

# ★ JEWISH CAPE CHRONICLE

VOLUME 40 No 7

AUGUST 2024

Digital Edition

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## NEW MURALS BRING VIBRANT ART TO THE PROMENADE

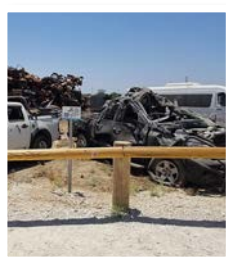


An artist at work on the Sea Point Promenade (Photo credit: Jonx Pillemer)

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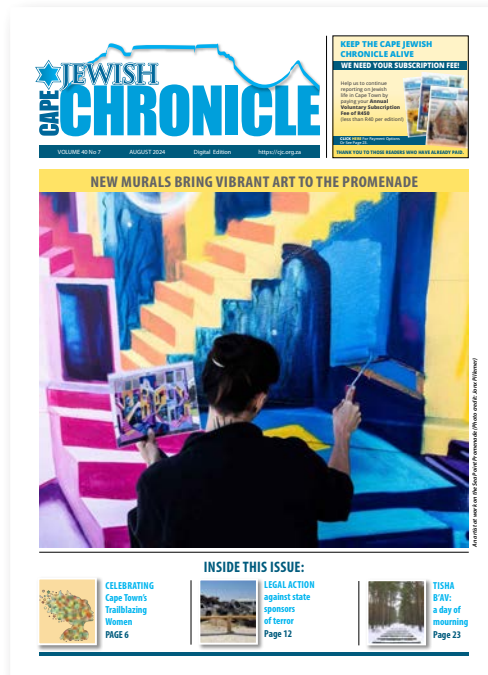
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Standard Bank –  
 Branch: Thibault Square;  
 Branch code: 020 909;  
 Account no: 070 703 493;  
 Account name: The Cape Jewish  
 Chronicle Trust; Account type: Current  
 SWIFT code: SBZAZAJJ

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# Bonny's Beat



## Identity

For most of us, our identity is fairly clear and uncomplicated: I'm a South African Jew.

But there are others who have an uncomfortable or complex relationship with their identity. I recently read two books authored by children of German and Austrian Jewish refugees who escaped Europe in the late 1930s to England and the USA. And these people's identities are not clear-cut.

Ironically, despite the Nazi era in these countries – the discrimination and violence perpetrated against Jewish citizens, the loss of jobs and businesses, the theft of the families' assets, the fear – the victims themselves and subsequent generations still demonstrate fondness for their original home country. They still speak the German language; still play the music of German composers and read German/Austrian literature; and still exhibit the typical character traits of those countries, like punctuality.

This situation creates an ambiguity in one's identity. One of the writers explains that – although he was born in England after the War and educated there, and despite becoming very much an English middle class person following the Christian faith – he didn't quite fit in as being English. He talks about being English when he stepped out of the family home but being decidedly German the minute he stepped back in. And this duality of identity has not been comfortable for him – who is he really?

Although I grew up with one Lithuanian-born parent, I did not experience that sort of ambiguity in my identity. Lithuania seemed to belong to other generations, but certainly not to mine. There

was no sign of Lithuanian culture in our household: no traditional food eaten; no harkening after Lithuanian culture. If anything, my feeling towards Lithuania was one of hatred because my father suffered so much at the hands of his Lithuanian compatriots both before and after the outbreak of War.

I wonder if the difference relates to the level of assimilation into the wider society. In Germany and Austria, Jews were fully integrated into society; and held leading positions in the professions, industry and even government. Their Jewishness ran second to their German or Austrian identity. The same was not true of the Jews of Lithuania, who were, I think, always the 'outsiders'.

Now that I've pondered over this question, allow me to draw your attention to what we focus on in this month's issue of the Chronicle.

You'll see that we share information about some leading women from Cape Town – in recognition of Women's Day this month. We also highlight the strength of the Israeli women whose children have been taken hostage. And, as regards special days, you'll also read about activities for Mandela Day. There's lots more too!

We hope you enjoyed receiving the additional print copy of The Cape Jewish Chronicle last month. You asked for more print copies, and we listened. But producing a print edition costs us a great deal, so please make sure you contribute to our costs by paying your subscription fee – or donating however much you can afford.



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## SHABBAT TIMES

DATE	PORTION	CANDLE LIGHTING		
		earliest	latest	ends
2 August	27 Tammuz	17:03	17:50	
3 August	28 Tammuz	Matos Masei		18:44
9 August	5 Av	17:07	17:55	
10 August	6 Av	Devarim, Chazon		18:48
16 August	12 Av	17:10	18:00	
17 August	13 Av	Vaeschanan, Nachamu		18:53
23 August	19 Av	17:14	18:05	
24 August	20 Av	Eikev		18:58
30 August	26 Av	17:17	18:09	
31 August	27 Av	Re'eh		19:02



# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS AUGUST 2024

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	EVENT	DATE	FOR MORE INFO
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	International Conference: Building Resilience Through Holocaust and Genocide Education	4-9 August	021 462 5553
ORT Jet Cape Town	Master Change Leadership with Ashley Hurwitz: Workshop 1 of a 2-part workshop	8 August	ortjectcapetown.org.za
SAZF Cape Council	Film Club: The Fifth Heaven	11 August, 18h00	RSVP: sazfevents@ctjc.co.za 021 464 6714
ORT Jet Cape Town	Mentorship Programme Introduction Workshop	12 August	nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
Temple Israel	Tisha B'Av	12 August, 19h00	executive-director@templeisrael.co.za
Limmud Cape Town	Limmud conference	17 (after Shabbat) & 18 August	<a href="https://bit.ly/LimmudCT2024">https://bit.ly/LimmudCT2024</a>
ORT Jet Cape Town	Business Networking with entrepreneur in spotlight Caryn Querido	21 August	nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Webinar: A discussion with Agnieszka Dobkiewicz, the author of the book, Post-Jewish: An Uncomfortable Memory on the extent of Jewish roots in Polish identity.	21 August	021 462 5553
Herzlia	Herzlia High School: In the Spotlight, a musical cabaret	21 & 22 August	
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Creative projects awards	25 August	021 462 5553
ORT Jet Cape Town	Goal Setting with Intention with Ashley Hurwitz: Workshop 2 of a 2-part workshop	29 August	<a href="https://qkt.io/NzhJJK">https://qkt.io/NzhJJK</a>



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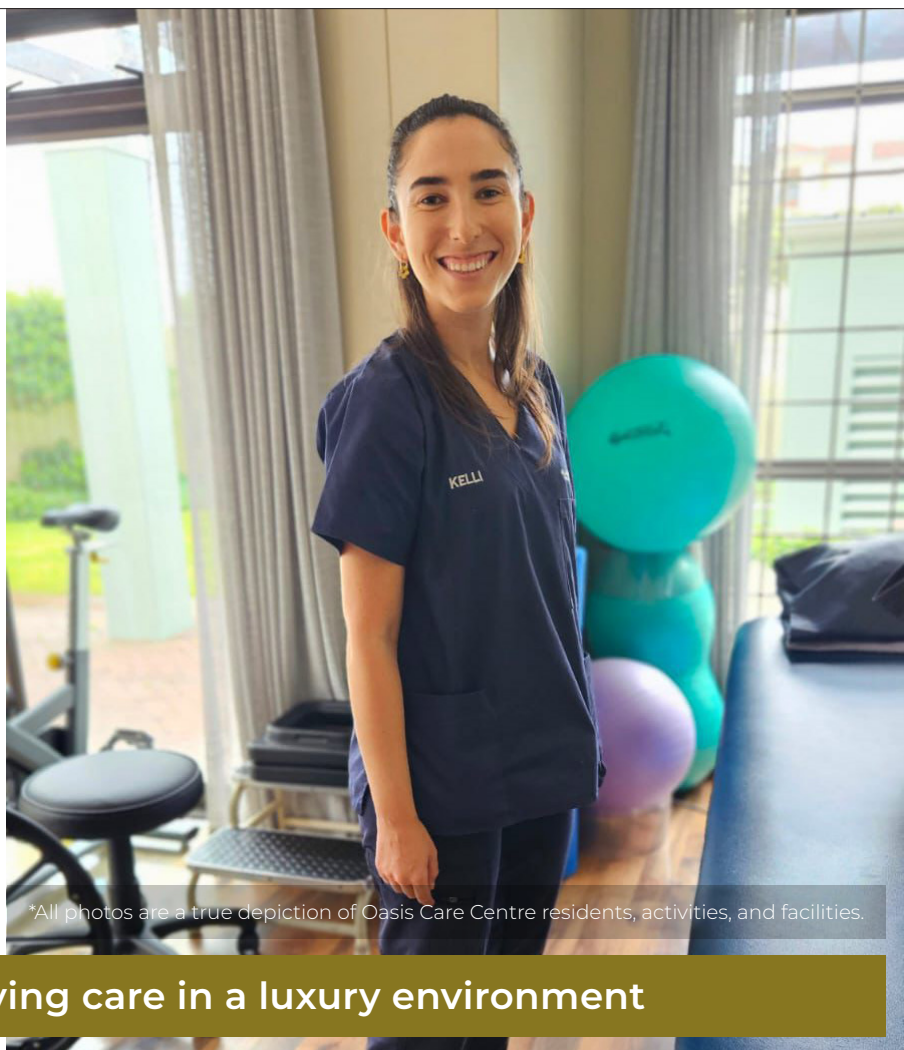
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# CELEBRATING CAPE TOWN'S TRAILBLAZING Women



*In celebration of Women's Day this August, we are highlighting some of the women from our community who have been trailblazers in their fields, both past and present.*

*There are, of course, many other women who've made their mark in significant ways, and we will continue to focus on their stories in future editions of the publication.*

## Leora Hessen



A businesswoman in Cape Town, Leora co-founded Artjamming South Africa. She has also taken on a leading role in the use of the Metaverse, being named as one of the Top 5 women in Africa in the field of Web3. She founded the African NFT Art Collective, geared to assist African artists to establish themselves in the Metaverse. Leora is also involved in various Jewish communal initiatives in Cape Town, and was named as one of 50 changemakers in the country by the Changemakers Hub.

## Rolene Miller



Rolene Miller founded MOSAIC Training Services and Healing Centre for Women in 1993 as an NGO response to violence against women, domestic violence, sexual violence and lack of access to sexual reproductive health rights services and rights education. It was the first organisation in the Western Cape to start working with domestic violence complainants directly at the Courts in 1999. Recognition for Rolene's role in the support of victims of gender-based violence was given by Parliament in 2017. She has written *Womandla! Women Power! The "Herstory" of Mosaic*, which tells the story of the organisation.

## Golda Selzer



An academic and pathologist at Groote Schuur Hospital, Golda Selzer co-founded SHAWCO in 1943. In the field of medicine, she was a significant researcher in paralytic polio. Dr Selzer was the first person to grow the Rubella virus from an aborted foetus from a mother who had been infected with Rubella. This was a key link in understanding the genesis of congenital cardiac defects associated with children born from mothers infected with this virus.

## Dame Mavis Becker



Mavis Becker, also known in professional dancing circles as Marina Lorca, is recognised as the doyenne of Spanish dance in South Africa. In addition to performing, she also served for many years as a teacher of Spanish Dance at the University of Cape Town Dance Department. She was recognised for her contribution to Spanish culture and the arts, being named a Dame of the Spanish Court.

## Pippa Ehrlich



Winner of an Oscar (an Academy Award) in 2021, Pippa Ehrlich wrote and co-directed the brilliant documentary film, *My Octopus Teacher*, which was aired on Netflix in 2020. The movie documents the building of a relationship between an octopus living in the sea in False Bay, Cape Town, and a human being, filmmaker Craig Foster.

### Gia Whitehead



The CEO of TSIBA Business School, Gia is a founder of this novel higher education institute, which this year celebrates the 20th year since its establishment in 2004, and brought in the first students in 2005. TSIBA is a social enterprise organisation comprising a Business School, Ignition Academy and Education Trust that work together to educate and prepare competent business executives and successful small business enterprises. Students who would probably be otherwise unable to acquire post-matric education because of financial or academic barriers are fully-funded in their TSIBA studies. Last year, Gia’s success was recognised in the Absa Jewish Achievers Award, when she was awarded the Europcar Women in Leadership Award.

### Feodora Clouts



Known for standing up for the right of women in the Jewish community to be treated equally to men, Feodora Clouts was a Jewish communal worker, Zionist activist and educationalist. She was behind the establishment of the first nursery schools for Jewish children in Cape Town in the 1920s, and became a leader of the local Bnoth Zion organisation. In 1932, she co-founded the Union of Jewish Women’s Cape Town branch. In addition to serving within the Jewish community, Feodora also contributed to the wider community through her work in education. She was also known for her opposition to apartheid measures introduced in the 1950s and 1960s.

### Helen Lieberman



Experiencing a life-changing moment in 1963 when she was first exposed to what life was like in Cape Town’s apartheid-era townships, a young Helen Lieberman established leading NGO Ikamva Labantu. Working with the women she met in the townships, she engaged with the communities to improve the conditions under which they lived. She has received numerous accolades in recognition of her passion for those less privileged, including the highest honour that the French state grants to a citizen of another country, Officier de la Légion d’Honneur (National Order of the Legion of Honour).

### Hannah-Reeve Sanders



Hannah-Reeve Sanders stands out as a female leader of Groote Schuur Hospital at a time when it was rare for women to hold positions at that level. During the worst apartheid years, she fought for equal access and treatment for all, advocating for initiatives that advanced black participation in the medical and health sciences professions. She is remembered for her strong belief in fairness and compassion.

### Roza van Gelderen and Hilda Purwitsky



Roza van Gelderen and Hilda Purwitsky, a devoted same-sex couple, represent the ‘New Woman’ of the 1920s, enjoying new freedoms of education, career, and lifestyle. World travellers, collectors, patrons of the arts, journalists, and teachers in Cape Town, they dedicated themselves to helping Eastern European immigrant children to adapt to their new lives. (Source: Jewish Women’s Archive).

### Leah Levin



An older sister of Dr Hannah-Reeve Sanders, Leah Levin grew up in Piketberg. She moved to the United Kingdom as a younger woman, and became a significant defender of human rights, although she had no particular education in the field. Among her significant achievements was her work to free the ‘Birmingham Six’, who

had been convicted for a deadly bombing, but who had been subject to abuse by the police. She also authored an important book on human rights, Human Rights: Questions and Answers, that was published by the United Nations. Recognised for her services to society, she was awarded an OBE in 2001.



## CONNECT, COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY

By DANIEL BLOCH

### BLOWING HOT AND COLD!



For two weeks in June/July, my family and I celebrated my nephew's bar mitzvah in Israel. What an incredibly moving experience – and the first time since my own wedding that our entire immediate Bloch family was together. Aside from the spiritual and religious connection at the Kotel, the amazing local cuisine and the stunning sites, the hot sweltering summer heat was exhausting, humid and muggy (not for my wife but more for me). And then we came home to a cold Cape winter chill with heavy rains, flooding and icy winds. My body was certainly blowing hot and cold, and the chance of catching a cold is almost a certainty.

Google defines 'hot and cold' as alternating between two opposite states, being enthusiastic or interested one moment and uninterested the next. Just like the weather in Tel Aviv and Cape Town, going from one extreme to the next, so has the political, social and economic landscape in South Africa.

Pre-May 29th, we had a failing economy, a poor performing leadership structure, no clear vision, high rates of antisemitism, high unemployment – and more. Now whilst several of these issues will not be rectified or solved in the immediate future, we have seen some glimpses of hope.

Our currency did recover ever so slightly post the elections and then again with the announcement of the Government of National Unity. The ZAR recovery however, did nothing to soften the blow when buying a cup of coffee and a pastry in Tel Aviv – at 40 Shekels (R200), each sip of coffee burnt a hole in my wallet! There have also been mixed feelings from political parties and members of the public with regards to our

President's cabinet announcements. One notable change was the appointment of Ronald Lamola, our previous Minister of Justice, to the department of International Relations and Cooperation. Whilst we are all glad to see the back of Naledi Pandor, Minister Lamola will need to prove himself and show South Africans that our foreign policy is more than just Palestine.

I attended Minister Lamola's first official briefing on Thursday, 11 July, and it was quite positive hearing what the department will be focusing on in the near future. Whilst the Minister confirmed that South Africa will continue with its ICJ case, Israel was not the centre of discussion and only took up a few minutes of the entire two-hour session. And, Minister Lamola was not donning any Palestinian clothing – although one person in the crowd wore a keffiyeh. Hopefully this means that our government will focus its attention on helping the citizens of South Africa.

The anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric also blows hot and cold. Whilst the general rhetoric in government has come to a standstill and perhaps the weather may be to

thank for the cessation of protests, we have seen UCT implementing an academic boycott against Israel – something which we know will not be taken lying down, and our partners and I will engage further with UCT on this matter. This is not simply a Jewish issue but a much larger problem which will affect all students and academics.

On social media, things are also up and down with some of the usual suspects continuing to hurl their verbal abuse against Israel whilst others have perhaps taken a holiday break and will resurface soon.

We have all experienced high levels of angst, fear and hurt over the past few months; however, things seem to be calming down slightly. We know this is not the end. As Israel continues to defend itself from Hamas and as the State continues to find a way to rescue the hostages, the war will continue and with it the anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric too. However, the Cape SAJBD will also continue to fight against the haters and protect our Jewish way of life at home.

## 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.**



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CAPE TOWN





# ARTS & CULTURE

## New murals bring vibrant art to the Sea Point Promenade

By SHANI JUDES of SJ Artists

The Sea Point Promenade has been transformed with the addition of three stunning new murals, curated by South African public art director Shani Judes. These murals, located on the Milton Road ablution blocks, showcase the talents of artists Yay Abe, Hakopike, and Mika Revell, each bringing a unique and thought-provoking vision to this well-known community space.

Shani, founder of SJ Artists, an

agency dedicated to supporting and managing mural artists and large-scale art projects, earned a certificate of recognition from the City of Cape Town for her contributions to public art over the past decade. (Click here to see our article about this in the February edition of the Chronicle.) "I'm passionate about bringing ocean conservation-themed public art to Cape Town," she explains, highlighting the fact that two of the

three murals are themed around the ocean and sea creatures.

"Illustrator Russell Abrahams of Yay Abe has created Ocean Daze, which captures a vibrant day at the beach," Shani says. "The illustrative composition of the peeking sun, Table Mountain, ocean waves, raindrops and cute plants is interspersed with hidden faces, inviting viewers to discover and connect with the details. The mural is a delightful exploration of nature and human presence." He challenges us to view the mural and see whether we can identify all seven faces in it.

Coastal Lullabies by Hakopike, crafted by local artist Amy-Leigh Braaf, illuminates the beauty found in the realms of nature, dreams, and the captivating ocean life of South Africa. A majestic whale is centred on the canvas, surrounded by a tapestry of seals, jellyfish, octopus, coral, and seaweed. As the animals gaze towards the horizon, they are captured in a world of vast beauty, bearing witness to the mystery of the ocean. We see the connection between humanity and the ocean, inviting introspection on shared experiences, preservation and the enchanting harmony between humans and the natural world.

With a focus on the architecture of traditional Bo-Kaap houses and Cape Dutch thatch roofs, American artist Mike Revell's Impossible City, the third mural, prompts viewers to question the future of their city, challenging conventional notions of home and community.

"These murals serve not only to provide beauty to a prominent public space, but are also geared to prompt the viewer to give some thought to the world around us," Shani says.



Blok CEO, Jacques van Emden

*Shani acknowledges the important contribution of property developer Blok, whose financial contribution has been crucial for the development of this public art. So, too, the trust in her initiatives shown by the City of Cape Town.*

*According to Blok CEO, Jacques van Emden, "We believe in creating homes that connect residents not just to their living spaces but to their broader neighbourhood and community. These murals create new points of interest along the Promenade, highlighting themes of ocean conservation and natural beauty – cultivating environmental awareness."*



The artist showing off her work (Photo credit: Jonx Pillemer)



An attractive side wall. (Photo credit: Jonx Pillemer)



Shani Judes (right) with one of the artists (Photo credit: Jonx Pillemer)

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**Kim Faclier**



**Brian Gradner**

## NORTH KENSINGTON GATE

London’s reputation for capital preservation and stable returns in the residential property market remains unassailable, despite global uncertainties. As a result, it remains a top choice for property investors seeking steady income and long-term investment and capital growth.

Says **Dr Andrew Golding**, chief executive of the Pam Golding Property group: “This is underpinned by the fact that London’s population is growing at an exponential rate, with over a third of the city’s 3.7 million households renting accommodation. Coupled with this, London’s appeal to the younger generation continues to grow, with an estimated annual inward migration of 80 000 in coming years, amplifying rental demand.”

“On the back of this demand for accommodation, City & Docklands Property Group, which has over the past 25 years set the benchmark for delivering high-quality property investments in London, has brought to market **North Kensington Gate**. This mixed-use development is set within the latest regeneration district in West London – **the Old Oak and Park Royal development area** - with a GBP26 billion investment which will transform into a

vibrant 650ha neighbourhood providing a total of 25 500 homes and 65 000 jobs over the next 25 years, with forecasts showing the area will see an almost 30% increase in house prices in the five years to the end of 2028.”

**Chris Immelman**, Head of Pam Golding International, advises that, worldwide, developments in regeneration areas have long been regarded as the sweet spot for investors, with early adopters enjoying above average capital growth, together with strong income potential. CEO of City & Docklands, South African-born **Gary Sacks**, has successfully completed 18 developments across London, including the highly successful Canary Central development at Canary Wharf in the Docklands regeneration project. Says Sacks: “With their experience and success in bringing London developments to the South African market, it was a logical decision to appoint Pam Golding International to market NKG.”

Less than a nine-minute walk from NKG will be the most technologically advanced rail network and transport hub in the UK. Due to open in 2029, **Old Oak Common** will be comparable only to London Waterloo, with commuters within approximately 10 minutes of major stations, with high-speed rail services linking to central

For further information contact Brian Gradner and Kim Faclier | email [london@pamgolding.co.za](mailto:london@pamgolding.co.za)



## VOICE OF OUR YOUTH

# “What does it remember like?”

By BRAD GOTTSCHALK



*Brad moved to Cape Town after living in Israel on the Habonim Shnat programme. He serves on the Habonim Machaneh VP (the Steering Committee) and is an active community participant, volunteering for SAUJS and Limmud. Majoring in Psychology, English and History at UCT, his interests include Israeli culture, politics, history, and cultural Jewish practice.*

There is a lovely quote from Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* – “Jews have six senses: Touch, taste, sight, smell, hearing... memory. While Gentiles experience and process the world through the traditional senses and use memory only as a second-order means of interpreting events, for Jews memory is no less primary than the prick of a pin, or its silver glimmer, or the taste of the blood it pulls from the finger. The Jew is pricked by a pin and remembers other pins... When a Jew encounters a pin, he asks: ‘What does it remember like?’”

Upon first reading, I fell in love with Foer's novel, which he wrote in Prague. So, visiting the city with the 2024 Habonim Grade 10 Shorashim group felt like a bit of a literary pilgrimage. There we were: a group of South African Jews sitting in the Altneuschul, famed for the legend of its stones brought by angels from the Second Temple's ruin. Translated to ‘Old-New’ Synagogue, this ancient Shul has nothing to do with Herzl's Altneuland, nor any Old Shul in Prague. Rather, the Hebrew name על תנאי (al tnay), which means ‘on condition’, was confused with the Yiddish ‘alt-nay,’ or old-new. The Shul was built with Temple stone ‘on condition’ that they be returned with the coming of Moshiach.

*“Every Jewish site in Europe seems to share idiosyncratic legend met with the empty reality of Jewish decimation”.*

Every Jewish site in Europe seems to share idiosyncratic legend met with the empty reality of Jewish decimation. These sites, like this Altneuschul (also fabled to hold the remains of the Golem), really are ‘Old’ meeting ‘New’. There are no locals who pray at this oldest operating Shul in the world. Rather, different tunes to the same prayers fumble throughout the Gothic structure. A new generation comes to pray in this old site, all on their way backpacking or business-ing through Prague.

The most striking detail in the Altneuschul was not the twin-nave design but the eyes of hostages depicted in its history, a reality far removed from the Shtetl dwellers of the past. This is the Jewish experience: a prick of memory and the erratic colours of our tapestried history. Our story is in constant conversation with itself, from Maimonides to Marx. What better place to face our new history than an eclectic Shul built with Temple stone?

Being a young Jew in 2024 is not easy. We face increased isolation from social media, existential dread from global warming, and our peoplehood is weaponised in culture wars. Nothing in 2024 is certain, and the rules of stability and progress we have known all our lives have been upended.

The leadership crisis makes navigating these difficult times harder. It is time for Jewish leaders like Netanyahu to set aside personal interests and take responsibility for forging a positive path forward. Although we seem far from it, I am hopeful for a bright future. We are fortunate to have strong communal structures in South Africa. Habonim offers an escape from the anti-social outside world into one of life-changing education and genuine connections. Our little bubble of paradise in Onrus is a testament to this. Building our future leaders is essential, lest we forget the lesson of ‘What does it remember like?’



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## LEGAL MATTERS

# Legal action against state sponsors of terror

By EDITOR



*Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, Founder of Shurat Ha Din*

In the last few weeks, announcements have been made about the launching of legal action against a number of countries that have been identified for providing support to Hamas for its murderous attacks in Israel on October 7th. This is a significant move in the use of the law to act against governments who sponsor acts of terror against innocent civilians.

The American Defamation League (ADL) has launched a case on behalf of direct victims of the October 7th attacks who are/were American citizens, or US family members of victims. The action is being taken against Iran – the single biggest state sponsor of terror anywhere in the world – and Syria and North Korea “for providing material support that directly contributed to the 10/7 massacre,” explained the ADL’s CEO Jonathan Greenblatt during an announcement in early July. Evidence shows that the support provided was extensive: of a material, tactical and financial nature.

Greenblatt explained that the purpose of the action is to get justice for the victims and compensation for the families of the victims of the terror attacks, which were of a nature never seen before. The compensation would come from an American state fund, the Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund. The action is taken on behalf of over 100 American citizens affected by the events of October 7th.

Of interest is that, in terms of the American Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, foreign governments cannot generally be the target

of actions in American courts. However, the lawyers involved are using an exception to this Act: where terrorist activities have been sponsored by particular countries, the courts may allow civil damages actions against these foreign governments. The selection of the three countries for this action is owing to them being classified under American law as designated state sponsors of terrorism.

Greenblatt points out that the lawsuit is a means of countering the denialism seen around the world since the events of October 2023. It will ensure that the horror of the attacks is recorded in history, and that there will be official evidence of the brutality of the actions of Hamas.

Other legal action will be taken by Shurat Ha Din (Israel Law Centre), an Israeli organisation founded by lawyer Nitsana Darshan-Leitner. This dynamic woman, who has previously secured the freezing of millions of US Dollars geared for the funding of terror, and has won \$3 billion in judgements for terror victims, explained the context of the legal action during a Jewish Report webinar called ‘Lawfare & Warfare: Bringing Justice for the Victims’ that many of our readers may have listened to.

Her actions are also based on the exception to the American Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. She explained that the US Congress confirmed the exception to the Act where a country’s actions reflect behaviour not in line with that of a sovereign state. This allows for an American citizen killed or injured

abroad to sue for civil damages arising from state-sponsored terrorism.

Shurat Ha Din identifies a wide range of defendants, not only states who facilitate acts of terror. The organisation is going after charities that raise funds purportedly for the Palestinian people but whose funds are ultimately used by Hamas to purchase weapons, build its city of underground tunnels, and so on. It has also launched legal action against cryptocurrency firms that allowed for Hamas to avoid the limitations imposed on them as regards receiving Dollars – this was also in the context of donations supposedly meant to assist the Palestinian people.

In explaining these cases, it was indicated that it does not matter whether or not the defendant countries appear in court. The legal action will need to prove that a country like Iran was behind the deeds committed by organisations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah; and it will need to prove the damages incurred. The court can issue a judgement based on this and, once a judgement is granted, the legal process can enforce the payment of the damages through seizing assets of the country in the United States, such as buildings and bank accounts. The proceeds of these assets will be used to provide some compensation to the terror victims.

Darshan-Leitner explained that many of the plaintiffs choose to participate because they want to see money taken away from these states so that there is less available to them to commit other acts of terror.

These types of cases can take many years to conclude so it is not an easy process for the plaintiffs, who are also dealing with the emotional trauma of the loss of a loved one in a brutal manner. But, it is certainly a powerful route to take.



*Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the ADL  
Photo credit – Gage Skidmore*



*Damaged terrorist vehicles used in October 7th attack*

**NOTE:**  
The information used in this article comes from two webinars. No local legal expert has been involved in these cases, and so it has not been possible to verify the accuracy of the information.



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# Cape Town's Connection to Israel

ADVOCATE EDUCATE CELEBRATE

## THE LIONESSES OF JUDAH A tribute to the mothers of Israel, who are turning the world upside down for the love of their children

By MANDY ALLEN

“Romi, my Romi. We miss you terribly, but we are strong. Don't lose hope. We are turning the world upside down to bring you back... Stay strong, it's almost over... Romi, we love you. My loved one... I love you, my beautiful daughter.”

We all have scenes seared into our souls from October 7th and its ongoing aftermath. For me, one that visits every night is that of Meirav Leshem Gonen speaking these words to her daughter, Romi Gonen (23), in the hopes that she would hear them, that they would offer her comfort. It is January. A platform and loudspeakers have been erected along the Gaza border. There are scores of people. They are there to mark 100 days – a lifetime ago – since their relatives were kidnapped from Israel into Gaza by Hamas. They call out to the stolen children of Israel – our stolen children – that they are loved, they are missed, they are being fought for. It is agonising to watch, but we have a duty to bear witness.

And there stands Meirav. One hundred days since her beautiful, vibrant Romi, terrified, made a final call to her mother from the Nova music festival.

“Mommy, I don't know what to do.”  
“Romi, I'm with you, sweetie.  
“You are not alone. “Romi. I'm here. Everything is going to be okay.”

Up on the platform, her posture is composed. She looks at once shattered and impregnable. I think to myself, how? How has she not collapsed? Despite the agony in her voice – at times it sounds like a lamentation – Meirav calls out to her daughter with a sense of purpose, assurance and a strength so fierce it is visceral. She is roaring her name. “Romi. Romi. My Romi.” This woman, I think to myself, is a lioness. The archetypal mother. One who will fight tooth and claw for her children despite being battered and bloodied, exhausted and overwhelmed. A lioness of Judah.

There are many heroes that emerged on the 7th of October

and since then. But it is the Israeli mothers that I think of most often, that we pay tribute to here. These women, who knew the heartbeats of their children inside them, who held them to their chests and in those moments saw a road ahead, hopeful for how their lives might unfold. Never imagining – who ever could? – that the path would take such a dark and devastating turn. The mothers of the soldiers of the IDF – those fallen and those in battle. The mothers who lost their sons and daughters on the 7th of October. And the mothers of the hostages. In a painful state of limbo, no end in sight.

And yet here they are. Still taking care of their families. Tirelessly advocating. Protesting. Lobbying. Every day, fighting tooth and claw for the return of their children. Meirav Leshem Gonen, mother of Romi. Rachel Goldberg-Polin, mother of Hirsch. Ayelet Levy Shachar, mother of Naama. Shiri Albag, mother of Liri. Orly Gilboa, mother of Daniela. Meirav Berger, mother of Agam... Some women whose names are familiar, others not. But all mothers, all members of a group that no one wants to belong to. Their love invincible, their resilience limitless. Lionesses, all of them.

It was said of the Israelites, “Behold, a people that rises up as a lioness...”. This concept of *eshet chayil*, a woman of valour, is a touchstone in Judaism. The strength of Jewish women, of mothers, demonstrated throughout the ages. Ezekiel, in the second part of the Tanakh, speaks of the mother as protector: “What was your mother? A lioness among lions.” The mother of the kings of Judah, too, compared to a lioness.

Most poignantly for me, this chapter in Jewish history brings to mind Rachel; the quintessential mother, who would sacrifice herself for her children throughout the ages, until the end of time. “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping: Rachel is weeping for her children and refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are

away. And G-d will answer her: Restrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work will be rewarded, and they will return from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future... That your children will return to their own borders.” May the lionesses of Judah know peace soon, so that they may lay down from the fight and their weeping will be no more.



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# Cape Town's Connection to Israel

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## Bnei CT takes on the cold

By JESSICA CONNÉ



Everyone!

**B**nei Akiva Cape Town's annual Winter Camp was a fun and exciting time! The theme of this year's Winter Camp was Bechol Nafshecha which translates to 'With all our soul'. We all put our heart and soul into this Winter Camp and made some incredible memories. We went bowling; had soccer, gaga ball and frisbee tournaments; watched movies;

had colour wars; played Capture the Flag; and had an unforgettably minty shtik.

Sunday tochnit madness has continued as usual with mini golf championships, games nights and some toasty movie nights. We are, as always, thrilled about the rest of the year's exciting events.

Kadimah Bnei Akiva!

## Habo summer, having a blast!

By MAX MENDELOW



*Habo chanichim and madrichim at lake Balaton, Hungary*

**S**chools may have been on break but Habo was in full swing. We started the holidays by welcoming our Chanichim to our annual winter camp. Colour wars, blind cook offs, bubble soccer and magic shows. Truly there was no place to rather be, well... except for Budapest.

Habonim madrichim embarked on an international expedition to bring Habo magic overseas. Camp Hallelujah was filled with Jewish

chaverim hailing from Belarus, Romania, Hungary and Israel. All looking to learn leadership skills and experience one another's cultures. No one brings culture like we South Africans! Our Shorashim Cohort joined Camp Hallelujah on the first stop of their Europe tour, seeing: Budapest, Prague, Vienna and Berlin.

So, what did you do on Semester Break?

## Diller's unforgettable summer seminar in Spain

By EYTAN LABE



*Diller Teen Fellows Cape Town Cohort 9 visiting Alhambra*

**T**his July, Diller Fellows from 15 communities worldwide – including America, Israel, Canada, South Africa and Australia – gathered in Córdoba, Spain, for an incredible 10-day experience.

The group bonded through fun activities, exploring Spain's rich culture, participating in meaningful workshops, and sharing our personal stories. Highlights included touring historic sites like the Mezquita and the Alhambra, and celebrating

Shabbat together, which deepened our connections and created lasting memories.

The seminar provided a unique opportunity to learn from one another's diverse experiences, especially after the challenging year, and build a global network of young Jewish leaders. From engaging discussions to unforgettable cultural experiences, we couldn't have asked for a more enriching and inspiring time together.

## Netzer winter kefi!

By HANNAH J



*Channichim walking in Kirstenbosch Gardens*

**W**e had many adventures and much excitement with both our younger and older kids this winter.

We started off with our day camps held from 17 to 21 June. The kids had a great time, as did the madrichimot. From braiding challot to visiting Kirstenbosch Gardens and catching the Red Bus, it was truly an exciting, adventurous week.

In the early days of July, we held our Winter Machaneh for our older kids, where we held many research-based discussions on topics from Progressive Judaism to Reform Zionism.

We ended our week together with Love In A Bowl, making sandwiches for the homeless.



## HEALTH FOCUS

# Be prepared: it's almost allergy season

By DR SARAH KARABUS, Paediatric Allergologist



Dr Sarah Karabus

Allergic rhinitis (AR) can be seasonal or be present throughout the year. Seasonal AR is often called hay fever and is typically caused by pollens, and sometimes moulds, found in the air.

Allergy symptoms that present all year round, rather than seasonally, are often due to animals, dust mites, moulds and fungal spores. Here we focus on seasonal AR which in South Africa usually starts in August/September through to February/March.

Hay fever can start at any age but is more common in older children and adolescents. Under the age of two, the most common cause of blocked/runny nose and sneezing is a viral infection. Although rare, AR may occur in toddlers; it is usually caused by indoor allergens such as house dust mites or pet allergies, rather than seasonal pollen allergy. Children need to be exposed to a few pollen seasons before they become allergic to the pollen. Small babies who have only been exposed to one or two pollen seasons in their lives are very unlikely to develop pollen allergies.

The pollens that cause hay fever vary from season to season, as well as from geographic regions. In South Africa, our grass season is very long – from spring to early autumn – so this causes symptoms for many months. The pollen seasons in Europe and elsewhere are much shorter, so hay fever often lasts only a few weeks of the year. The pollens triggering hay fever in Cape Town are slightly different from those elsewhere in the country. With global warming on the rise resulting in longer flowering seasons for plants, pollen seasons seem to get longer and more severe every year.

Common grass pollens causing hay fever include ryegrass, Bermuda grass and kikuyu. Tree pollens include acacia, willow, oak, plane, poplar and cypress. Weed and flower pollens are less important in Cape Town, but are common triggers in Gauteng.

Hay fever is not usually caused by colourful, flowering plants because the pollen from these plants is too heavy to be airborne. In general, if you can see the pollen with your eyes, it is not the cause of your hay fever, as it is too big to be airborne.

An allergy test is not always necessary but can be useful to determine the true cause of the symptoms. Allergy tests are done either by skin-prick testing ('the scratch test') or a blood test. Allergy tests are safe and relatively accurate, even in small children and babies. It is a myth that children have to be over a certain age to be tested.

Your GP or paediatrician will be able to diagnose and treat most cases of hay fever, but referral to an allergy specialist may be useful for difficult-to-manage cases.

### Treatment of Allergic Rhinitis

Appropriate treatment is important; untreated it may worsen asthma and cause dental problems, sinusitis and post-nasal drip. It affects sleep and can cause poor concentration, fatigue and irritability which may contribute to problems at school.

Treatment of hay fever includes avoiding known triggers by staying indoors on hot windy days when pollen levels peak, driving with windows closed, and avoiding freshly-cut grass. Change your child's pollen-covered clothing after they come in from school or playing outside. Pollen can collect on your washing on the line so, if possible, dry the allergic child's linen inside. Second-hand smoke from cigarettes or fires, chemicals/fragrances and other air pollutants can also make hay fever worse.

It is impossible to avoid pollen completely and so using over-the-counter saline sprays are imperative to rinse the allergens out of the nose and eyes multiple times a day during pollen season.

If medication is required, medicated nasal sprays and antihistamines are the most effective treatments.

An allergy specialist may recommend allergy immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy involves giving a gradually increasing amount of the allergen until the patient becomes tolerant, or desensitised, to the allergen. This takes about three years to complete but the benefit is that it can reduce allergy symptoms on a long-term basis.

### When to start the treatment

If you already know that your child has hay fever, start using the nasal spray a few weeks PRIOR to the start of pollen season. This will help minimise symptoms by protecting and preparing the membrane of the nose and sinuses by the start of pollen season. It takes a few days/weeks for nasal sprays to work optimally so, starting only once pollen season has begun, will not be as effective, and it will take much longer to see a response.

It is best to use the sprays daily during pollen season, and not as-needed. The way in which the nozzle of the nasal spray is positioned is

important to maximise the response, so ask your doctor to show you the correct technique. (Aim slightly backwards, not upwards, and tilted away from the nasal septum, towards the outer corner of the eye on the same side.)

### Hay fever or a cold?

Both hay fever and a cold start with a blocked nose. To differentiate between the two, note that, while a cold takes 10-14 days to clear, allergies last longer. Also, an allergy won't show by way of fever or discoloured mucus – as with a cold.

With an allergy, sneezing and itching of the throat, palate and ears are common symptoms. Children often wiggle their noses (like a rabbit!), and push up the tip of the nose (called 'the allergic salute'). The nose is runny with profuse, clear, thin mucus and the eyes may also become itchy, red and watery.

Paediatrician and Paediatric Allergologist, Dr Sarah Karabus, practices in the Chest & Allergy Centre at Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital in Cape Town. A graduate of the University of Cape Town Medical School, Sarah specialised in paediatrics with a further subspecialist fellowship in allergology at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital

*"If you already know that your child has hay fever, start using the nasal spray a few weeks PRIOR to the start of pollen season."*

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## CONSIDER THIS

# The invisibles on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean

By RABBI GUERSHON KWASNIEWSKI, Temple Israel, Cape Town



**W**hat are the major problems facing humanity today? Climate change, terrorism, poverty and war.

I come from Brazil, a country with more similarities to South Africa than many imagine.

The Atlantic Ocean bathes our coasts. Brazil was the last country in Latin America to officially abolish slavery – in 1888. It is estimated that between the 16th and 19th centuries, more than three million slaves arrived in the country from Africa to work on sugar plantations, coffee plantations and gold mines.

Brazilian society in the 21st century is an unequal society, and black people have fewer opportunities, earn the lowest wages and some live in extreme poverty. The coloured population throughout history was relegated from public office and often mistreated.

Brazil and South Africa are large countries, rich in natural resources,

but both have a large percentage of the population living below the poverty line. This is where the invisible emerge: those who exist but we do not want to see; those who do not have a roof over their heads; who beg at traffic lights; who rummage through garbage; who assault others to survive; who take drugs or drink to endure the cold of the harsh winters.

Recently we had floods in my city and 200 people died, and many are still missing today. A great wave of solidarity arose spontaneously – from one hour to the next the invisible became visible. Assistance centres were set up, with mattresses, pillows, hot showers, meals served, and

clothes donated – and for the first time many people were protected by a roof, and received food three times a day. They were given medicines and doctors and nurses were available to take care of them. The tragedy made them visible, and the entire society ended up practising the principles of Tikkun Olam – correction of the world – and Gemilut Hasadim – acts of loving kindness.

Our Jewish values and the fulfilment of mitzvot make us keep in mind the neediest in society throughout the year. The Mandela Day activities with Temple Israel are an example of our community responsibility, a day in which the invisibles become visible.

## Pride Shabbat



Dee Moore (right) with Pride Shabbat guest speaker Arlen Leight (left)



Congregants enjoying Pride Shabbat

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Bingo master Alan Watson and President Diana Sochen



Jamie Hansen, Daniella Beswick, Lyle Minnaar and Hannah Jantjies with their bingo winnings

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## ENTREPRENEURS' HOTSPOT

# Transitioning from employment to entrepreneurship

## Attorney Marlon Shevelew shares his story

By EDITOR



and be responsible only to myself. The other is that I was very keen to specialise in a field of law that the firm I had been with didn't give me the opportunity to do: rental property law."

19 years later, Marlon Shevelew and Associates Inc. is a leading firm in the rental property law field, with Marlon often being called on by members of the media to assist with queries relating to rental issues from the public. Today, his firm has grown to six lawyers, three legal consultants and two administrative support staff.

Marlon was realistic about what moving into his own business would mean – most importantly as regards making the public aware of his firm and what services he offers. "I understood how important networking is to get a business off the ground," he explains. "So, I joined various business networking groups; used social media to post on LinkedIn and Facebook; and I contacted numerous people from the law profession whom I had met in my previous work life. All these steps helped to bring the clients in, and get my business off the ground."

In addition, through developing a niched legal focus in rental property law, which was, he says, "a very understated and neglected area of property law", he was able to approach other people and businesses. He explains that, "I knew that, if a person has a property that they let, they have money to afford legal assistance for the various problems that landlords invariably encounter, such as disputes with tenants, the need for properly drafted lease agreements, non-payments by tenants, and so on." Armed with this information, he then approached property agencies to offer his services to the landlords they represent, software companies in the property management technology space, and credit bureaus who list defaulting tenants.

Having established a name for himself in the industry, Marlon subsequently identified gaps in the services available in the rental property market. And that put him on a path to develop disruptive legal services. This has resulted in three new services:

### THE RENTAL RETAINER CLUB

This allows rental agents and landlords to sign up to receive rental law advisory services for a small monthly fee. In addition to advice provided for particular scenarios, members receive a monthly newsletter that provides information about recent cases relevant to landlords, as well as a Question and Answer section, providing practical advice for landlords and agents.

### RENTDOC

Landlords often have to send Letters of Demand to non-paying tenants. This can be a costly exercise, so Rentdoc is an online service that provides for the automated generation of a Letter of Demand for a landlord or an agent directly onto a Marlon Shevelew and Associates Inc letterhead. The only cost incurred is R60 +VAT plus postage.

For the law firm, the big positive is the revenue that follows. As Marlon comments, "When the person has used the Rentdoc portal for the Letter, there's a strong chance they will consult our law firm for the next steps, such as debt collection and eviction."

### RENTLAW

Marlon has partnered with a listed insurance company and a reputable insurance broker to market an insurance policy to cover the costs of eviction and of amounts owing by a non-paying tenant. This type of policy is not a new concept but marketing is notoriously difficult as the low premium for the policy and the even lower commission for brokers to promote this is negated by the marketing budget needed. With his extensive database, Marlon is able to do this far more productively and is able to zone in on those agencies and landlords who need this incredible product.

The firm is on the panel that does the eviction work, and the bill for the legal work then goes to the insurance company, rather than to the landlord.

All in all, Marlon's transition from employee to being his own boss has been hugely successful. And he is constantly innovating and addressing new opportunities so there's plenty yet to come from him!

Self-employment is not an easy thing – but it can be extremely rewarding. That has been the experience of local attorney, Marlon Shevelew, who gave the lowdown on his personal entrepreneurial journey at a recent ORT Jet Cape Town Business Networking event.

Marlon makes the point that one may be in a comfort zone while working as an employee – and that's absolutely fine. There isn't necessarily a reason to give up a secure job and go off on your own, unless you have a burning passion to be your own boss.

And his own story proves the point. It was just a few months after becoming a partner in an established and solid law firm in Cape Town in 2005 when Marlon took the plunge and started his own firm. "Two strong passions guided me into this," he explains. "One was that I really wanted to be my own boss. I wanted to move away from being responsible to other people,



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# Normalcy is only skin deep

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.*

I am in Tel Aviv right now, in Sarona, a few paces from Kaplan Street. The once anonymous Kaplan Street is now synonymous with protests. Once upon a time – seems like decades ago – against the attempts by our government to implement major judicial changes. Now, Kaplan is the street where many of us gather to demand the release of our hostages each week.

Normalcy is only skin deep. In a few minutes I will be walking through Hostage Square trying to keep it together and pretending that, on some level, life goes on. How am I doing that? By going to a play at the Cameri Theatre. (I am now post-theatre and I have to admit that, during most of the play, I felt terribly uncomfortable knowing that just a few yards from the theatre relatives of the hostages are sitting together, desperately waiting for an answer, a glimmer of hope).

Normalcy is only skin deep. But, life does go on. Next week I fly to visit my son, daughter-in-law and four of my grandchildren in Birmingham, Alabama where they are doing fellowships at UAB Children's Hospital. A normal thing for a grandparent to do, especially if, like me, you miss the little ones so much.

But, as with everything else over here right now, normalcy is only skin deep.

Instead of spending time only with them and with friends from the local community, I have four teaching gigs while I am in the States. Three connected to the JCC movement – that wonderful network of Jewish Community Centers which are to be found almost anywhere there are a handful of Jews – and one in a large Methodist Church in Mountain Brook, right outside Birmingham.

Normalcy is only skin deep.

Besides the usual items in my suitcase – you know, basic toiletries and clothing – I pack light. There will be a few additional items in keeping with the times we are living in. I am taking a Yahrzeit candle with me so that, when I speak in the church, the community will be aware that we are all in mourning in Israel. Mourning for both those murdered in cold blood by the waves of terrorists on October 7th, and for the soldiers who have fallen subsequently in this battle for our survival we are in the midst of, both in Gaza, and on our border with Lebanon.

Then there are the yellow flags, pins and wristbands from the activists who keep the hostages in all our minds. They will be placed on a few chairs. I will ask people not to sit on them as a reminder that some of our people are missing, being held captive by brutes.

And I am taking texts with me. Specifically for my teaching session at the Methodist church, copies of that wonderful poem by Israeli poet Yehudah Amichai, "The Jews". (A short excerpt for you to enjoy:

*The Jews are not a historical people and not even an archaeological people, the Jews*

*are a geological people with rifts and collapses and strata and fiery lava.*

*Their history must be measured*

*on a different scale.*

*The Jews are buffed by suffering and polished by torments*

*like pebbles on the seashore.*

*The Jews are only distinguished in their death*

*as pebbles among other stones:*

*when the mighty hand flings them,*

*they skip two times or three,*

*on the surface of the water before they drown.)*

Normalcy is only skin deep.

There is one last item in my luggage. A painting I fell in love with. A beautifully delicately rendered, small painting, small enough to fit into the one carry-on I am taking with me. A family of four is just visible in the painting. It is as if this family, two larger adult figures and two very young children, are in hiding, or possibly being hidden. Tal Kaminer, the wonderful artist, as delicate as her paintings, did not necessarily have the Bibas family (Shiri, Yarden, little Ariel and baby Kfir) in mind when she created it but, for us Israelis, always aware of this nightmare scenario, a young family ripped out of their normalcy and now probably below the surface in a literal way, underground, hopefully all alive, a painting such as this, surfaces all our pain.

There is nothing normal about how I packed for this journey, nothing at all.

*"... as with everything else over here right now, normalcy is only skin deep."*



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# TISHA B'AV: a day of mourning



Treblinka rail tracks

During August, we commemorate a number of tragic days in our history. Tisha B'Av, a fast day that falls on 12-13 August (the 9th day of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar), is most commonly known as a day of mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. The dates of these events are 586 BCE and 70 CE.

Other days of catastrophe for Jews around the world that occurred on

this date are below:

- The refusal by G-d to allow the Jews to enter the Promised Land after the Exodus
- The ending of the revolt led by Bar Kochba in 135 CE, which brought to a close the resistance of the Jews to the Romans
- The first date when Jews were expelled from Spain at the start of the Spanish Inquisition in 1492

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# JCS@WORK

## Children Presenting with School Refusal

**Renee Donneson**  
Senior Social Worker

Jewish Community Services (JCS) is a designated Child Protection Organisation and, as such, we intervene on all matters referred to us involving minor children. The below article will focus on children experiencing School Refusal.

### What is School Refusal?

School Refusal occurs when a child is too anxious or fearful to go to school, and all attempts by the parents to facilitate are unsuccessful.

### What are the Signs and Symptoms of School Refusal?

A child, depending on their specific age, level of maturity and developmental stage, may present with School Refusal and anxiety as follows:

- Be physically unwell before school, such as experiencing headaches, stomach aches or nausea.
- Display tantrum-type behavior or intense emotional outbursts.
- Refusing to leave home in the morning, often leading to prolonged and distressing morning routines.
- Become extremely argumentative and aggressive when school attendance is discussed or enforced.

### Causes of School Refusal

There are a multitude of reasons why a child's anxiety may be heightened to such a degree that they refuse to go to school. These can include, amongst others:

- Problems and conflict with peers, such as difficulties in friendships, social isolation or interpersonal conflicts.
- A child being bullied at school which can severely impact their sense of safety and well-being.
- The inability to manage academically and socially at school, leading to feelings of incompetence or embarrassment.
- Problems at home within the family

*“Jewish Community Services is a designated Child Protection Organisation and, as such, we intervene on all matters referred to us involving minor children.”*

system, such as parental conflict, divorce or financial stress.

- Mental health conditions, which could include depression, separation or anxiety disorders.
- Physical conditions that make attending school uncomfortable or challenging.

### Some Strategies for Managing School Refusal

- Open communication: Encourage your child to express their fears and anxieties openly. Validate their feelings and avoid dismissing their concerns.
- Consistent routines: Establish and maintain consistent morning and bedtime routines to provide a sense of stability and predictability.

- Collaboration with school: Work closely with teachers, counsellors and school administrators to develop a specific and individualised plan that addresses the child's specific needs and concerns.
- Therapeutic interventions: Engage in therapies that focus on the management of anxiety and coping skills.

Jewish Community Services believes that it is essential for a parent to seek help and involve services to support both the parent and child respectively.

If you would like any further information or have any questions relating to this article, please contact Jewish Community Services on 021 462 5520 or email [info@jcs.org.za](mailto:info@jcs.org.za)



Courtney Kirkland - www.unsplash.com

**#JewishCommunity #JCS #SocialWork #SchoolRefusal**







# A MENSCH POINT OF VIEW

Making the most of your non profit board  
by Rebecca Youngerman



**THE MENSCH ACADEMY**  
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## Three ways to make the most of your nonprofit board

*Consultant and leadership coach Rebecca Youngerman partners with nonprofits, philanthropies and businesses that wish to make bold change through their organisational culture. She has built and managed multiple international nonprofit boards. She is an international member of Mensch's social change learning curriculum, The Mensch Academy.*

Over the many years I have spent staffing, consulting to and serving on nonprofit boards, I have noticed that organisations do not regularly invest enough time, care and intentionality to shape healthy and productive board cultures, nor to shape roles that enable lay leaders to work productively, efficiently and joyfully. Crucial is clarity in what is expected of each board member, and everyone should understand the culture that represents the living values of the organisation.

### THREE TIPS FOR STRENGTHENING BOARD LEADERSHIP:

#### 1 Be clear about where you want to go and who can help you get there

As you determine the direction you want to lead the organisation in, consider the existing alignment between your strategic priorities, resources, desire for growth, and your organisation's appetite for change. The board will be more clearly positioned to make decisions through universally understood goals and criteria when they are on the same page.

#### 2 Assemble the right people

Effective board leadership requires a commitment to both the work that drives the mission and to the people who make it happen. Having the right team in place positions the organisation for more meaningful work, greater impact and growth, and a more joyful experience.

When considering recruiting new board members, consider both the skills and expertise currently represented, and identify any gaps. Does your board draw on the expertise of leaders with diverse knowledge, lived experiences and identities, who together can help the organisation solve challenges in new ways? Identify people who will make your organisation one of their top three philanthropic commitments, who can give in different ways of their time and talent.

Communicate the expectations of board members, and take time to develop and nourish your board's sense of trust and their identity as a team. You may want to jump right into the work, but slowing down to

understand the strengths of your board members will give your team the ability to work together more successfully, especially as moments of uncertainty and challenge arise.

#### 3 Focus on committees

Committees are where much of the work of an organisation actually happens, and they allow for the identification of rising leaders. Having fewer committees with the right scope allows board members to focus on the organisation's highest priorities, positioning them to contribute meaningfully. Committees such as finance, governance and nominating also allow the board to serve the organisation at a more strategic level, giving the staff space to run programmes and focus on the day-to-day work required.

When you recruit the community's best leaders to your board, don't take their abilities and intelligence for granted. Create the time to set them up with intention, and channel their talent in a way that means the most to your organisation's mission and success.

Our board members are often the smartest and most successful community leaders with experience in navigating complex challenges across sectors and globally. They are the leaders so needed at a time defined by both crisis and possibility.

But we do not always set up these volunteer leaders to take full advantage of their skills and talent.

## MANDELA DAY Community PROJECT

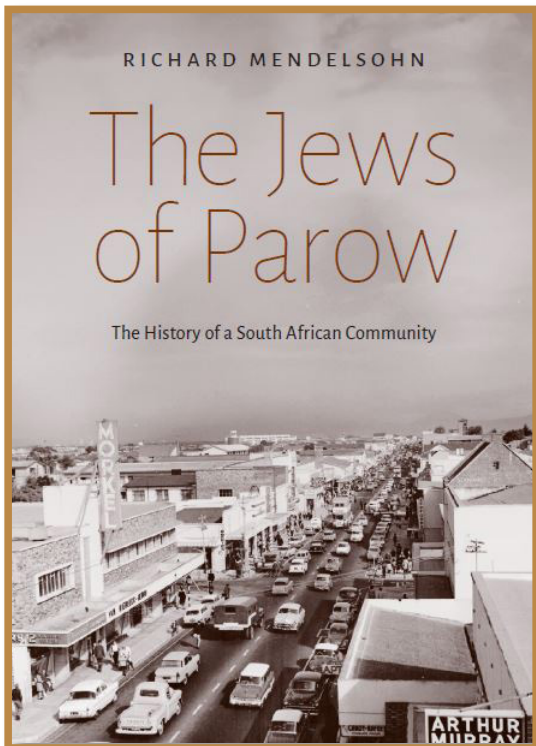


**WE PREPPED 6750 MEALS FOR 750 KIDS**

For the Mensch 7th Mandela Day Community Project, 85 volunteers prepped, chopped and packed food to make 6 750 meals to feed 750 children at 15 educare centres in Hout Bay. Organised together with beneficiary partner 'Love in a Bowl' and with sponsorship from the Cape SAJBD – a high impact day of service was enjoyed by all.



# RICHARD MENDELSON'S The Jews of Parow The History of a South African Community



The rise and demise of the Jewish community of Parow over the course of the 20th century represents a microcosm of the South African Jewish experience. Never numbering more than a few hundred people at its height, this small community in an unfashionable suburb of Cape Town embodies a story that reflects South African Jewish life at large in all its richness and complexity.

This lively, richly illustrated history traces the history of this small, vibrant and enterprising Jewish community in the Cape Town suburb of Parow since its foundation after the Boer War. Professor Richard Mendelsohn has drawn on over sixty interviews and a rich vein of documentary records to explore the social, professional and business lives of the Jews of Parow; their religious and recreational lives, caught in

an uneven contest between prayer and play; their cautious relations with a conservative, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking host society; the place of Jewish women in a patriarchal order; and the ties, including those of Zionism, ethnic solidarity and kinship, that bound the community closely together.

The book is a work of collective biography. It tells many individual and family stories, including those of the founding matriarchs in the early twentieth century, who were forced by unhappy circumstances to raise their children on their own; the entrepreneurs, some of very humble origin, who built major industries; the shopkeepers, large and small, and their close relations with their diverse customers; the doctors, lawyers and pharmacists who once dominated Parow's professional life; and, above all, Parow Jewry's remarkable and controversial rabbi, who served

the community for three and a half decades despite repeated efforts to oust him.

The book will officially be launched in mid-September. Alongside the publication, a unique, immersive exhibition, "Echoes of Parow, a South African Jewish Story", which draws on the book for inspiration, will open at the South African Jewish Museum. The exhibition will be on display from mid-September for six months. The book can be purchased from the museum shop.

Richard Mendelsohn is a retired former head of the Department of Historical Studies of the University of Cape Town and Deputy Dean of the University's Faculty of Humanities. As Richard grew up in Parow in the 1950s and 1960s, its Jewish heyday, the social history of its Jewish community is a project that is both professional and personal.

## Tikkun Olam – Mandela Day activities

Helping to make a difference in the lives of some impoverished Capetonians, pupils of Herzlia Weizmann Primary School collected a variety of items – empty jars, used yoghurt containers and Ziplock bags; as well as packets of instant soup, stock cubes, rice and lentils – to pack a healthy mix of ingredients for warm soup. The 273 packages of soup mix will be donated to a number of schools serving impoverished communities.



**SOUP RECIPE**  
**for the soup mix**

Place contents of jar into a large pot  
Add 4-5 jars of hot water  
Bring everything to the boil  
Once boiling, lower the heat  
Cook on a low heat for about 1 hour



## BE PART OF A CARING COMMUNITY

Life isn't easy for anyone at the moment. There are insurmountable problems throughout the world exacerbated by the fact that those who lead are not leading wisely with devastating effects worldwide.

So many people battle on their own and do not have the necessary support to lighten the load, but they may need assistance with daily decisions or needs. Our CJSA team has the opportunity to interact daily with everyone who comes to our centre, and the team is able to forge relationships and assist in numerous ways. Whether chatting at one of our centres or while enjoying outings, each person has the opportunity to be heard. Our caring team regularly reaches out to meet those who feel the need for home visits, individually in the privacy of their homes or privately at the centre for confidential conversations. A listening ear and assistance is given professionally without any bias or judgement.

Our weekly programme is planned with care and much thought. I am always amazed that, although we live in the same city and many members from each centre know one another, the likes, dislikes and needs differ considerably for each branch, and are taken into account when doing the planning.

Two recent incidents stand out for me. I don't often have the opportunity to hear comments from members as to what they enjoy or want. I visited Milnerton with Karen Borochowitz, a CJSA Board member and recently appointed Central

Care Services Manager of the Care Services Board. Members were just ending a morning's activity. It was so heartwarming and validating that we are on the right path to hear the group talk about how supported they are and how appreciative they feel.

The second incident took place in Sea Point during an afternoon activity when a very elderly, infirm, long-standing member arrived with her carer. There was nothing scheduled for her that afternoon and the planned activity for that time was really not suitable for her. What stood out for me was the fact that she was happy to be amongst people who love and care for her, just observing while feeling part of a community that cares, instead of being alone at home. This highlighted the importance of the service we provide – just being there for anyone who needs us.

We are currently moving forward together as the seven welfare agencies under the Care Services Board, and we will be offering new services which will make life so much easier for those ageing in place. We look forward to working as a united team with COO Hazel Levin and our colleagues at JCS.

Stay warm and healthy and join our programmes, both in-house and online weekly.

Diana Sochen  
Executive Director



Milnerton members enjoyed a morning at the Castle



Southern Suburbs members enjoying a morning of decoupage with Melanie Shirk



Art class in Sea Point



West Coast members enjoying a morning of exercises with Shireen Stokel



Knitter of a blanket for sale on auction – Debbie Epstein, on the right

### SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

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

**SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS:**  
Alec Cohen – 95 years

**BAR MITZVAH:**  
Michael and Gail Blumenthal – Grandson

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**  
Kerry Abromowitz, Adrienne Berkowitz, Toni Blackie, David Daitz, Susan Honour, Marlene Shirk

**Well wishes extended to those who have been under the weather. You have been in our thoughts:**  
Bernice Kaplan, Lilian Sheldon, Shirley Kaplan, Norma Mendelowitz, Hilda Wilck, Esther Mair, Carrie Clift



## ENTREPRENEURS' HOTSPOT

# Tips for networking



Michelle Shevelew

Local architect Michelle Shevelew of M2S Architects has been described as 'a networker par excellence' – a person who walks into a room and identifies the people she thinks could be of value to her and her business.

She ran an exercise at a recent networking function organised by ORT Jet Cape Town, during which

she shared some of her tips for getting the most out of an event.

Michelle always makes a point of arriving at a function early. "That gives me the opportunity to chat to other people over a cup of coffee," she explains. "One never knows whom one may meet when having an informal discussion like this. For instance, I've met people this way who need some building advice, and that way I've secured a new client."

Another piece of advice that she shares is to listen to what other people say when they are speaking or presenting, and to write something down from what they said that you found interesting, so that you have a point to pick up with the person in a later discussion. You can then steer the conversation around to let the person know more about what your business offers – that may lead to an enquiry from the person themselves or from one of their contacts.

This last point is an important one for Michelle. "Always think of the audience as not only the person you are talking to but as their contacts



Business networking

too. The individual in front of you may not need your service now – or ever, for that matter – but they may know other people who would

be interested in you. The initial conversation could potentially lead to new clients and so it's definitely worth the effort," she says.

**ORT Jet Cape Town provides networking opportunities and support for entrepreneurs, business owners and professionals. Contact [nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za](mailto:nicole@ortjetcapetown.org.za) to find out more.**



## BOOK TALK

# A hidden gem turns 65 Happy birthday to the Jacob Gitlin Library!

The only Jewish library on the African continent, the Jacob Gitlin Library, has grown enormously since it opened 65 years ago. Dedicated to the memory of a leading early 20th century Zionist in Cape Town, Jacob Gitlin, it continues to provide a much-needed service to Cape Town's Jewish community. "We have an extensive collection of fiction, non-fiction and reference books," says Library Director Jacqui Rodgers.

Although our local community has experienced dwindling numbers with immigration and an ageing demographic, use of the Library has grown considerably. In fact, a pamphlet from 20 years ago records that the number of people using the facility was approximately 2 000; today, there are 3 950 members, and the Library has seen an increase in the number of non-Jewish users and younger borrowers.

The first Jewish library in Cape Town opened in 1899, and it soon became popular among the newly arrived immigrants from Lithuania. Over the subsequent years, it became clear that a library with a focus on Jewish-themed books and with a strongly Zionist focus was a necessity. In 1959 the Western Province Zionist Council

decided to establish a library to serve the community in the region.

There was a great deal of support for the idea of naming the library in honour of Jacob Gitlin (1881-1953). The Library has moved from Zeeland House on the Foreshore to Leeuwen Street in downtown Cape Town and then to its present location in the Gardens Community Centre.

Numerous professional librarians have led the library over its 65 years: Yvonne

Verblun: 1972-1999; Dr Ute Ben Yosef: 2000-2010; Devis Iosifzon: 2010-2013; and Jacqueline (Jacqui) Rodgers: 2014-present. It is also staffed by other dedicated professionals and volunteers.

This amazing resource has a great deal to offer a varied audience. "The Jacob Gitlin Library is an amazing, vibrant space which offers endless opportunities. It connects the community to information, connects people

to literature and people to people.

It is a unique lending library open to all. We in Cape Town are privileged to have this cultural resource and I am privileged to be the Director," Jacqui concludes.



Staff of the Jacob Gitlin Library in the 1990s. L-R: Sarah Amato, Yvonne Verblun, Shirley Waldman, Helen Katz



Jacob Gitlin



## ARTS & CULTURE

### Documentary series tells the story of Jewish life in South Africa



Alan Swerdlow outside the Old Shul, Gardens Shul, Cape Town

Currently streaming on the American/Israeli streaming channel IZZY and on Amazon Prime Video (Africa), the documentary series 'Legends & Legacies' tells the story of the South African Jewish community.

The series consists of eight episodes, covering the arrival of Jews in the region; the involvement of Jews in the economy; the development of communal institutions; integration into civil society; engagement with the political realities in the country; academic and creative life; and a consideration of the potential future of South Africa's Jewish community.

Written and presented by South African Jewish theatre personality, Alan Swerdlow, the series "takes us on an entertaining journey through

the history of South African Jewish settlers, and the contributions they've made to our country. It creates an awareness of Jewish people and their involvement in the socio-economic and political development of South Africa," explains the producer of the documentary, Mark Wade.

Cape Town features prominently in the series, with scenes shot at the SA Jewish Museum, the Jacob Gitlin Library, the Gardens Shul, the Irma Stern Gallery, and other well-known spots in the city. In addition, there is an interview with Gwynne Robins, who has worked within the local Jewish community for many years.

**Find out more:  
CLICK HERE.**

### Music and poetry as a form of resistance to Nazi oppression

By EDITOR



Shmerke Kacerginski (left) and Abraham Sutzkever (right)



Zola Shuman, Dr Bret Werb, Aviva Pelham, Ivor Joffe

hopefully give a talk at our Holocaust Centre too!"

Both Sutzkever and Kacerginski became involved in the preservation of Yiddish and other Jewish cultural objects in the Vilna Ghetto during World War II. As part of 'The Paper Brigade', they smuggled rare books and manuscripts, saving them from destruction by the Nazis. As recorded by YIVO, "Theirs is an incredible story of cultural resistance in the face of almost certain death."

Kacerginski – the subject of extensive research by Dr Werb – wrote many songs during the War years, reflecting the harsh conditions of life in the Ghetto. "He understood the power of song to forge bonds of camaraderie, to lift spirits, to help cope with grief. And he had the talent to fashion such songs as the situation demanded," Dr Werb explains.

In addition, after surviving the War as a partisan fighter, he began collecting songs from other survivors – songs that not only testified to creativity during adversity but offered evidence of German crimes that many feared the world at large would not believe.

In 1948 Kacerginski published a book of the music, 'Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps'.

As for Sutzkever, he is regarded as probably the greatest Yiddish poet of the Holocaust. Together with others in 'The Paper Brigade' he hid a diary by Theodor Herzl and some of Marc Chagall's drawings in walls and concrete in the Vilna Ghetto.

Sutzkever escaped from the Ghetto in 1943, and also joined the partisans but made his way to Moscow. After the War, he emigrated to Palestine.

Sutzkever provided testimony at the Nuremberg Trials against Franz Murer, the Nazi overlord of Vilna, who was known as 'the Butcher of Vilnius'.

"Kacerginski and other collectors of Shoah songs realised the importance of documenting folkloric responses to the Nazi terror, the despairing and the mordantly humorous, as well as the heroic calls to resistance. In doing so they played a crucial role in preserving a Yiddish literary culture the Nazis had sought to destroy," Bret concludes.

Two important figures in the Yiddish cultural world were highlighted at recent events in the Cape Town Jewish community.

At the Yom Hashoah Vehagevurah commemoration in May, local Yiddish speaker, Dr Veronica Belling, read a poem by Abraham Sutzkever; and, more recently, visiting American Jewish ethnomusicologist, Dr Bret Werb, highlighted the music and Yiddish lyrics of Shmerke Kacerginski. Werb, Musicologist and Recorded Sound Curator at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, has produced several recordings of ghetto, camp, and resistance songs.

Thanks to local musician, Zola Shuman, Werb's extensive knowledge was shared with Capetonians. She explains, "Due to my Holocaust family music legacy, I correspond with Bret regularly and, when he told me that he would be coming to South Africa for an international music library and archives conference in Stellenbosch, I figured that, while here, he could



## ARTS & CULTURE

# South African Jewish musicians recognised internationally

By EDITOR



BREINDY AND MATT | MBUZENI

KOL ISHA

L-R: Matt (Matthew) Klawansky, Breindy Klawansky, Mbuzeni Mkhize

South African Jewish music band, Breindy and Matt, was recently inducted as a member of The Recording Academy, the organisation that runs the

GRAMMY Awards. This significant achievement is particularly encouraging since the songs Breindy Klawansky is recognised for are in Hebrew.

Breindy says that, “To my knowledge, I am the only South African to be inducted this year and I am touched and humbled that the Academy has recognised my music.”

Being included in the Academy is an important step in a musician’s career for a number of reasons. The acknowledgement of the quality of a musician’s work is significant since the Academy is behind “the most prestigious and significant awards in the music industry worldwide”, and provides exposure to a much wider audience. As Breindy explains, “This induction gives me networking opportunities especially in the global, Jewish and alternative music scene overseas.”

Although her music is largely Jewish in nature, Breindy has embarked on some interesting collaborative

initiatives, such as a single with Sama-nominated Maskandi artist Mbuzeni which is in Zulu and Hebrew. “Working with Mbuzeni was a really interesting experience,” Breindy says. “I loved composing my melodies to his Maskandi style of guitar and really felt humbled to be able to collaborate and partner with someone of his calibre.”

The band’s first single, ‘Lo Sira/ Ungasabi’ (which translates to ‘You shall not fear’, in Hebrew and Zulu respectively) is inspired by biblical texts from Psalms Chapter 91. The message conveyed in the song is that one should place one’s trust in G-d and not fear one’s enemies. The Zulu lyrics, while not identical, have a similar theme, focusing on working hard and not being intimidated by the forces that seek to stop one’s work.

To hear Breindy and Matt’s music, visit the band’s website – [www.breindyandmatt.com](http://www.breindyandmatt.com) – or search for ‘Breindy and Matt’ on itunes or Spotify. You can also listen to the single, Lo Sira, [CLICK HERE](#).



## GAME ON

# The call of the court

By EDITOR

“My dream is to drop out of school!” So says 12-year-old Rafael (Rafa) Palmer, an enthusiastic tennis player whose success on the court makes a professional tennis career very enticing. Which is why he’d consider quitting school – and rather going off to Roland-Garros and a Grand Slam title!

Rafa, who is at Herzlia Weizmann Primary School, recently made it into the Western Province under-13 tennis team. And, with 90% of his Western Province teammates speaking Afrikaans, Rafa expects a great improvement in his Afrikaans marks at school!

“My dad introduced me to the game,” Rafa explains, saying that he immediately fell in love with the sport. He’s since gone on to many impressive achievements, including winning two tournaments on one day, acquiring provincial colours,

and coming second in the Synergy Cup, a local event that pits an A team of eight players against a B team of eight players.

These achievements come on the tail of a great deal of hard work and practice. In addition to playing for his school, Rafa plays twice a week at Pinelands Tennis Club and three times a week with his coach and father in Fresnaye – and that adds up to many, many hours of practice every week. He also participates in water polo and swimming, and so his days are filled with sporting activities.

Rafa would love to have the chance to play against his idol, Carlos Alcaraz, the Spanish professional player who recently won his second Wimbledon Men’s title at the tender age of just 21. Go for it, Rafa! We’ll be rooting for you when you take on Alcaraz!





# SIMCHA SNAPS

## Wedding



Jason Mayo and Nicole Margolius were married in December 2023



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## Hip hopping to national success



L-R Eve Dorrington, Kayla Salkinder, Liv Dorrington

Three years into their hip hop dancing journey, twin sisters Eve and Liv Dorrington, and their friend, Kayla Salkinder, have brought home a gold award. Aged 11, the girls achieved a Gold Award in the 12 and Under age group at the recent South African Body of Dance (SABOD) National Championships. Representing their province, the Western Cape, in the World Trial

Circuit (WTC) Hip Hop Formation category, the girls achieved this success following their dancing collaboration from the age of four while they were all at Herzlia Kerem Pre-primary Constantia. Currently, they dance with TVZ Studios.

All the girls are in Grade 5 – Eve at Herzlia Highlands Primary School, and Kayla and Liv at Reddam House Constantia.

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