dad," David says.

Being a young Jewish teenager living in Durbanville and attending a non-Jewish school certainly comes with its challenges. David told me he had been trying to practice Judaism on his own, but acknowledged that playing football and chasing his dreams has made it difficult to juggle his desire to get more involved in the community, while keeping the fire to become a professional footballer.

He says, "I feel slightly disconnected from the community. I'd love to play Maccabi, but it wasn't very accessible for me to make the squad as the trials were held only in Johannesburg.



18-year-old David Passman (left) stands alongside his Stellenbosch Football Club captain whilst singing the South African National Anthem at Athlone Stadium during the annual flagship Kapstadt Cup in 2022.



David (back right) with his brother Justin (back left), Angie and Sean in front.

"And of course, I live in Durbanville," he continued, "The majority of the community is in town, so I don't mix with as many Jewish people as I would love to, but for a long time we did make an effort to go to Shul every Friday night, in either Milnerton or Sea Point."

In writing this story, I learned of David's grandfather, Jack Passman — a travelling Cantor with a voice like Pavarotti's, who made his way from Johannesburg to Cape Town, and even spent some time in America. According to Sean, rumour has it that at the age of 14, Jack had his own choir. He would write music while travelling, and although Sean was young at the time of his dad's passing, the memories are captured in the music sheets he still has in his possession today.

If his grandfather's passion for Judaism is anything to go by, I have no doubt that David and his family will find their way into the Cape Town Jewish community, when they're ready and in their own time.

But for now, keep an eye on this brilliant goalkeeper's career, the Jewish one from Durbanville.

Justin Asher is the Chairman of Rygersdal Football Club and General Secretary of the Cape Town Tygerberg Local Football Association. He is also a member of the Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies.



David Passman comes out to make a daring save during a Bayhill Premier Cup 2022 match for Stellenbosch Football Club.

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