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Cape Town's Pesach celebrations

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Bonny's Beat



We can teach our children to love

The Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosted a documentary movie screening, *Blind Love*, a few weeks ago. In the movie — which focuses on the March of the Living event at Auschwitz — a Holocaust survivor who shares his experiences of Auschwitz with some of the participants, commented on something that I've been mulling over since I saw the movie. He made the point that, for him, dogs and Auschwitz are synonymous with fear and death. Dogs were used by the Nazis at the camp — and elsewhere throughout Europe, too — to terrorise subjugated people, such as the Jewish prisoners. Often, the dogs were used to attack people and they killed many of the prisoners. So, for the elderly survivor, dogs were creatures to be feared.

Having accompanied the particular group of participants in the March of the Living — blind people and their support dogs — he discovered that dogs can be completely different. He experienced dogs that are loving and caring, providing much-needed support for the people they look after.

In commenting on what he learned from the experience, the elderly survivor said, "You can teach a dog to hate — like the Nazis did — but you can also teach it to love."

I think this is the same with people. It's especially important right now, as we are dealing with the hatred we see around us throughout the world since the events of October 7th. The polarisation of those who believe in Israel's right to exist and the haters has grown a great deal, and we are seeing the ugly face of hatred far more than we did a year ago.

Should we all just become haters too? I certainly don't think so because we can never hope to

coexist with other people if the hatred overwhelms us.

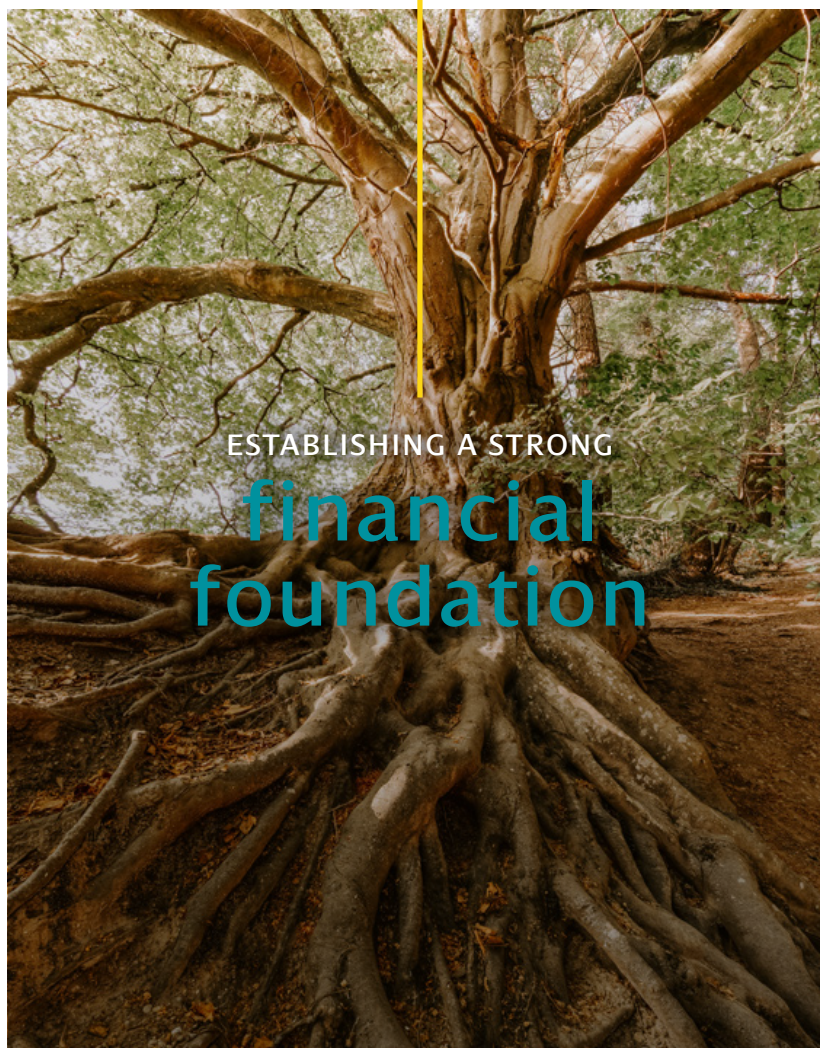
The things we tell our children to do and the things we say in front of them shape their attitudes towards others. So, we need to be conscious of our actions and our words. Within our own community and families, we should show our children how to love others, rather than to hate. Perhaps this example of a post on social media sums it up: **'Seeing a little girl, about eight years old holding a placard saying, 'One Zionist One Bullet' outside the Aliyah Expo was disturbing. It inculcates hatred for Jews in children.'**

So, let's teach our children (and our dogs!) to love, rather than to hate!

We have another article in this edition about the movie I referred to earlier. It is about the benefits that suitably trained dogs can bring to people with autism. Take a look at the article on page 11.

Autism seems to be on the rise — although it may be that diagnostic tools are improving. Similarly, we come across more cases of lupus (autoimmune conditions) than used to be the case. Drawing attention to the disease, World Lupus Day is held this month. Medical expert, Dr David Gotlieb, shares useful information about the condition on page 23 and 24.

With the national elections soon to take place, we're happy to share news about a legal challenge launched by the Democratic Alliance (DA) against the Independent Electoral Commission. Not long before we started finalising this edition, news came through that the challenge was successful — great news for the legal team, which included two advocates from our community. See page 6.



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SHABBAT TIMES

DATE	PORTION	CANDLE LIGHTING			
		earliest	latest	ends	
3/4 May	25/26 Nissan	Achrei Mos	16:57	17:45	18:37
10/11 May	2 / 3 Iyar	Kedoshim	16:52	17:39	18:32
17/18 May	9/10 Iyar	Emor	16:48	17:34	18:27
24/25 May	16/17 Iyar	Behar	16:45	17:30	18:24
31 May/1 June	23/24 Iyar	Bechukosai	16:43	17:28	18:22



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS MAY 2024

<u>COMMUNITY ORGANISATION</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>FOR MORE INFO</u>
UJW	Movie Fundraiser	5 May, 18h00	–
Cape SAJBD	Yom Hashoah	6 May, 12h00 - 14h00	See page 8
ORT Jet Cape Town	Mentorship Programme Introduction Workshop	6 May, 09h00 - 12h00	RSVP: nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
SAZF Cape Council	International Guest Speaker	7 May	–
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Public lecture: Nazi concentration Camps in the South African Media April-November 1945 by CTHGC Archivist Dmitri Abrahams	9 May, 18h00	RSVP: admin@holocaust.org.za
ORT Jet Cape Town	Entrepreneurial Training: 6-part programme with Over the Rainbow	Starts 9 May, 09h00 - 12h00	RSVP: https://forms.gle/ZgeXTF8qiPHz7DZBA
Mensch	Mensch Academy training workshop: Build your Board Engagement Strategy	15 May, 16h00 - 18h00	RSVP: jodi@mensch.org.za
ORT Jet Cape Town	Business Network with Jenna Benater	15 May, 18h00 - 19h30	RSVP: nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Film screening: Four Winter followed by a Q&A session with the filmmaker	16 May, 18h00	RSVP: admin@holocaust.org.za
SA Jewish Museum	Set in Stone	16 May - 30 June	–
UJW	Pesach Sheini	22 May, 18h00	RSVP: projects@ujwcape.co.za
ORT Jet Cape Town	Entrepreneurial Training: Strategic Blueprint to Business Success with Ariella Kuper	22 May, 09h00 - 11h30	RSVP: nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
Entrepreneurs' Network	Panel conversation – The Future of Leadership: Innovating for Tomorrow's Challenges	22 May, 16h00 - 18h00	RSVP: nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
UJW	91st AGM	28 May, 10h00	RSVP: projects@ujwcape.co.za
United Herzlia Schools	Annual General Meeting 2024	28 May, 18h30	admin@herzlia.com

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LEGAL MATTERS

THE PURSUIT OF DEMOCRACY: challenging the SA Electoral Commission

By EDITOR



The ability to exercise the right to vote is a key tenet of a democratic state. Through the ability to vote, a citizen of a country is able to express a choice as to what type of government they want to rule their country, and to decide on the nature of the leadership that their country would benefit from.

The national elections in South Africa this year are probably more interesting and more hotly contested than has been the case at any time since the first democratic elections were held 30 years ago. Since the African National Congress (ANC) dominated the political scene after 1994, generally winning national elections with a sizeable majority, voters have tended to be somewhat

apathetic about the electoral process, believing that the ANC would win anyhow, whether or not they exercise their vote. This year, however, things look somewhat different: for the first time, there is a strong chance that the ANC will not win an outright majority of seats. And, with the country struggling severely with economic growth, crime and other social ills, there is perhaps greater interest in the value of one's vote than has been the case for some time.

Eligible voters currently outside the country make up a sizeable group, and many of these people are keen to vote in the upcoming national elections. However, a challenge for thousands of these voters is finding

a suitable place where they can exercise their vote.

While a South African citizen should be able to vote at a South African embassy or at a consulate headed up by a career diplomat, the Electoral Commission has excluded Honorary Consulates from the sites where votes can be cast. This has a significant negative impact on the ability of South Africans living abroad to vote. For instance, in Australia, which has one of the largest expat South African diaspora populations in the world, there is a High Commission in Canberra, where South African voters may vote. However, the vast majority of South Africans living in Australia are in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne — and these are cities represented by Honorary Consulates for South Africa. And so the thousands of South Africans who do not reside in Canberra will not be able to cast their vote come 29 May, unless they travel to Canberra, which is a great distance away.

Recognising the value of the expat South African vote in this year's election, the Democratic Alliance (DA) recently launched legal action to challenge the interpretation given by the Electoral Commission, appointing a legal team that includes two Jewish advocates from Cape Town.

The argument made by the DA is that the Electoral Act directs the Electoral Commission to allow the casting of special votes, and that this process in terms of the Act allows for votes to be made at any South African embassy, High

Commission, or consulate abroad. This wording does not rule out an Honorary Consulate and so, the DA argues, honorary consulates should certainly be included. The exclusion of Honorary Consulates — which are, after all, sites of official representation of the South African state — effectively means that thousands of voters become disenfranchised. And, as one of the advocates comments, "The balance to be sought should always favour enfranchisement, rather than disenfranchisement."

And, it would seem that enfranchisement may well be the order of the day. On 10 April, the Electoral Court upheld the argument of the DA, directing that the decision of the IEC not to allow voting at consulates led by Honorary Consuls should be overturned. This should mean that there will be many more sites at which South Africans not in the country on 29 May will be able to vote — although the authorities will have a tough time getting ready for this within such a short period of time.

As regards South African citizens in Israel at the time of the elections, it is unclear as to whether they will be able to vote since the embassy has been closed. The SAJBD has written to the IEC for clarity on this matter and will inform the community in due course.

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CONNECT, COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY

PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN, PROUDLY JEWISH

By DANIEL BLOCH, Executive Director, Cape SAJBD



I hope that through this article, I will be able to address these concerns and provide a clear perspective as to why we should all still be proudly Jewish and proudly South African.

Our government’s application to the International Court of Justice was a low point for our community, and many if not most of us were left feeling embarrassed, alone and angry. However, these are the actions of a few within the ruling party and do not represent the majority of South Africans. The Jewish community and indeed Israel has many friends in South Africa and we are grateful for their support over these past few months. With the country’s elections around the corner, it provides an opportunity for each and every one of us to stand up and be counted. Ensure you make your way to a voting station and cast your vote for a South Africa that represents you, defends your rights, and provides you with a life filled with happiness, prosperity and boundless opportunities. I for one am proud to be South African and will most certainly do my part to build a country which I can be proud to call my home.

Whilst antisemitism is on the rise globally and indeed in South Africa, our Jewish way of life is still protected. As Jews, we can express ourselves by going to shul, frequenting our usual social joints and attending community events. We can proudly display our Magen David chains, wear our Yarmies and celebrate our Zionism. Yes, there have been protests, and social media is filled with a variety of haters; however, we can still walk the streets and live our lives — something our friends in London, New York, Melbourne, Paris and Berlin find challenging.

Some may say that if we are truly free and can proudly display our Judaism and our Zionism, then why are we continuously told not to engage with the anti-Israel activists? Isn’t this cowardly and are we not hiding away? Definitely not! The reality is that this minority of antisemitic and anti-Zionist hoodlums are hostile and, in some instances, have shown a tendency to become physically aggressive. However, what really

frustrates them is the fact that we continue to ignore them (as does the majority of the public), and we don’t give them the oxygen they so desperately desire. Their main aim is to intimidate and threaten and ultimately elicit a response from our community. The more we block them on social media, ignore their loud rants at protests, and simply disregard their slander and hate speech, the more frustrated they get and, ultimately, they lose momentum, energy and the determination to carry on. We have already seen their protests diminish in size, the turnouts are poor, and even their verbal attacks on social media lose traction and fade away.

How will we defeat all those hate-filled individuals? They can protest, they can scream loudly, they can threaten and intimidate us. However, we will not back down. We will not give into the hatred. We will not remain silent. We will not be bullied and harassed and we will most certainly not apologise for loving Israel. We will continue to live our lives as proud Jews and as proud South Africans.

Over the past several months, our resolve as South Africans and as Jews has been greatly tested. I have heard comments like, “I am embarrassed to be South African” and “I am scared to be Jewish”. And I ask these people the question, “Why?” Their reasons are all the same – the ICJ case and the increase in antisemitism globally.

REPORT ANTISEMITISM & HATRED

The Cape SAJBD closely monitors and investigates all acts of antisemitism in South Africa — but **we stand against all forms of hatred.**

Our ‘No Place for Hate’ campaign fights hatred directed against anyone to combat a culture of racism, antisemitism and prejudice in our country.

Report incidents of antisemitism and hate by sending a **Whatsapp message to the Antisemitism Hotline on 079 994 5573.**



YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

COMMUNITY WELLNESS HELPLINE

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious and would like access to a trained counsellor, please contact our Cape SAJBD’s Community Helpline to support your emotional wellbeing.

Send a WhatsApp message, voice note or call the Emotional Wellness Helpline on 079 875 3902



REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Please report any suspicious activity or potential security threats specifically related to the Jewish Community or Communal facilities as well as medical emergencies to the **24-hr CSO Control Room on 086 18 911 18**



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DOXXING

WHAT IS DOXXING?

Doxxing is shorthand for ‘dropping docs or documents’ and is **the malicious release online of personal or identifying information** (cellphone, email, work and/or home address, photographs and even a partner or children’s details) **without that person’s permission.**

- Doxxing is **cyberbullying**. The aim of the perpetrator/s is to **intimidate, emotionally manipulate, coerce**, ruin the reputation of the targeted person or, in some extreme cases, to incite physical harm against them.
- People are targeted for various reasons including **extortion** and as a malicious means of **weaponising** an opposing political or socio-cultural viewpoint to enact a perverse form of ‘**mob justice**’ **against a perceived ‘enemy’.**
- The scariest part of doxxing is that, once your private contact details are shared on the internet electronically, **it is extremely difficult (if not impossible) to get this information removed.**

EXAMPLES OF DOXXING AND THE CONSEQUENCES

In 2019, journalist Karima Brown won a case in the Gauteng High Court against Julius Malema of the EFF who posted her cellphone number on Twitter, resulting in her receiving extreme threats of violence.

The vehicle of Sea Point resident Peter Wagenaar was set alight after his details were posted on a Facebook community forum. Wagenaar was targeted by certain members of the group for his homeless feeding scheme during lockdown. A criminal case is pending.

Most recently, a shocking case of mass doxxing in Australia saw a pro-Palestinian collective releasing the personal information of 600 Jewish creatives. The government is fast-tracking legislation that will crack down on doxxing under the country’s Privacy Act.

GET IN TOUCH

If you are a victim of doxxing then please send photos and evidence to the antisemitism

Whats App hotline +27 79 994 5573



WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

The legality of doxxing is **not always clear** and South African **laws on social media are always changing**, but there is legal recourse in many instances including:

- **If there is a clear breach of the person’s right to privacy** as enshrined by the Constitution and in terms of POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act).
- **If the information was obtained unlawfully** and in contravention of RICA (Regulation of Interception of Communications).
- **Under the Protection from Harassment Act.**
- If the doxxing **causes damages** (financial/property/emotional pain and suffering) **and/or leads to physical harm.**

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM DOXXING

- **Be careful** when sharing any information online including cellphone number, home address, email or personal images.
- **Think before you post (or repost).** Your actions could carry legal risks.
- **Practice good cybersecurity.** We recommend using a good anti-virus security solution, which guards you against viruses on your devices, secures and stores your passwords and private documents and encrypts the data which you send and receive online with a VPN (Virtual Private Network).
- **Check your privacy settings and update accordingly.** Separate your personal social media (which should be kept private) from your public, professional affairs.
- **Check yourself on a Google search and see what comes up.** If there’s personal information such as cell numbers or a home address, you can request its removal.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BECOME A DOXXING VICTIM?

- It’s understandable to be concerned, even scared, if you are doxxed. Intimidation is the aim of the doxxer.
- **Report any doxxing attack to the social media platform** it has taken place on. If it includes financial doxxing, contact your financial institution immediately.
- **Screen grab everything:** make sure the date and URL is visible as well as who the doxxer is (if known).
- **Involve law enforcement** if a personal threat is made against you or a loved one. Any information pointing to your home address or financial information should be treated as a top priority by them.
- **Change your passwords and privacy settings** (if not already set to private).
- **Enlist** a friend or family member for support.



The Western Cape Jewish community welcomes you!

The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies 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!



For more information,
please email sajbd2@ctjc.co.za



MAN'S BEST FRIEND: The Blind Love of dogs



Although the documentary movie, *Blind Love*, focuses on Auschwitz, viewers at the showing of the film hosted by the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre left with positive feelings. The documentary relates how a group of blind or partially sighted people was able to participate in the annual March of the Living, which includes a symbolic walk from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II-Birkenau in Poland.

The 'feel good' element came from the depiction of the support dogs that went along on the trip. These dogs were core to allowing this group to participate in an event that would otherwise have seemed completely beyond their reach.

The screening of the movie was followed by a panel discussion with representatives from local organisations that train and provide support dogs, including dogs to assist people with autism.

Autism in our community

We often hear about cases of autism in our community and, according to many reports, "Statistics from health organisations suggest that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnoses are on the rise. This doesn't necessarily mean that autism itself is becoming more common...; it could also be that more people are receiving autism diagnoses." And, while there is no consensus on the number of cases, it is clearly a condition with fairly high prevalence.

It is one of the conditions that fits within the inclusive education approach applied at Herzlia Schools. Inclusive education is a philosophy that allows for children with varied abilities to all attend the same school. So, instead of allocating a child with ASD to a 'special school', the child attends a mainstream school and is thus able to enjoy the same education and social opportunities as other

children. Amanda Varkel, Systemic Head of Educational Support at Herzlia, says: "We have many pupils with a diagnosis of being on the autism spectrum enrolled at Herzlia and many other pupils who exhibit symptoms of ASD, but have no formal diagnosis."

While schools aim to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, not all children with ASD can, however, be accommodated in a mainstream school. As Amanda explains, "In an environment like Herzlia, the environment can be overwhelming from a sensory point of view, which may be challenging for some children with ASD. In addition, there are many transitions throughout the school day — different classrooms, subjects and teachers — which is not always conducive to the learning environment of a child with autism. Herzlia offers extensive support to children with additional learning needs and we aim to work with families and children holistically in order to ensure the best learning outcomes from an academic, social and emotional point of view."

Cape Town Torah High also offers inclusive education, and curates individual learning programmes for each child, whether or not they are living with a particular non-neurotypical condition. "This implies that a child with ASD can learn in an environment unique to their particular needs and characteristics," explains Sarah Hull, the Deputy Principal of the school, who is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). "The concept of designing a learning programme particular to each of the 60 pupils in the school is particularly beneficial for someone who is not neurotypical. We can provide for that child to learn at their own pace, and to include courses in their own curriculum that are likely to be more appropriate for their individual make-up."

Sarah highlights the advantages of having neurodivergent learners in the same environment as neurotypical ones. "The brain of the neurodivergent child, such as one with autism, processes information in ways different from the usual, and so there is so much more flavour to the way in which we see the world."

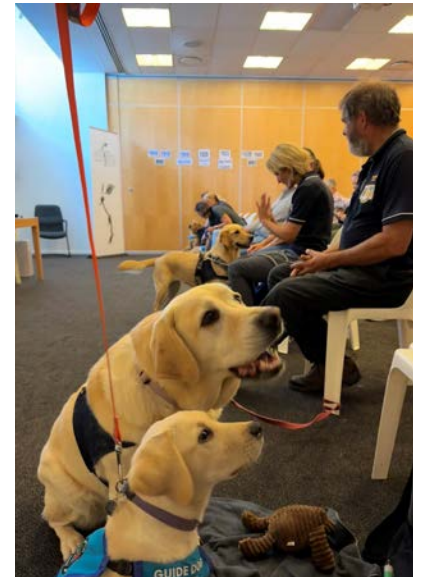
Therapy and support dogs for autistic people

In many cases, dogs can assist a person with ASD. While a dedicated medical service or an emotional support animal that is a constant companion to the person with autism is not always possible — largely because many people find it difficult to cope with the pressure of working with one of these dogs — a number of local organisations offer assistance through providing therapy or facility dogs that work at a centre or children's home.

Therapy TOP Dogs, for instance, provides visits with qualified dogs and their handlers to suitable facilities. Their programmes involve activities related to Animal Assisted Therapy, Animal Assisted Interaction, and Animal Assisted Education. According to Sarah Bourhill, the Area Co-ordinator for TOP Dogs in the Western Cape, "The approach applied is to provide these activities as part of a multi-modal therapy team that is supervised and complies with the regulations of the particular facility." (Find out more here: www.therapytopdogs.co.za.)

Autism Support Dogs are also provided by SA Guide Dogs Association for the Blind, a global NGO that provides Guide, Service and Support Dogs for a range of needs. (More information is available at www.guidedog.org.za.)

Just Dogs Behaviour, in association with Honey's Garden Medical Alert Dogs SA, runs a course for anyone needing the support of a dog, but



where the need does not extend to having a full-service dog to accompany the person everywhere. Says Lucy Breytenbach, the founder of Honey's Garden, "Autistic children and their caregivers benefit from this Emotional Support Dog (ESD) course. Not only do the dogs learn how to ground the children and provide much needed comfort, but the families also learn a form of relationship training that gives the child skills and confidence in general." The content of the course has been developed from knowledge of psychiatric service dog training, and families have the option to then further their skills and go on to certify their ESD as a full medical service dog after completing the course. (See more at www.medicalalertdogs.co.za/our-dogs and at www.justdogs.co.za/jdesd.)

While autism can be debilitating for the person with the condition, there are numerous ways in which organisations are working to provide support and assistance. No family should be left to battle it alone.

CONSIDER THIS

Lag B'Omer – some thoughts

By RABBI GREG ALEXANDER



because Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai was an important Torah scholar and mystic that his *yahrzeit* is a *hillulah*, a festivity, accompanied by bonfires. This custom is based on the idea that Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai brought spiritual light into the world through his teaching of Torah and his contribution to the mystical understanding of God's Essence.

In rabbinic thought the anniversary of the death of a *tzadik* should be a celebration of their life and not an occasion for mourning their passing. According to Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 7:1 "A good name is better than fragrant oil, and the day of death is better than the day of birth". Midrash Kohelet Rabba explains, "When a person is born, everyone is joyous; when the person dies, everyone weeps. But that should not be so; rather, when a person is born no one should be joyous, as they do not know the challenges and actions that will confront that individual, and whether the person will be righteous or wicked, good or bad. When the person dies, they should rejoice that the person passed away with a good name and departed from the world in peace". If one follows this understanding, it makes sense to celebrate the life of someone who left the world a better place for having lived in it, and for having brought the light of the Divine Presence into the world by their courageous defiance of oppression and persecution. Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai was such a person.

During this difficult time for Israel, the Jewish People and the world, may Lag B'Omer 5784 remind us of the value of the many righteous lives that bring God's light into the world. That there is always hope — even in the darkest of times.

At the end of the month Jews around the world will be observing *Lag B'Omer*, the 33rd day of the counting of the *omer*, a ritual that links Pesach and Shavuot. While the weeks of *sefirat ha-omer* is considered a period of mourning during which weddings are not celebrated, the 33rd day of the *omer* is one of the three exceptions (the others being Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Rosh Chodesh Sivan). This is because *Lag B'Omer* is the anniversary of the death of Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai, a mystic who defied the Roman ban on teaching and studying Torah.

The source of sorrow of this period in the Jewish calendar is a Talmudic legend (Yevamoth 62b), according to which 24 000 disciples of Rabbi Akiva died of croup between Pesach and Shavuot. Historians surmise that the real reason for all these deaths was the fact that Rabbi Akiva was the spiritual leader of the *Bar Kochba* rebellion against Rome. Rabbi Akiva was arrested and executed by the Romans, and it is plausible that his students were killed during the Roman military action against the Jewish rebels.

The question is why the period of mourning is suspended on the *yahrzeit* of a great rabbi of the second century CE? It is precisely



Thirteen wine farms filled the hall



Ana Resnekov-Hammond enjoying the kid's activities



Charles Gonsenhauser, Dean Hyde and Julie Gonsenhauser



Kelly James and Barbara Bont

Temple Israel Wynberg hosted another fantastic WINEberg Route fundraiser. With 13 wine farms, amazing raffle prizes, great food on sale, activities for the kids and SO much more, a wonderful day was had by all!

Super Purim

Our Purim was supercharged this year with kids and adults showing their amazing powers at our carnival, shpiel and megillah reading at Piers Place rooftop venue in town. The stalls were filled with

food, crafts and games and the shpiel included parodies from Frank Sinatra to Ed Sheeran. Thanks to all the helpers, singers, leyners, costumers and to the weather for holding out perfectly.



The superstars of the Purim shpiel (L-R) Rabbi Malcolm (Green Goblin/Bigthan) Jeffrey Davis (super Mordechai) Jess Miller (Captain Vashti), Rabbi Emma (Super Esther), Samantha Horwitz (Wonder Woman), Jacob Hoffman (Thanos - Haman - boo), Rabbi Greg (Thor/Ahashverosh), Rachael Sara (Loki - Teresh)

Tamar Shabbaton January 2024

We are bringing back TaMaR South Africa! Tamar is the global movement that engages Progressive Jewish young adults and young professionals. We have slowly been hosting events and

seminars for the 18-30 age bracket and we are excited about all that is to come as we continue to grow! We kicked off the year with a Shabbaton to reboot and prepare for the year ahead.



Back Row (L-R): Naama, Lyle, Giuliano, Shannon, Alexandra, Babalwa, Izzy, Rachael, Ashley. Front Row (Left to right): Jes, Candice, Nina, Sarah, Beth, Zena, Nathan

MAZAL TOV to last month's Bnei Mitzvah

Bobby Katz

Sam Lund

UNION OF JEWISH WOMEN provides crucial educational foundations for the children of Kensington, Cape Town

By EDITOR

Through the long-standing efforts of the Union of Jewish Women (UJW), the Jewish community of Cape Town has built a strong relationship with Capetonians who call the suburb of Kensington home. It's an area with its fair share of poverty.

Su Lubner and Alan Hoffman lead the Executive Committee for an important UJW project in the area. As Su explains, "The Kensington Educare Centre started over 80 years ago as a soup kitchen run by the UJW. Over the years, it expanded its operations, and today we offer a quality educational facility in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) space that serves the communities of Kensington, Maitland and Facreton."

Since access to education is so crucial during a child's formative years, the role that the Centre has played in the development of the children from the area cannot be overstated. Over the years, more than 6 000 children have passed through the educational environment, gaining valuable skills that give them the edge when they move into the formal schooling environment later on. As Fazlin Jacobs, who works at the Centre, comments, "When our children go to primary school, they are often asked 'Did you go to Kensington Educare?' because it is clear that the particular child is far more advanced than others in the primary school."

The 65 children currently at the Centre — funded through donations, fundraising and school fees that parents pay — benefit from a fully integrated approach to child development. Su highlights that the Centre follows the Bambanani curriculum that was developed by Afrika Tikkun. (See a previous Chronicle article about this [here](#).)

In addition to the advantages that the children gain from the Centre, it also serves as a valuable resource for the training of ECD teachers and support staff — and this happens through a partnership with ORT SA Cape Education, a socially conscious, committed NGO. CEO Bev Da Costa explains that "ORT SA Cape Education creates hope through quality education, including our teacher training programmes."

A further partnership with Mensch's food programme (which is one element of their philanthropic giving) ensures that the children receive nutritious food at the Centre, which provides all children with breakfast, fruit and lunch every day.

With alliances and collaboration a key feature behind the success of this initiative, it is fitting that the partnership is taken a step further during Herzlia High School's annual Community Day, which took place this year on 15 March. An initiative of the Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute (EOLI), the Community Day involves a meaningful and educational day for Grade 12 pupils, aiming to expose them to the work of Jewish organisations and inspire them to get involved in volunteering with organisations in our community.

"The content to be covered and the design of the day was structured to be as immersive, fun and engaging as possible, while imparting the required information about the various organisations visited, and the services they provide to their beneficiaries," explains Ashley Hurwitz, the EOLI Community Schools Project Driver.

"Pupils were given the opportunity to understand the big picture relating to our community's needs and how the fundraising and support from various organisations is geared to meet these needs," says Herzlia's Subject Head for Life Orientation, Di Dos Santos.

The matric learners that selected The Kensington Educare option enjoyed a dynamic and creative day of activities with the children and the three participating community organisations — The Union of Jewish Women, ORT SA Cape Education and Mensch. Workshops highlighted the career and volunteer potential in areas from teaching to running a successful ECD.

According to Di, "In addition to visiting the project of their choice — such as the Kensington Educare one — pupils were assessed based on their participation and contribution to the programmes they attended. Each pupil submitted a summary of their experience, and each group created a video documenting their activities and learnings." After the visits to the various projects,

all the matric pupils met to share with one another their particular experiences, so allowing for cross-learning and sharing.

The learners clearly benefited from the experience. As Daniella Cohen comments, "The day at Kensington Educare highlighted for me how our Jewish community positively impacts the lives of the children, through the solid educational base they receive, as well as from the love and care shown to them."

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Kensington Educare Centre needs assistance to keep providing for the children. Donations of these items are always welcome:

- Children's clothing
- Toys
- Lego
- Picture books
- Pots and pans, and other kitchen utensils
- Vegetable plants

Contact Vanessa Arelisky at the UJW if you can help. Call her on 021 434 9555 or email info@ujwcape.co.za



Preparing lunch for the children



The children work on an activity organised by the Herzlia pupils



Herzlia Gr 12s participate in an ORT Cape activity to build the ideal Early Childhood Development Centre from Lego



Cape Town's Connection to Israel

ADVOCATE EDUCATE CELEBRATE

P2G solidarity trip to Israel

By MAXINE BOYD

The P2G Beit Shemesh, Mateh Yehuda and South Africa partnership met up for their annual steering committee meeting in Israel. Our delegation included staff from both Johannesburg and Cape Town, which included our Director of the SAZF CC, Heather Blumenthal, and P2G steering committee member, Maxine Boyd.

Our trip began at Hostage Square, followed by a visit to the Hostages and Missing Families Forum in Tel Aviv. A heart wrenching set up, in support of all the hostages and their families. We met incredible volunteers and activists from all over the world and were honoured to hear the first-hand experience from the father of hostage Omri Miran, who has been held captive by Hamas for over six months.

Amongst our guided site visits to the Kibbutzim affected on October 7th, we also visited Moshav Netiv Ha'asara. We had the privilege of listening to a young mother, who told us of her family's survival experience of hiding in a bomb shelter for more than

12 hours without power or supplies.

We also met with displaced families from Kibbutz Nir Am, who are currently living at the Herods Hotel in Tel Aviv. We spent time listening to how they have had to cope with life and survival under difficult circumstances since October 7th.

We then visited the Nova Festival Massacre site. Words cannot even begin to explain how we felt walking through the deathly silence of the Nova site and seeing the faces of hundreds of young adults who were brutally murdered and abducted by Hamas. Over the past few months, families and community members have come together to plant trees, which represents new life, to honour the lives of those lost at the Nova Music Festival.

If you have the opportunity to visit Israel during these times, we would encourage you to volunteer in whichever way possible. Israel needs our support more than ever!

AM YISRAEL CHAI!



Scenes from Hostage Square



A tribute to the youth at Nova Festival Site



The Nova Festival Site - Memorial



Tunnel created at Hostage Square

FILM CLUB MOVIES — voices from Israel

If you're one of those Capetonians who loves to join the throng at the Labia Theatre for an international film festival, you may just enjoy taking advantage of the Israeli movies offered to members of our community by the South African Zionist Federation Cape Council (SAZF Cape Council). Relative to the country's small

size, Israel is a powerhouse in the world of movie-making. In fact, it's become one of the leading suppliers of television content in the United States, and produces numerous films that enjoy significant success. Once a month — except for this month — a movie is screened on the second Sunday of the month at

18:30. Entrance is free (but donations are gladly accepted), and movie-goers are provided with a light meal, too. The April offering, Broken Wings, released in 2002, was rated 8/10 by IMDb, and was described as "a poignant, slice-of-life drama about an Israeli family coming to terms

with the death of their father." Viewers in Cape Town found it moving and thought-provoking, largely because it presented a very realistic view of what can happen in a family when the unexpected occurs. If you'd like to join the SAZF Film Club, contact the SAZF Cape Council on sazfevents@ctjc.co.za.



Cape Town's Connection to Israel

ADVOCATE EDUCATE CELEBRATE

Meeting March

By JESSICA CONNÉ

March was a month to remember! Bnei Akiva Cape Town's highlight of the month was our Mini Mach! Some camp-wide activities that stood out were the impromptu water fight; shtik which made its annual hilarious feature; a beautiful hike; and Just Dance, which is always a blast! We had some meaningful times too, with unforgettable Shabbas dinner dancing and a powerful post-Shabbas tisch around the bonfire (naturally followed by toasted marshmallows).

Matric maddie, Adam Merris, says, "My highlight of mini mach was making smoked tuna with my grade 4 channies. It was something they had been waiting for since our first tochnit of the year and was full of fun, with music playing and amazing conversations. After this our group received the nickname 'Tuna Boys' which became famous throughout the whole campsite. I'm looking so forward to our upcoming tochnits and, of course, winter camp!"

Kadimah Bnei Akiva!



Reflecting on a month of growth and leadership

By EYTAN LABE



As the Diller cohort embarks on yet another month of transformative experiences, it's time to reflect on the journey so far. From engaging workshops to impactful volunteering initiatives, culminating in the recent Leadership Shabbaton, the past month has been nothing short of enriching.

Organised entirely by the Fellows, for the Fellows, the Leadership Shabbaton showcased the essence of our programme. It's where the theoretical knowledge imbibed in workshops finds its practical application in a nurturing environment. Led by our capable Fellows, the event surpassed all expectations.

It's evident that our community has a bright future with the leadership skills demonstrated and the leaders themselves. With each passing experience, the Diller Fellows reaffirm their commitment to making a positive impact on the world.

Hey, Siri! Play 'Heroes' by David Bowie

By HANNAH JANTJIES



2024 Purim Carnival at Piers Place: Netzer channichimot making their Mishloach Manot

This year's Purim kids carnival was superhero themed. It was hosted at Piers Place — a perfect hero cave. I'd even say better than Batman's.

We opened the doors to all of our heroes in the late afternoon. The kids enjoyed a few games at the different booths, took photos, and danced to the music! Many channichimot made new friends and welcomed those newcomers.

A takeaway from the afternoon was definitely seeing how happy, excited and encouraging they all were. Their friends and first timers instilling confidence in them while struggling with a game or two was heartwarming. We ended off with an interactive, comedic play about Purim by our rabbinic team.

We had an amazing turnout, with a great group of heroes. Can't wait to see you at the next one!

Habonim at work

By MAX MENDELOW



The last month has seen Habonim members not only engaging with our channies but also fulfilling our commitment to community building and social action.

Our weekdays have been filled with school visits and class lessons while our weekends have seen us engaging with our chanichim on Mini Machs. We've invested time and love into donating old clothing to ward off the cold weather and we celebrated our community values on Family Day with a Habo-wide braai. We've kept our Madrichim discussing and questioning during our weekly Friday night meetings - and have had a great time doing it. More than that we've started planning our next sensational events with a Garinim Sleepover in the works.



A JOURNEY OF PURPOSE: Life as Director of Astra Jewish Sheltered Employment Centre

By MANDY EDISON



effectively to maximise impact. Whether it's refining programme initiatives or exploring innovative fundraising avenues, I strive to fulfil our vision.

It's not only about expanding our reach but also cultivating the potential within our organisation. Investing in our team's professional development, fostering a culture of innovation, and embracing diversity enriches the fabric of our organisation. By nurturing growth, we empower our beneficiaries and staff to realise their fullest potential, fostering a collective spirit of excellence and resilience. Whether it's witnessing the transformational journey of those we serve or celebrating milestones achieved, each triumph reaffirms the significance of our mission.

Thank you to the committee, staff, and beneficiaries for their support and who encourage me along my journey.

As I reflect as the Director of Astra Centre, I am humbled by the privilege of serving a cause greater than myself. Each day brings new opportunities to create meaningful change, to amplify voices, and to ignite sparks of hope in the darkest of times. Looking ahead, I am filled with optimism, fuelled by the unwavering belief that, together, we can create a brighter, fair world — one day at a time.

In the bustling world of non-profit organisations (NPOs) — where magic happens and goals are achieved and the impossible becomes possible — every day unfolds as a new chapter in the quest for positive change. As Director, there is dedication, challenges, and moments of wholehearted impact.

At the heart of my journey lies a steadfast commitment to our organisation's mission. Each morning, as I step into my role, I am reminded of the lives we touch and the difference we strive to make.

Navigating the intricate web of non-profit operations demands strategic foresight and adaptability. From charting long-term goals to navigating day-to-day challenges, every decision is infused with purpose. Collaborating with our dedicated team, we refine our strategies, leveraging resources

MEDICAL DOCTOR IN CAPE TOWN CITY BOWL

Dr Eden Lurie is a General Practitioner who obtained a degree in Medicine as well as Genetics from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Equipped to manage acute and chronic illnesses, paediatrics, women's health and mental health. Aesthetic procedures are also offered. Registered as a Discovery Health Premier GP who also does Vitality Health Checks.

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MAZALTOV TO THE 2024-5 HERZLIA SLC!

L-R: Danni Shochot (council member), Daniel Geva (council member), Jessica Sherman (council member), Jacques De Wet (Head Boy), Benjamin Lazarus (council member), Samuel Bagraim (Deputy Head), Alexand Franco (Deputy Head), Daniel Webb (council member), Edan Sachs (Deputy Head), Eve Cohen (council member)



HERZLIA CHAI TO CHAI

Herzlia education is a journey that often begins at 18 months in pre-primary until matric (usually age 18). Since 2017 Herzlia has celebrated this rite of passage called Chai to Chai. Matric pupils lead this event filled with fun and educational activities, but mainly to spend time together and connect with their 'little brothers and sisters' in Grade 1 so they become inspired to follow their footsteps to being proud Herzlians, menschen and future leaders just like them!



Herzlia High School and Primaries Chai to Chai



Back L - R: Noah Arelisky, Brooklyn Danilewitz, Adam Poulton. Front L - R: Mikayla Marcow, Stephanie Burton, Erin Beder



L-R: Lyla Ratmansky & Chole Katsen having the best time at Chai to Chai



L-R: Julia Stein, Maddison Jaffe & Angelina Goriashina enjoy a treat at Chai to Chai



L-R: Zachary Herskovitz with Jonah Ginsberg



L-R: Ariel Levy, Leo Franck, Aiden Schneider and Jacob Pachter



L-R: Asher Hurwitz, Noah Zive & Axel Derman

ECLIPSE TOUR TO THE USA

Fourteen Herzlia High School science pupils recently got an out-of-this-world opportunity to go on an educational Eclipse Tour to the USA including trips to NASA, the Capital Building and Epcot. The ultimate highlight was the experience of a lifetime... the solar eclipse in Austin, Texas!



Back Row L - R: Samuel Hamburger, Idan Mazor, Ben Levinson, Emily Zelezniak, Oliver Leslie, Joel Shamley, Alexander Danziger. Front Row L - R: Mrs Pretorius, Amala Moodley, Jadon Booyesen, Clive Loewenthal



ARTS & CULTURE

Portrait of the artist as photographer

By EDITOR

Having one's achievements recognised by one's peers is important to any artist, and so it's a great honour for artist Michelle Sank to have been named as the winner of the Portraiture Prize in the Open Category of the 2024 Sony World Photography Awards. These annual Awards are among the top prizes internationally for photography, and are geared to demonstrate "the ways the arts reflect the world around us".

Michelle was born in Cape Town, but spent her early years living in Durban whilst visiting Cape Town regularly during this time. She returned permanently to the city of her birth aged 17 to study Fine Art at the University of Cape Town.

She has lived in the UK since 1987, working part-time as a lecturer in photography and in various other roles. She has always had an interest in photography but it was only in 2020 that she was able to take up photography full-time as her career.

Michelle explains that, "I am interested in creating sociological landscapes, interplays of human form and location that are significant in their visual, sociological and psychological nuances." Interestingly, although she has lived so far from Cape Town for so many years, her work now returns her to the city regularly. In fact, her winning piece in the Sony Awards — called Zenande, Sinawe, Zinathi, and Buhle at Sea Point Pavilion, Cape Town — is part of an ongoing series of images she has termed 'Ballade', a title chosen to reflect the poetic and lyrical aspect of this connection to her birthplace.

The award-winning photograph highlights Michelle's strong memories she has of Sea Point, in particular of the Promenade and the Pavilion Swimming Pool. "My memories date from the apartheid years, so of course I remember the Pavilion public swimming pool as being for a white public only. These days when I return to Cape Town, I am struck by the fact that the Pavilion looks structurally very much like it did all those years ago — except for one huge difference: it is totally multicultural where all ethnicities and religions can now share this special recreational facility."

Another photograph from the 'Ballade' series, Zhara, was selected for display at London's National Portrait Gallery in 2023 as part of the Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize exhibition. "I was a winner in this Prize a number of years ago, so that was also another huge honour," Michelle comments.

Michelle was recently involved in a separate project exhibited at the Imperial War Museum showing a collection of portrait photographs of Holocaust survivors living in Britain. She has had five published photographic books of her work to date, has worked with galleries and organisations in the UK, Europe and the USA and has won numerous photographic awards worldwide.

Having recently spent three months in Cape Town to continue her work on the 'Ballade' series, Michelle plans a return to the city for a longer period during 2025. Immersing herself in the city is likely to yield more works that showcase her love for the city and its people.



" I am interested in creating sociological landscapes, interplays of human form and location that are significant in their visual, sociological and psychological nuances "



Michelle Sank



Zhara – Photograph displayed at London's National Portrait Gallery



Mindu Hornick Holocaust Survivor and daughter Nicola



Winning photograph – Sony World Photography Awards

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IN THE BLOOM OF YOUTH — at age 98!



Alida and Hilda in the Astra garden



Hilda Shenker celebrates her 98th birthday with her sisters. Front row (L-R) Queenie Sender, Hilda Shenker, Irma Edelstein with Dora Pick at the back. Queenie, Hilda and Irma are all in their 90s.

Anyone who has visited Coffee Time in Breda Street, Cape Town, during August will recall the beauty of the tranquil garden with its stunning display of clivia flowers. (Not that the garden doesn't look wonderful at other times of the year, mind you!)

While many have admired the beautiful garden, few people know that one person has been the driving force behind its creation and continued beauty for almost 40 years — something we reported on in our June 2021 edition. 98-year-old Hilda Shenker is the brains and hard work behind this hidden gem that provides a peaceful spot within what is a fairly dense urban environment not far from the city centre.

When Hilda came to live in Cape Town in 1985 — moving into a flat in Sea Point — she left behind a magnificent garden at her home in Waterkloof, Pretoria. A passionate gardener who'd built up a huge amount of knowledge and developed a keen gardener's eye, it would have been a waste of wonderful talent had Hilda not had the opportunity to apply her gardening skills elsewhere. And so, it was fortuitous that she met the late Sara Pascall, a well-known figure within Cape Town's Jewish community. Sara encouraged Hilda to establish a garden on a barren piece of ground that forms part of the Astra property.

Today, when one admires this beautiful, well-established garden, it's difficult to imagine that it was once just a dust bowl with no plants

growing on it. "There were no funds available at the time to build up the garden," Hilda explains. "We needed to replace soil and dig in large amounts of compost to restore the soil before we could begin planting, so we embarked on a project to make our own compost — which was quite a job! And, luckily, I got a big load of compost from the Mount Nelson Hotel which had offered free compost to anyone keen to take it."

Relying on donations of plants, the garden has grown over the years into a splendid spot, serving as an attractive addition to Coffee Time, a restaurant which was the vision of former Director of Astra Merle Furman. It's the perfect venue for a small function, especially when the weather is good. With the floor-to-ceiling windows in the Coffee Time property, one is able to enjoy the garden even when sitting inside.

For many years, Hilda was helped in the garden by Astra employee, Zolani Hlathi, whom Hilda describes as, "a beautiful human being." Zolani is now unfortunately unable to assist with the gardening work because of a physical disability, so Hilda's carer, Alida Botha, is now part of the dynamic gardening team.

Alida thoroughly enjoys the weekly visits to the garden. "I learned about growing vegetables as a child from my grandmother, so I developed a passion for the garden many years ago," she says.

Hilda's son, David, attributes his mother's good health at such an

“ 98-year-old Hilda Shenker is the brains and hard work behind this hidden gem... ”

advanced age to the garden. "She used to work in the garden every day, and now she continues there every week. This has given her a purpose in life. And the bending, carrying, digging, and many other physical tasks have certainly kept her body strong and healthy."

Best wishes to Hilda on her 98th birthday — which she celebrated on 19 April. We look forward to seeing you direct the operations in the garden for the next 98 years!

Hilda and Alida share their GARDENING TIPS

- You must have passion for your garden to turn it into a success
- Be prepared to work hard to get rewards
- Throw a rotten lemon into an unused bit of ground and wait. You may well see small lemon trees coming up after a while. Plant those out once they are big enough
- When you cut a green pepper, save the pips. Put the pips onto a tissue and cover with another tissue. Keep the tissue moist. New pepper plants will sprout; transfer each plant into a garden pot — and enjoy the fruit of your labour.

The brainchild of the former Executive Director of Astra, Merle Furman, Coffee Time opened in 2000. Merle explains: "I stood next to the old shed in what was essentially a dry yard and saw the most beautiful view of Table Mountain. It was at that moment that I realised that we could make use of the wonderful location of Astra's building for a small coffee shop." With the support of the Astra Executive Committee, the idea grew and eventually Coffee Time was born. In addition to serving as a very pleasant meeting place for members of the public, the coffee shop provides a workshop experience for some of the staff with disabilities, who work there as waiters and who learn about the catering industry.

The coffee shop is located in what was the original stoep of the Astra building. It is closed in with glass walls, which allows for visitors to enjoy the magnificent views of the garden.



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DEPRESSION - UNVEILING THE SHADOWS

JCS@WORK – NORMALISING AND DESTIGMATISING DEPRESSION

ZIA ADLER
Social Worker

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Major Depressive Disorder is a serious mental illness that is documented in the DSM 5 (Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders). The DSM 5 documents several associated disorders involving the depression component. This debilitating condition develops from environmental, psychological, genetic and biochemical factors unique to each person and is often trivialized and dismissed as an ingenuine health condition. Studies reveal that 25 % of South Africans are depressed, where more than a quarter of respondents report moderate to severe symptoms.

Depression is a mood disorder characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness. It also affects how the person thinks, feels and behaves. Symptoms range, can be atypical and include depressed mood, markedly diminished or loss of interest/pleasure in activities, weight loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or excessive/inappropriate guilt, decreased concentration and thoughts of death and suicide. Recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan or suicide attempt or specific plan for suicide. These symptoms must result in significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

People suffering from Depression may experience feelings of guilt, self-loathing, worthlessness and hopelessness, feel useless, despairing and stuck. Symptoms may not fit stereotypical versions and may present as anger, irritability and physical symptoms. An exact diagnosis is required by a general practitioner or mental health professional to exclude possible physiological causes and other exclusions and to correctly diagnose a range of related conditions.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Depression was originally phrased as Melancholia, meaning "overcome in sorrow and wrapped up in sorrowful thoughts". Symptoms are experienced along a spectrum and are unique to the individual, with severe symptoms described by sufferers as a "Cancer of the soul". Some individuals experience what is known as a "Hidden" or "Smiling" Depression, where outward appearances conceal the inner suffering.

The experience of depression has been widely depicted in music, poetry, literature and art. The famous artist Edvard Munch depicted Depression in his painting "The Scream". This resonates with persons experiencing Depression, where the painting embodies their existential dread and anguish. Sylvia Plath authored "The Belljar", where the jar is a metaphor for mental suffocation and depression. Visual and conceptual metaphors of Depression include thorns, barbed wire, shackles, fog, dark pits and barren landscapes. Popular music also depicts Depression - "Hurt" by Jonny Cash, "Fix" by Coldplay and the Eurythmics, with the poignant lyrics "Here comes the rain again, tearing me apart like a new emotion" - rain symbolizing Depression.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Misconceptions narrate Depression as an innate weakness, laziness, lack of motivation where sufferers react to a vocabulary of depression, told to pull themselves together and to snap out of it. This only serves to worsen the condition. People experiencing

depression may establish a learned helplessness which acts as a barrier to accessing help. Encourage the person to seek professional help, offer validation and encouragement, empathy and active listening. Depression is preventable and treatable with a combination of psychological therapies and use of medication providing for the best outcomes. Treatment requires a holistic approach that involves gaining access to additional tools that may include meditation, yoga, adequate nutrition and exercise. Left untreated Depression can worsen resulting in an increase in the risk of suicide.

Take anyone talking of suicide seriously - it is okay to talk about it. Social workers at JCS at times find it necessary to apply measures in respect of the Mental Health Care Act to safeguard life. This constitutes an involuntary hospital admission where the person is a danger to themselves. If you would like further information regarding Depression, please contact JCS; email admin@jcs.org.za or call **021 462 5520**.

"Depression is a mood disorder characterised by a persistent feeling of sadness. It also affects how the person thinks, feels and behaves."



unsplash.com - Gadiel Lazcano

#JewishCommunity #JCS #Depression #MentalHealth #SocialWork





HEALTHY AGEING – it’s so important

Many factors influence healthy ageing. Whilst one has no control over some, the factors underlying ageing — such as genetics, what you eat, the amount of exercise you do, a healthy diet, going to the doctor regularly, and taking care of your mental health — are within our reach, and the way in which we look after these issues certainly contributes to healthy ageing.

Independence and maintaining a good quality of life, combined with taking care of your mental health, promotes healthy ageing. As you live independently, you need to ensure that you are safe at all times and that you maintain a good diet to live optimally. Ensure that you have a good network and are socially active. Social isolation and loneliness are factors negatively impacting wellness.

As you age there are changes that take place in your body which you need to be aware of and address if these changes affect the quality of your life. Hearing loss, vision and memory loss, loss of friends and family, and disability of any sort can make it difficult for you to socialise and maintain friendships, often increasing isolation and making one feel lonely.

Loneliness is extremely debilitating. You may be in a room filled with people but, if you have any sort of disability, you may feel excluded and lonely. Loneliness makes you feel alone or separated and this feeling is very distressing. Social isolation occurs when your social circle decreases and there is a lack of interaction with people. Those who are socially isolated or feel lonely are more likely to be agitated, suffer from sleep deprivation, and have a greater propensity to heart disease and depression.

Being socially active is so beneficial. In Cape Town, our ageing community is lucky to have an organisation such as Cape Jewish Seniors which helps meet all their needs. There is certainly no need for anyone to be alone or socially isolated as right across the Peninsula our branches have activities that cater for every need. Whether you are creative or artistic, enjoy music, need exercise or merely want to chat, there is an opportunity almost every day of the week to find a like-minded person with whom to spend quality time. There is also the opportunity to chat confidentially to a social worker in a safe environment where your needs can be met and worries allayed.

Outings are top of the list for enjoyment, and we are fortunate to have two drivers who take our members out and about every week

to special places. We have just enjoyed our annual getaway to Goudini where members had a fabulous time.

Our art and craft exhibition was a wonderful success with members exhibiting beautiful work and enjoying a special day as they viewed the display. How proud they were when one of their creations was bought by a guest who popped in to see the exhibition.

We are about to celebrate Pesach and, more than ever this year, as we utter the words, “Let my People Go”, each one of us will be praying for the safe return and the release of all the hostages who are still in captivity. We wish you a Chag Pesach Sameach whilst you enjoy your seders with those you love.

Diana Sochen, Executive Director



CJSA member Twigg Curitz enjoying the Herzlia Matrics interaction



Enjoying Goudini Spa



CJSA members in Goudini



Milnerton Members enjoyed a fabulous outing to the Postcard Cafe



Southern Suburb members enjoying Onse Huisie Restaurant.



Herzlia Matric learners interacting with members of CJSA



Sea Point members enjoying a talk by Leonard Suransky



Leonard Suransky speaking in Sea Point

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

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

BIRTHS:

Pia Kaplan – birth of great-grandson,
Zilla Kudo – great-grandson

BARMITZVAH:

Hannan and Tzippi Brivik – grandson

ANNIVERSARY:

Shirley and Hymie Kaplan – 50th

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY:

Nigel Brooker – 80th,
Lena Kantor – 86th, Les Vides – 93rd

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Gayle and Michael Blumenthal,
Barry Katz, Kim Tucker

CONGRATULATIONS:

To Aaron Gersh who came 7th in his age group in the Argus Cycle Tour. There were 120 people in his age group.

CONDOLENCES AND WISHES OF LONG LIFE TO:

Shirley Cohen on the passing of her niece
Harry Faktor on the passing of his wife, Marcia

Well wishes extended to those who have been under the weather. You have been in our thoughts:

Thelma Rozen, Bernice Kaplan



HEALTH FOCUS

LUPUS – a basic understanding

By DR DAVID GOTLIEB, a leading Cape Town rheumatologist



The body has an immune system designed to protect the individual from infections and external threats but the immune system may become autonomous and cause disease by attacking the person's body itself.

This phenomenon is called autoimmunity, and there are multiple diseases which arise through the inability of the body to distinguish itself from an outside environmental agent or infection. Collectively, the diseases are known as Autoimmune disease.

These diseases are based on a genetic component, and exposure to an infection or unknown agent in the environment, frequently years before onset of clinical disease.

These include, amongst many diseases:

- **Rheumatoid arthritis**, which primarily affects the joints.
- **Crohn's disease** which affects the bowel.
- **Ulcerative colitis**, which affects the colon.
- **Psoriasis** can affect skin, nails, tendons and joints.
- **Systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus)** which can affect multiple organ systems.

In the case of lupus, what follows is activation of the blood white cells, especially lymphocytes, and the production of antibodies which attach to and damage or destroy various organ tissues.

The disease occurs in 1-10 per 100 000 people worldwide, but some populations are more susceptible to it, e.g. people of mixed race in the Western Cape, African American women, Hispanics, and Asians. There is also a significant incidence among Jewish people, especially those of Sephardic background. In fact,

EFFECT	SYMPTOMS
Constitutional symptoms	Fatigue, brain fog and fevers
Alopecia	Hair loss
Skin rashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An acute classical butterfly distribution rash on the face with sensitivity to light • A subacute non-scarring skin rash on the neck, chest and shoulders • A chronic scarring type called discoid lupus with scarring of the skin
Mouth ulcers	Usually painless, but may increase as the disease progresses
Joint manifestations	Arthralgia: morning stiffness, pain without swelling Arthritis: swelling in the joints
Cardiac involvement	Endocarditis: inflammation of the heart valves Myocarditis: inflammation of the heart muscle Pericarditis: inflammation of the lining of the heart Varying severity of chest pain or heart failure with breathlessness
Respiratory involvement	Pleurisy: inflammation of the lining of the lung with chest pain on breathing, or discomfort with breathlessness caused by damage to lung tissue
Vascular involvement	Raynaud's: white, blue and red colour changes in the fingers in the cold Livedo: lacy pattern of skin pink/blue colour. Also seen with temperature changes Vasculitis: severe inflammation of the blood vessels to the skin or internal organs Hypertension is common, aggravated by kidney disease
Blood disorders	Marrow involvement, or autoimmune peripheral blood involvement, with moderate to severe anaemia or bleeding disorder because of platelet reduction or low white count and increased infection risks
Clotting disorders	Antiphospholipid syndromes, which may cause thrombosis of vessels or embolism to the lung
Gastroenterological involvement	Swallowing issues, abdominal pain or, rarely, pancreatitis or hepatitis
Kidney disease	Varying severity of inflammation of kidney tissue causing blood or protein in urine on testing. This is the most important involvement in lupus, and in the past was the primary cause of death in patients from kidney failure
Pregnancy issues	Fertility and second trimester foetal loss is associated with lupus, especially if antiphospholipid antibodies are found. Hypertension and aggravated kidney disease and bleeding and clotting issues with pregnancy cause potential harm to mother and child. It is essential to control the disease before pregnancy can be undertaken.

a study in Israel showed between 49 and 155 cases per 100 000. The incidence among Ashkenazi Jews is lower, and the disease is generally less severe among Ashkenazim.

Lupus is more common among women in the age group 15-45. However, approximately 10% of cases start in childhood.

The severity of the condition may also be affected by genetics and one's hormone status.

It presents in a number of different ways, and the clinical manifestations vary from minor symptoms to life-threatening disease.

These are illustrated in the table above.

continued on page 24 ▶



Alopecia with lupus



HEALTH FOCUS continued

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis is made on clinical suspicion with the clinical findings of the patient, with a full history and examination, since the illness is so multisystem in nature. At the same time an indication of severity is made, by assessing for major organ involvement, especially kidney involvement. Thereafter blood can be sent to the pathologists, who conduct various tests on the blood, and do special tests for lupus antibodies.

Once a diagnosis is suspected, the specialist of choice is the rheumatologist who will liaise with other specialists, especially renal physicians. A kidney biopsy might be required.

With relatively few trained rheumatologists in South Africa, it may be necessary to consult a physician who will liaise with a rheumatologist as best as possible.

The disease is characterised by flares of activity, with constitutional, skin and joint disease seen very frequently. The organ complications are less common, but the specialist should see the patient more

frequently, depending on symptoms, or for regular monitoring every six months. The patient should have their urine checked at each visit.

TREATMENT OF LUPUS

Treatment of the disease has improved significantly over the past 30 years and, today, with proper treatment, patients can have normal lives, and have normal pregnancies. In fact, survival has improved from 50%, in the past, to over 90% in the current era.

Various medications are used to assist patients: from antimalarial treatment with hydroxychloroquine; to anti-inflammatory medications; to cortisone, in varying doses for immune suppression; to immune suppressant drugs; and the newer class of biologic drugs.

WORLD LUPUS DAY is held on 10 May to draw attention to this medical condition. The disease gets its name from the Latin word for 'wolf' (Lupus): many people with lupus show a distinctive rash, which looks like the bite of a wolf.

butterfly rash face

Family Announcements

OBITUARY FOR EDNA HELFET

EDNA HELFET DIED ON APRIL 17, 2024.

Born Edna Landsman in George, Western Cape, she would go on to live in Calvinia, Cape Town, and Boston before returning "home" to Plettenberg Bay, a mere fifty miles from where she was born, in 2001. With her beloved husband Arnold, she raised three children in Cape Town and travelled to the four corners of the earth.

Edna was a long-time member of the Black Sash and a volunteer for many years with the South African Council of Churches Dependants Conference. As a Rotarian, she pioneered the introduction of MedicAlert bracelets in South Africa. The venerable matriarch of her far-flung family, she was the loving mother of three, grandmother of five, and great-grandmother of five more.

Edna passed away peacefully on April 17, 2024, in Plettenberg Bay aged one hundred and two. She led an extraordinarily well-lived life.

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



SAJM

South African Jewish Museum

Back to the Front

In March, the SA Jewish Museum & Jacob Gitlin Library were joined by Leon Levy, an anti-apartheid activist and pioneer of the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

Leon Levy, in a fascinating discussion with Professor Milton Shain, explained his new riveting

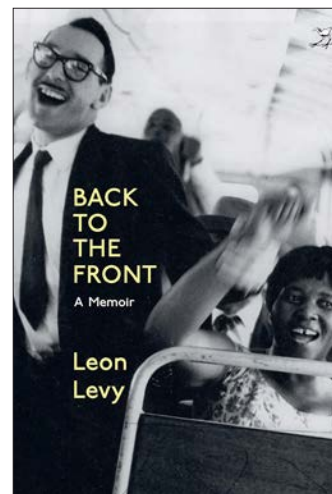
memoir *Back to the Front*.

The memoir explores his childhood, early years on the factory floor, his immense contribution to the formation of the trade union movement, his fierce anti-apartheid activism and more.

Back to the Front is available at the Museum Shop.



Jacqui Rogers, Leon Levy, Gavin Morris and Philip Todres



Back to the Front available at the Museum Shop



Prof Milton Shain and author Leon Levy



Preventative Measures I, (2023)

SET IN STONE

Joe Turpin

16 May - 30 June 2024



SAJM
South African Jewish Museum



MENSCH IS THE LEADING JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Fundraising: THINK BIG – there is enough money

Michelle Stein ran the first Mensch Academy training on how to Build Your Fundraising Strategy. A fundraising consultant and trainer specialising in high-value fundraising from major donors, corporates, trusts and foundations, Michelle provides her Point of View...

If we knew there was enough money, what would we do differently?

I recently met with one of South Africa's leading management consultants. She works for the country's biggest corporate foundations, measuring the impact of their funded programmes.

After 30 years+ in the sector, she concludes: There's enough money to fund projects. That isn't the challenge. The real problem is not enough organisations think big to solve problems at scale.

Her words surprised me. It seemed counter to the narrative that there's never enough money. So, if we know there's money but it's about solving problems at scale, what can we do differently to attract funding, especially as a small not for profit organisation.

Here are five suggestions:

1 Hold a big vision

Go back to the drawing board and start thinking big. What would it look like if we scaled this? What would we need to reach even more? If we believe there is money, what's stopping us from making this happen? Once you've created that big vision, start talking about it. Even if your income or activities don't yet reflect it, continue to believe in and communicate the big vision you imagine and are working towards.

2 Collaborate with others

Partner with organisations doing similar work or adjacent work — align with others. Uphold the saying, 'If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together'. Funders love collaboration because impact is multiplied, skills are complemented and new solutions become possible.

More funders are also increasingly pooling funding into donor collectives to maximise funds and share learnings. If donors are doing it, they want to see organisations doing it.

3 Follow the data

Use actual data and impact measurement to show why your solution works, not anecdotes or stories. It means investing in and valuing impact measurement not as a nice-to-have but as a necessity for securing funding. Daniel Kahneman's book 'Thinking Fast and Slow' details how people make decisions. It reveals that people make decisions based on emotion, and then use facts, figures and logic to justify and explain their decisions. Organisations need stories to draw funders in, but they also need data, for donors to explain why they funded a particular solution.

4 Develop partnerships

Big, long-term funders appreciate being valued as partners in tackling society's biggest issues. So we must move away from seeing them as an entity to be contacted once a year or

as a necessary evil. Find out what they value, and then communicate what's in it for them as a partner. Once they're on board as a funder, it's about finding ways to bring them closer to the work. This involves much more than a once-a-year report. Regular phone calls, meetings, reports, events, cards and other touch points will demonstrate that they've made a wise investment.

5 Invest in your organisation

Despite our organisations solving some of the most complex societal issues, we expect them to run on a shoestring. We accept big spending on innovation and development in the for-profit sector because the outcome is a great product. But, in the charity sector, we limit spending because it may feel reckless even if it means we cannot achieve our big vision.

Invest in your organisation; the scale of your work demands it.

For more from Michelle go to <https://www.handmadefundraising.com/>



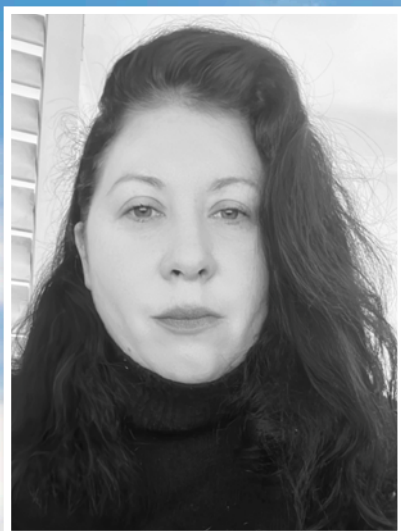
The Mensch LIFT Alumni community met this past month bringing together the first 2 cohorts of the **Leading Impact for Transformation (LIFT) Leadership Programme**. This group of 30 leaders represent some of the most impactful and impressive Jewish social changemakers in the country. Having completed the LIFT programme, they have graduated into an alumni community to continue their learning and development facilitated by Mensch. This session focused on clarifying and focusing on their leadership goal for 2024



To *aliyah* or not to *aliyah*?

For many South African Jews, that is rapidly becoming the question

By MANDY ALLEN



Aliyah is Hebrew for ‘ascent’, interpreted as the ‘act of going up’ towards the holy city of Jerusalem. Emigrating to Israel from the Diaspora – the act of making *aliyah* – is one of the touchstones of Zionism, representing the ultimate homecoming. Whether or not you choose to make *aliyah* in your lifetime, as a Jew it is both your legally enshrined right (the Law Of Return) as well as a rite of passage.

However, fulfilling the modern dream conceived of by Herzl – who was inspired by the Jewish land-soul connection that is as old as history itself – still comes with the headache of bureaucracy and paperwork. Being a practical people, we took care of that in the form of the annual *Aliyah Expo*, taking place in South Africa for almost two decades now.

The expo affords prospective *Olim* or the *Olim*-curious a chance to cover all the FAQs: documentation and eligibility; the ins and outs of

the education system; employment, taxation and medical matters; how to establish a business. Seasoned ex-South African *Olim* who have (re) established their roots in Israel are also there to share their personal experiences.

This year’s expo took place in early April at Sea Point’s Marais Road Synagogue, with all the heightened security precautions necessary. At midday, a small group of anti-Israel protestors arrived, eventually numbering around twenty. While unwelcome, it was not unexpected and CSO kept disturbances to a minimum.

Unfortunately, what began as familiar rhetoric about colonial entities and genocide progressed to a small breakaway group vandalising several cars driving past (the incident is being investigated). The authorities arrived swiftly to diffuse the situation and, while nobody was physically hurt, it was an undeniable escalation from violent words to violent actions.

It must be pointed out, in the current zeitgeist, where incidents of global antisemitism are increasing at alarmingly exponential rates, the South African Jewish community – while not being spared of antisemitism – has been relatively fortunate with regards to the low percentage of real-life incidents compared to the experiences of other Jews in the Diaspora. The repeat patterns of antisemitism, however, are unmistakable and we ignore them at our peril.

Jews are not a monolith, of course, but taking the temperature on social media and in conversation reflects

something that many South African Jews are experiencing to varying degrees – an unravelling of our sense of security and belonging in the country that we love. (Consider yourself lucky, and perhaps stop here, if you don’t relate.)

Who reading this hasn’t, in the last few months, questioned what our future and that of our children will look like here? South African Jews – a large percentage of us at least – have been shaken by our current government’s foreign policy: its vocal support for Hamas, its increasingly warm ties with totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and its willingness to be choreographed straight into the chambers of the ICJ by the Islamic Republic of Iran. In pursuing these relationships, and a general unwillingness to acknowledge the concerns of the Jewish community, the pervading sense is that the ANC has thrown South African Jews under the bus, giving the green light to Jew hate. That there have not been any serious incidents here speaks to the decency and morality of the majority of South Africans, who are not represented by the behaviour and policies of the government. This is a beacon of hope. And we are not Jews with trembling knees. This is our home. Most of us aren’t going anywhere and nor would we want to.

The ultimate paradox here, of course, is that more uncertainty for Jews in the Diaspora results in higher *aliyah* figures. Something that those who are hellbent on the destruction of the State of Israel would do well to remember considering that, for them, one Jew in Israel is already one too many.

“
...anti-Zionists...
only strengthen the case for *aliyah*. It’s the ultimate own goal and the joke’s on them.”

Our constitution provides for the right to freedom and security including the right ‘to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources’. Jewish citizens of South Africa, just like anyone else, also have the right of association – including being able to walk freely and without intimidation into a Jewish event, a Jewish-themed movie, and an *aliyah* expo... When those anti-Zionists stand outside these venues and reveal the true nature of their ideology, when they make Jews feel unsafe, they only strengthen the case for *aliyah*. It’s the ultimate own goal and the joke’s on them.

Even with the current war, *olim* are steadily arriving to make new lives in their ancestral homeland. It’s incorrect to frame *aliyah* purely as a response to Jewish persecution. We go to fulfil a longing. We go for job opportunities. We go for family connections. We go out of a sense of loyalty.

But *aliyah* is undeniably tied to political and societal shifts. And for many Jews right now, those shifts feel seismic. It is a source of comfort to know that Israel exists as the Jewish homeland to welcome and protect us. Never again means never again.

WIZO CAPE TOWN’S BOUQUET OF HOPE

The WIZO Cape Town Shiri branch launched a fundraiser called “Bouquet of Hope” to spread love this Pesach. Their hope was to place a bouquet of yellow flowers in every home, symbolising hope and freedom for the hostages still held in captivity in

Gaza. Each yellow flower served as a reminder of every individual held hostage, ensuring that none are forgotten. All proceeds from the sales will be donated to The WIZO Emergency Fund, supporting Israel and her people in times of need.





UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024



Notice is hereby given that the United Herzlia Schools (UHS) Annual General Meeting will take place on the 28 May 2024 / 20 Iyar 5784 at 18h30 at Herzlia High School, MH Goldschmidt Avenue, Highlands Estate.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the elected Governor positions, duly proposed and seconded, must be lodged by 16h00 on Tuesday 21 May 2024. A CV of not more than 120 words must be attached to the nomination form. Please email admin@herzlia.com or contact 021 286 3468 for nomination forms or more details.

VOTING

Parents in good standing, alumni, trustees, honorary life members and current donors to UHS and The Herzlia Foundation Trust are considered members of UHS and are eligible to vote. Voting will be in-person only, no proxies. Parents, benefactors and donors of the school please accept this as an invitation. Right of admission reserved.

Andries van Rensen
Executive Director

www.herzlia.com



BOOK TALK

Highlighting Yiddish

By EDITOR

In last month's Chronicle, the Editor's piece spoke about preserving our culture, specifically as relates to the collection of Yiddish-language books that would otherwise be discarded. The topic was prompted by a book called *Outwitting History*, which relates the story of Aaron Lansky, an American who has collected over a million Yiddish books that would otherwise have been lost.

The topic sparked some interest — in fact, our social media posts of the article resulted in hundreds of reactions, and quite a few people around the world shared the post with its link-through to the article itself. As a result of the interest, our colleagues at the Jacob Gitlin Library informed us of a children's picture book in their collection that relates Aaron Lansky's story and how he "preserved culture and history." The book also reflects "the power of an individual to bind past and future generations

through language and literature."

Included in the book are a number of Yiddish words that many of us know and use. In its glossary of words, it also highlights a few words that we probably think are English words, but that are in fact derived from the Yiddish language. For instance, the word 'glitch' — which in English refers to a malfunction — is the English version of a Yiddish word 'glitsch', which describes slippery conditions.

Both the adult version of the book and the children's picture book are available for borrowing from the Jacob Gitlin Library, which has mounted a special exhibition of their books about Yiddish. Some long-time favourites such as *The Joys of Yiddish* join a range of others, some with delightful titles like *Rhapsody in Schmaltz: Yiddish Food and Why We Can't Stop Eating It.*



Pictures by: Natacha Wood



ENTREPRENEURS' HOTSPOT

LABOUR LAW and the small business



Michael Bagraim

The recent commemoration of May Day (or Workers' Day) should include a focus on the right to work — problematic in our country, which is regularly identified as having the highest rate of unemployment in the world. The latest figures — for the end of the 4th quarter of 2023 — reflect an official unemployment rate of 32,1%; the unofficial rate is, of course, higher. The employment outlook for young people is particularly dire. So, it's no surprise that many people call for a greater focus on initiatives geared to create more meaningful job opportunities.

Part of the solution to our unemployment crisis is most certainly the role that small business could be playing. As Michael Bagraim, a local labour law expert and consultant at Bagraims Attorneys, explains: "It is absolutely clear from research done worldwide that it is small business that creates entry-level jobs everywhere. Small businesses are the best vehicle to appoint, engage and train new entrants into the labour market. And small businesses are invariably labour intensive — which is exactly what we need in South Africa."

Michael laments the fact that the current government has done nothing of value for small business. We have an intense, complicated labour regulatory environment that is not conducive to job creation; as well as complex labour legislation that favours trade unions and employees, which makes it difficult for small businesses to grow. He points out that, "Most of the small businesses that I deal with on a daily basis are fearful of employing people and invariably would rather invest in larger businesses or take their investment abroad." The result is that, in essence, there has been a business investment strike for over 10 years.

"Yet, despite this negative scenario," Michael comments, "there are still numerous opportunities for

entrepreneurs, and so we continue to have a fairly vibrant private sector, with many new businesses being created."

The starting point regarding our labour laws is for an entrepreneur to acknowledge the difficulties, and to ensure that they know and understand the labour regulatory environment. "Make sure that you remain within the precepts of our labour legislation when you embark on your entrepreneurial journey," he says, explaining that, "Many small businesses I deal with consult labour consultants regularly to be certain that they don't fall foul of the law."

Michael offers these points of guidance for small business owners:

- Put all the rules in place that lay out what you expect your staff to do and what the expected behaviours of employees should be.
- Only if a rule was clearly in place can you consider dismissing a staff member.
- Always keep records relating to any transgression by an employee. You should also keep records that reflect what process was applied when an employee has apparently broken a rule.
- For a dismissal, you also need to have evidence that shows that the

particular staff member transgressed the rule.

- When a situation arises in which a dismissal may be necessary, it's wise to consult a labour consultant who will review the set of circumstances and advise you as to whether a dismissal is likely to succeed. An important element of this is that the employer must have followed a proper process.
 - The easiest way for the small business owner to ensure that the merits of the dispute and possible dismissal are valid is to follow the proper process as outlined by Schedule 8 to the Labour Relations Act.
 - If you decide to proceed with a dismissal, you must follow a proper disciplinary process. You should appoint an independent chairperson and someone who can follow the disciplinary process as laid out in the Labour Relations Act.
- Ultimately, if you prepare properly and keep suitable records, dismissing an employee is possible. Hopefully, we will soon see the start of a more business-friendly environment in South Africa, which encourages entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and, consequently, to employ more workers. That can only bode well for the country.



THE CAPE JEWISH CHRONICLE RECORDS ITS APPRECIATION OF THE CONTINUED SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

The Susman Charitable Foundation

Rubi and Anne Chaitman Foundation

With compliments from Aggie Hirsch in memory of Freddy



THE MAUERBERGER FOUNDATION FUND

THE HAROLD AND BEATRICE KRAMER FOUNDATION

Goldschmidt Family Foundation



THE SILVERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

Stanley and Zea Lewis Foundation

The Henry Van Embden Family Foundation



With Compliments Kalman, Esther and Michael Maisel Trust

With compliments The Jack & Ethel Goldin Foundation

With compliments from Susan & Lesley Rabinowitz in memory of the Late Ben & Shirley

Science fiction, Israel style

JULIAN RESNICK writes from Israel



JULIAN RESNICK was born in Somerset West and grew up in Habonim Dror. He studied at UCT, and made Aliyah in 1976. He's conducted numerous shlichuyot and educational missions on behalf of Israel, to Jewish communities in England and the USA. He works as a guide in Israel and around the world (wherever there is a Jewish story).

He's married to Orly, and they have three children and eight grandchildren and is a member of Kibbutz Tzora.



IDF Iron Dome

I have never been a great fan of science fiction. I have never seen Star Wars, Star Trek (for me it is Star Drek) or Back to the Future. I have seen ET, but I would argue that ET is not science fiction, but a very special way of looking at the way human beings connect with one another.

I have never made an effort to see an eclipse and, to be honest, always preferred the Humanities to the Sciences. I can name many of the great poets of the English language, but struggle with the physicists, chemists, and biologists.

For me the great heroes of the Jewish People have always been Bialik, Agnon, Bashevis Singer, and yes, Mordechai Anilewicz, Hannah Senesh and A.D. Gordon.

And then April 13th happened.

Talk about science fiction; talk about when reality is weirder than fiction.

If anyone had ever told me that, on an evening during my life, the army spokesperson in the country in which I live, Israel, would go on national television, and tell us that hundreds of Intercontinental Ballistic

Missiles, armed Drones and Cruise Missiles were on their way from Iran and, within a few hours would arrive in Israel, I would have either asked them what they were smoking — or ask them whether they were fans of Star Trek, Star Wars, Back to the Future, or possibly a relative of one of the best known Jewish authors of all times, Isaac Asimov.

Seriously, what is one supposed to do with the knowledge that a weapon of mass destruction is winging its way to you. My wife and I watched the Army spokesperson literally telling us that we would be on the receiving end of hundreds of incoming missiles and drones, and told us to prepare for the possibility that we might have to be in the shelters for a while.

What do you do if you are the grandfather of a 9-year-old, a 7-year-old, 4-year-old twins, another 4-year-old, a 2-year-old, a 1-year-old and a 6-day-old, newborn, little boy? So, four of them are with their parents doing medical subspecialties in the United States, three are on the kibbutz, and one is in Tel Aviv.

I called my son in America to say hello (or was it goodbye? I am still unsure.) I made sure that I was

prepared for the bomb shelter. Spoke with my daughter in Tel Aviv and then we tried to go to sleep for a few hours based on the knowledge that we might be needed with the grandchildren the next day.

And then the extraordinary news started coming in. We, Israel, with help from the United States of America (Thank you, Mr President, you really came through!) and other allies, significantly some Arab countries among them, had prevented 99% of the murderous missiles and drones from getting through in their attempt to cause mass destruction in Israel.

As of those 48 hours my Jewish Heroes are changing. I now know the name Daniel Gold, whose work enabled us to develop our extraordinary defence systems. (I am aware that both of his parents were Hungarian Jews, survivors of the Nazi Holocaust.)

This is a time to celebrate the scientists of Israel, the pilots of the Israeli Air Force, the soldiers, men and women, who did what was needed to do to keep us all safe. This is a time to say thank you to the high school physics and chemistry teachers in Israel, woefully underpaid, like all the



Daniel Gold

teachers in Israel. Thank you to the Technion, the Weizmann Institute, the universities of Israel.

When Isaac Bashevis Singer received the Nobel Prize for Literature — well deserved — there was a line in his acceptance speech where he mentions that this is also an award to the Yiddish language which he mentions has no words for “weapons, ammunition, military exercises, war tactics”.

Thankfully, In Hebrew there is. We have

כפת ברזל, קלע דוד וחץ!!!

(Kippat Barzel, Kelah David and Chetz!!!)

VOICE OF OUR YOUTH



Building my Jewish identity in numerous ways

In working with the youth in my Jewish community, it became clear quite quickly that I wanted to be a teacher in my professional life. I am passionate about education and am determined to use that passion to make a difference in the lives of the students I teach and will teach in the future. English and History have always been my favourite subjects and, to be able to teach them in the future, will be an absolute dream.

I took a gap year in 2022 and did Shnat Netzer, mostly in Israel. The year involved another person and me being thrown in with 13 other Netzeriks from Australia. We spent three months in Jerusalem doing a programme called Machon, in which there were informal classes on everything to do with Judaism, Israel, spirituality, current affairs — and everything in between. There were people from all over the world from all the different youth movements.

From there we moved to the Negev where we volunteered at a youth village called Nitzana. We worked on the farm and in the school. It was my experience of the school that made it clear to me that I want to be a teacher.

In the middle of my gap year, we all went to different Union for Reform Judaism youth camps across the United States and worked there for around two months.

Back in Israel we volunteered at Kibbutz Harduf in the garden and learned what it

means to be part of a Kvutzah. We had classes in Hebrew, Arabic, drama, and coexistence.

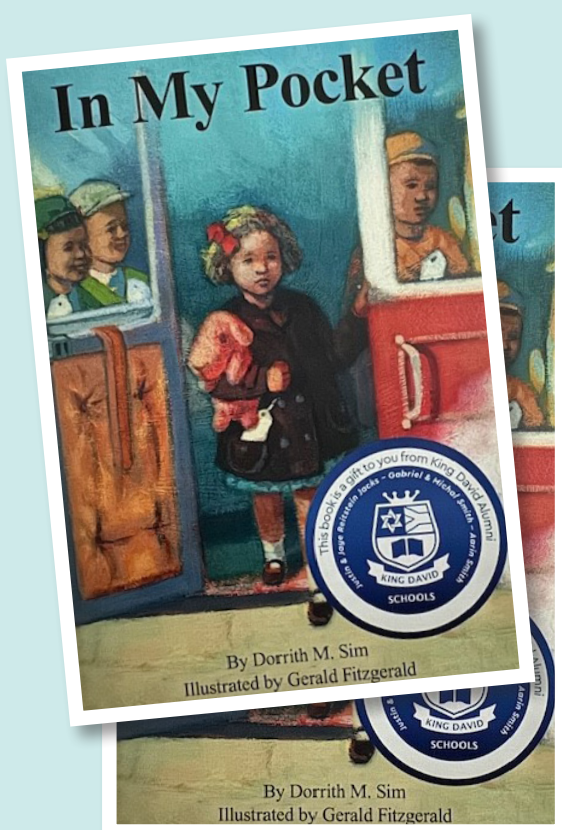
Shnat was an experience that showed me how important youth movements are to our Jewish community. During the year, I learnt more about myself and why I align myself so strongly with Netzer and the Progressive community. Our group of 15 became a family and I made strong friendships that I know I will have for the rest of my life. Through hagshamah, the actualisation of our ideology, my passion for the youth movement space and the impact it has on the Jewish youth was reignited because of the connection I made, places I saw and the experiences I had. It inspired me to come back and work with Netzer to make sure that the youth movement experience is one that all can share and love.

Being in a youth movement space is vitally important because it creates a safe space for our Judaism to be celebrated without it having to be explained or justified. It is a safe space to explore identities and opinions, question and converse and, most of all, to be uniquely ourselves, while making the best friends in the whole world.

My Jewish identity is arguably one of my biggest and most important ones. My Judaism has allowed me to understand the world in a unique way and experience religion in a way that I have had the ability to make my own.

My name is DANIELLA BESWICK. For the most part I go by Dani and I'm going to be writing for the Cape Jewish Chronicle's Voice of the Youth Column. I am so excited to be writing this column and can't wait to share my opinions and feelings about the world!

I live with my mom, dad, brother and our numerous pets. I am a 2nd year university student, studying English Literature and History at UCT — although I do like to joke that my studies are merely a side hustle. I am a Progressive Jew, who grew up at Temple Israel and Netzer. Now, I teach at the Temple Israel's cheder, as well as do private Bnei Mitzvah tutoring and am the Mazkira, or director, of Netzer, the Progressive Jewish youth movement. Needless to say, I am a busy bee and honestly love it that way.



IN MY POCKET project expands to other schools

When teaching children about the Holocaust, personal stories go a long way towards creating an understanding of this horrific period in our history. This is certainly true as regards The Diary of Anne Frank, one of the most popular books of all time. It's a book that resonates with young people particularly well since they are able to identify with the character whose experiences are told in the book because she is of similar age.

Another book that tells of the experiences of a child from her own perspective is In My Pocket. The book is by Dorrith M Sim, who relates her experiences as a Kindertransport child. As reported in the September 2023 issue of the

Cape Jewish Chronicle, the book is being brought to children in Cape Town by former Capetonians, Eli and Jill Rabinowitz.

After an initial project with Herzlia Primary Schools — which will continue this year — the initiative is also being launched at the Sinai Academy and Phyllis Jowell School as a focus for this year's Yom Hashoah commemoration. The cloth pockets used for the art project — a core element of the initiative — will be supplied by Astra Jewish Sheltered Employment in a special collaboration among the various organisations. Funding for the project is provided by the Rabinowitz's WE ARE HERE! Foundation.

Swimming to SUCCESS

By EDITOR

When moving to a new area or a different city, it's a good idea to join a local group with an interest similar to one's own. That's been the experience of Sharon Hammar, who moved to the Atlantic Seaboard a few years ago. "The experience of moving to a new area and meeting new friends through an activity is so important," she says.

When Sharon moved to this part of Cape Town, she was encouraged by long-distance swimming legend, Eddy Cassar — a friend from years beforehand — to become involved in swimming. She explains that Eddy and many new swimming contacts welcomed her into their swimming world.

"I started swimming regularly at the Pavilion, and then moved on to Clifton and Camps Bay. The network of swimmers I now know well nurtured me to do longer open water swims, and they taught me so much about this type of swimming, which has many challenges you won't find in a swimming pool," she explains. One needs to learn, for instance, how to swim over seaweed, and how to cope with cold water and sea life. An added positive experience is the camaraderie among the group of swimmers she is now regularly engaging with.

Sharon's swimming ability grew from strength to strength — and a few months ago she was invited by Eddy Cassar to do the Robben Island swim, a swimmer's dream and the symbol of significant achievement as a swimmer. Sharon and another Cape Town Jewish swimmer, Nadine Pincus, took up the challenge. For Nadine, who has completed a variety of long distance open water swims, this would be her 3rd successful Robben Island event within the past five years.

"Eddy suggested the swim as part of his 70th birthday celebrations," Sharon explains. Nadine had already planned on participating in the swim in celebration of the milestone birthday. For Sharon, the event created an opportunity to highlight the plight of the hostages held captive in Gaza since October 7th, and so she dedicated the swim to these victims of terror. This focus proved to be a valuable motivator for Sharon during the swim. As she says, "I was aware that I had exercised free choice in doing the swim, but the hostages weren't given that sort of choice: they had been abused and traumatically removed from their beds, their families, their homes. I continuously prayed and prayed for their release. This spurred me on."

Prior to the swim, Sharon and Nadine undertook a great deal of training, building up their swimming distances. This involved significant

commitment and a great deal of time, but the effort paid off when all three swimmers successfully completed the Robben Island swim on 15 March.

Sharon explains that, "We had to wait for the right environment — both suitable water and weather conditions — so we were on standby from the beginning of March. The day that we got the go ahead from Big Bay Events seemed perfect, and we were hopeful that the water wouldn't be too cold. It was a fair temperature when we started out, but it got colder and colder as the swim progressed. I found it uncomfortably cold — even though I was wearing a wetsuit and I worried about Nadine and Eddy who were without wetsuits. I have the utmost respect for Nadine and Eddy who are the true legends of this swim as it was an enormous challenge for them to have the inner strength to complete the swim in such cold water conditions."

Nadine explains that, "Long distance swimming of this sort is often more about the mental strength than the physical. As skins swimmers (swimmers who don't wear wetsuits), we are always affected by the temperature of the water — even by a point of a degree — and the longer we're in the water the colder we become. During this swim the temperature was particularly cold for a longer swim, so it was very challenging. The cold water conditions carry the risk of hypothermia, and the support crew had to monitor all the swimmers throughout the swim."

The actual process involves being taken across the bay to Robben Island in a rubber duck boat. The swimmers swim from the Island back to the shore of Cape Town, a distance of 7.4km. The swimmers, in fact, ended up swimming an additional kilometre because of the impact of the current on the day.

Sharon is hugely thankful for having had the opportunity to realise a childhood dream. "It's wonderful that I could finally do the Robben Island swim, even at the age of 69!" she concludes.



Swimming towards Blouberg from Robben Island



Welcoming group for Sharon



Sharon, Eddy and Nadine the next day



Sharon coming out of the sea on Blouberg Beach after 3hr 27min

STARTING OUT AS A LONG DISTANCE SWIMMER: Advice from Nadine Pincus

- Build up fitness through regular distance swimming
- Vary the distances so that you learn to cope with longer distances
- Swim in the ocean so that your body becomes acclimatised to the cold water

Some groups you could join:

- Hotchocolate - Sundays at 09h00 at Camps Bay (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sundayhotchoc/>)
- 360ne open water swim (<https://www.the360neswim.co.za/>)
- K8 swimming coaches (<https://www.k8coaching.co.za/>)

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