

# SAJAC REPORTER

2022

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# 2022 President's Message

by Pamela Nathan



Today was my day to write the president's message for our upcoming Reporter. As I was about to start writing, the phone rang. It was someone who needed help from SAJAC to find them a place to stay and possibly find job opportunities for both spouses. I had just put the phone down after discussing a plan of action for them when the phone rang again. This time it was someone looking for assistance for their elderly mom who needs help.

Then I opened my computer. There were a few new messages. The first one was to thank us for providing meals to someone who just recently had cancer surgery and needed our assistance. Below was a lovely email from someone not belonging to SAJAC to thank us for the beautiful presentation that was done for us. Michael Kretzmer, Grant Gochin, and Sylvia Foti exposed the untruths of the Lithuanian Holocaust. She wanted to know how she could help with this project.

So often, I ponder whether, 35 years later, SAJAC is still relevant. Well, my morning's experience provided me with my answer immediately .... absolutely yes!

There is great value in SAJAC's ability to provide a service to our community, especially as we are growing. We do have a challenging time keeping abreast of all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We are fortunate to have Kayli Amyer join our board this year. Kayli is young and enthusiastic and brings us a new and vital spirit. Within a few months, she organized a Purim party which was a great success.

And as a result of Kayli's influence, we have been asking our members to list their children separately from themselves in our Directory so that we can have them listed as part of our community. You may have noticed that several of our members have done so already, regardless of whether their families still live in San Diego. As we now have nationwide non-profit status, irrespective of whether the descendants are born in America, they still have a place with us because of their heritage. We encourage you to help us do that by sending in the details of your married kids and including the details of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A huge big thank you goes to all our volunteers who unconditionally help us year after year. Some have been around as long as I have. I am so grateful to them all as they continue to be available to our organization.

I also want to thank our advertisers who financially support our Directory & Reporter. You'll enjoy reading, once again, all the great articles we have to offer. This year, more than ever, many of the contributions seem to be "All About Our People."

Thank you always for your support of our organization. Without you, we could never have survived.

Shana Tova and may you have an easy fast. With love and gratitude

With love and gratitude,

Pamela

# EDITOR

by Avra Kassar



## Who is our Editor?

Avra Kassar has edited the SAJAC Reporter for the last three years. In 1977, Barry ז"ל, of blessed memory, Avra, Barak, Ami, and Yoni left Cape Town for Harrisburg, PA. Two years later, the LSU Eye Center recruited Barry, and they moved to New Orleans. Traveling the country to find a place to call home, Barry left academic medicine for private practice, and they arrived in La Jolla in 1981.

Avra was always involved in the Jewish community wherever she lived. The importance of Jewish Education was her passion. She was the Judaic Director at the Jewish Community Junior High School in La Jolla. After retiring, she became the Agency for Jewish Education President and remained on the AJE board for many years. Avra also created and published the BONA SERIES, an introduction to the Hebrew alphabet for lower grades. After selling nationally and internationally to schools for twenty-five years, Avra enabled schools to download BONA for free.

Avra and Barry, of blessed memory, met in preschool. She was three, and he was a year older. When Barry was twelve, he told Avra's cousin he would marry her! When Avra's family went on Aliyah in 1949, she said she left her boyfriend behind! It was bashert they moved back in 1951.

They were both very active in Habonim. After marrying in 1965, Barry completed his internship at Tel Hashomer, where Barak was born. Avra taught English to residents who were continuing their studies in the States. At the end of 1968, they returned to Cape Town, and Barry qualified as an Ophthalmologist.

After an 11-year courageous battle with colon cancer, Barry passed away in 2019. They had been married for 52 years and had known one another for 72 years! Avra had promised Barry that she would get on with her life when he was no longer by her side. Avra says: "It is not easy to learn to live alone without the love of my life. I will love and miss Barry forever but my memories of a fantastic marriage filled with love, friendship, respect, and also traveling the world help."

Avra says her friends and family keeping in touch has helped her move forward. Being close to her children and grandchildren didn't just happen. She and Barry believed in nurturing a strong family. Avra feels so blessed that they are all so close. Barak, Ami, Yoni, and their wives often visit, as do her grandchildren Arel, Sam, Dorian, Charlotte, Mila, and Judah. Avra has been to see the older ones at college and also travels to Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

### SAJAC REPORTER 2021

- CONTRIBUTORS**
- copy editor: Avra Kassar
  - reporter layout: Derek Berghaus
  - advertising director: Pamela Nathan
  - coordinator: Lee Leibenson

**SAJAC**  
WISHES  
EVERYBODY  
**SHANA TOVA**  
AND WELL  
OVER THE FAST



# AGM 2022

by Lee Leibenson



## **SAJAC's Annual General Meeting was held via Zoom on January 21st, 2022.**

Kayli Amyer, our newest board member, opened the meeting and welcomed those attending. She stated she intended to help grow the SAJAC organization by reaching out to younger people. Kyle then introduced the guest speaker, Bev Goldman, the national president of the Union of Jewish Women, South Africa.

Bev presented a fascinating talk on the history of South African Jewry - a History of the Past. She also highlighted "Legends & Legacies," which is an 8-part documentary television series that tells of the history and valuable contributions made by the South African Jewish Community. The makers of this series crossed the country, from small villages to major cities, where they covered little-known stories by interviewing community members from all walks of life. They found both joy and sadness as well as some remarkable achievements. The series was created and produced by Mark Wade and written and presented by Alan Swerdlow.

After the presentation, Pamela Nathan called the formal SAJAC AGM to order. Present were:

Pamela Nathan, Moira Berman, Lynn Dillon, Kyli Amyer, Lee Leibenson, Hillel Katzeff, Sandy Braff, Joel Ehrlich, Derek Berghaus and Dennis Davis.

### **2021 Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 minutes as presented.

### **Financial Report - 2020**

Lee Leibenson presented the financial report. She stated that our membership dues have been on a gradual downward slide because so many members who have become senior citizens now pay a reduced fee. Also, unfortunately, we have lost many members due to the passage of time. She suggested the board consider a \$100 patron membership that would be greatly appreciated. She added that SAJAC is

in an excellent financial position and will continue to be an asset to the community it serves. A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2020 financials as presented.

### **President's Report**

Pamela Nathan delivered the president's report. She highlighted the improvements to SAJAC's website maintenance and that having the directory online was a huge bonus. She also informed the audience about the upcoming medical symposiums.

### **Gemilut Chesed Report**

Sandy Braff delivered the Gemilut Chesed report and gave a brief financial overview.

### **Election of the 2022 Board**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the entire slate as presented:

**President** – Pamela Nathan

**Vice President** – Lynn Dillon

**Secretary** – Moira Berman

**Treasurer** – Lee Leibenson

**Friendship Committee** – Tanya Friedman

**Friendship Committee** – Michelle Abramowitz

**Friendship Committee** – Linda Robinson

**Welcome Wagon Committee** – Michelle Diamond and Jill Epstein

**Gemilut Chesed Committee** – Sandy Braff

**Reporter Committee** – Avra Kassar

**Members-at-Large** – Joel Ehrlich and Kayli Amyer

A raffle was held, and Dennis Davis was the lucky winner of a beautifully framed picture donated by Moira Berman.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

# L' Shana Tova

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is one of Judaism's holiest days. Meaning "head of the year" or "first of the year," the festival begins on the first day of Tishre.

BJA Partners wishes the entire Jewish community a L' Shana Tova.

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# Welcome

## newcomers



Judi Wolder.

We welcome Judi Wolder to San Diego. She emigrated from South Africa in 2008 and settled in Irvine with her husband and four children - One older boy Gideon, and girl triplets. She worked as a schoolteacher at King David in Linksfield, Johannesburg, and at the Temple Bat Yahm pre-school in Newport Beach. Judi then obtained her master's degree in Counseling Psychology. While doing her internship in 2013, her daughter, Liora, was diagnosed with rare cancer and underwent aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Liora has subsequently recovered and is eight years in remission. Liora cycled across the United States to celebrate her recovery, crossing all state lines from East to West Coast in 2.5 months.

Her sisters, Jessica and Cara, founded the Make a Wish Club at their school Tarbut V'Torah, in Irvine. They raised \$40,000 in three years. The most money any school had raised in the whole country.

Judi has now divorced and is an empty nester. Her children have all left the state, pursuing their lives and careers. Judi recently started the Friends Shabbat Dinner Club -Over 40's for adults with older kids looking for social and community connections to celebrate the spirit of Shabbat. This is hosted in community members' homes every month.

Judi is excited to be living in San Diego and looks forward to the new opportunities in friendship, community, and all the fun things the city has to offer. ... pursuing their lives and careers. Judi recently started Friends Shabbat Dinner Club of San Diego - Jewish 40's Plus on Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/1173972086719736](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1173972086719736).



Maureen May Bacher.

Maureen arrived in San Diego in July 2019 to join her daughters' family after living an active and diverse life in South Africa. Originally from Emmarentia in Johannesburg, Maureen spent her younger years on the family farm known today as the Madikwe game reserve. She went to King David boarding school for her primary and high school education.

Maureen worked in a pharmacy in Hyde Park for many years until she met and married an Austrian architect and moved to Norwood. They had a daughter together, and in addition to raising her daughter, she joined her husband in his many different ventures - from owning a boutique in the lovely Tollman Towers hotel to a men's hairdressing salon.

They also invested in real estate and worked on many local residential and commercial projects.

Eventually, Maureen and her husband parted ways when her daughter went to high school. A few years later, Maureen met her life partner, Noel Clegg. Together, they purchased the Mountain Inn, a small hotel in Louis Trichardt.

Several years ago, longing for city life, they returned to Johannesburg and launched into the real estate business by buying and renovating homes. They also opened what became an acclaimed restaurant in Rosebank known as the Colonial Restaurant and Bar which led them to purchase and operate other restaurants in the area. Eventually, Maureen retired, and Noel resumed his practice as a CPA until he passed away in 2016.

In 2019, Maureen decided to join her daughter and family in Rancho Santa Fe. She loves being close to her granddaughter and enjoys cooking, gardening, and arranging flowers.



Charlene and Frank Stuppel are ex Cape Townians. They came to San Diego in 2019.



Lorian and Joel Jacks.

Lorian and Joel Jacks have been visiting San Diego for almost 20 years. In the past year, they finally decided to make a move, mainly because both their sons and their families live in California.

They enjoy living in PB, close to the ocean where they hike, take long walks, and meet new people.



Ann and Cliff Bengis.

Ann and Cliff Bengis are new to SA-JAC. They moved here to be close to their children and grandchildren after living in Paradise Valley/ Scottsdale for 32 years.



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# Lithuanian Untruths Exposed

by Michael Kretzmer



Michael Kretzmer

SAJAC played host on June 12 to a critical debate for Litvak Jews: should we turn a blind eye to the Lithuanian government's bizarre and overt holocaust denialism? Or do we owe it to our murdered people to fight back?

The two-hour debate featured three speakers: Grant Gochin, a wealth adviser from LA; Silvia Foti, a writer, and journalist, Michael Kretzmer, a filmmaker who has directed the film 'J'Accuse!'.

All three passionately believe in the need to fight back against holocaust lies.

## J'Accuse!

It tells the story of the uniquely cruel Lithuanian holocaust, which swept away 96.4% of Lithuanian Jewry, about 220,000 people, thus ending one of the greatest post-exilic civilizations. The film explains how Lithuanians committed almost all the murders, rapes, and torture. It notes how to this day, Lithuania brazenly makes up lies (via its infamous Genocide Centre) to defend the mass murderers and turn them into national heroes. Killers like Jonas Noreika murdered as many as 14,500 Jews in the Plunge/Siuliai region in 1941. They presided over an empire of pedophile rape, robbery, torture, humiliation, and mass murder.

## Two heroic people, Grant Gochin and Silvia Foti tell this important story:

Born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, but now resident in Los Angeles, Gochin has been fighting Lithuania through the Lithuanian

courts. He has self-financed over 30 legal cases against the Lithuanian government and the Genocide Centre, all dismissed on technical grounds, so the substance of his claim has never been considered. Jonas Noreika murdered almost all his family.

Silvia Foti is Jonas Noreika's granddaughter. She is an extraordinary woman of moral courage. Silvia inherited the role of becoming Noreika's official biographer from her dying mother. During her research, she discovered his dark and terrible past. But instead of turning a blind eye to his depraved crimes, Silvia wrote the truth in her incredible and well-reviewed book *The Nazi's Granddaughter* (now re-issued under the title 'Storm in the Land of Rain'). What courage it must have taken for her to go against her people, country, and family! For decades she had no support and suffered greatly from her sacrifice. It was a privilege to hear Silvia's incredible story.

Readers can find out more about Grant and Silvia at: [Grantgochin.com](http://Grantgochin.com), [Silviafoti.com](http://Silviafoti.com)

Many contributors expressed outrage about the holocaust denial sweeping the world, especially in eastern Europe. But no other country lies as egregiously or systematically as Lithuania. As Grant Gochin said: "It is an intolerable insult to the Jewish people, and I believe we owe it to our murdered families to fight back. They stripped us of all our humanity, and these lies and hero worship of our murderers repeat the dehumanization. We should not allow it."



Grant Gochin.



Silvia Foti.

J'Accuse! will be premiered at the end of the summer at the Jewish International Film Festival across Australia. After that, it will be shown at Jewish events and film festivals across the world... including San Diego!



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# Gastroenterology Symposium

Tuesday, May 17th, 2022 on ZOOM @ 5:30-7:30 pm PST

by Franklin Gaylis\*



Franklin Gaylis MD.

We were privileged to participate in an exciting gastrointestinal (GI) medical symposium covering colorectal cancer (CRC) and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Outstanding speakers were Dr. Richard Boland, Dr. Bridget Boland, and Nurse Practitioner Angelina Collins from the UCSD Colorectal Cancer Center. All three presentations were excellent and filled with important information, details of which can be found by listening to the symposium at SAJAC's website on the VIDEO page.

## Colorectal Cancer

Dr. R. Boland discussed the genetic and epigenetic basis of the disease. He mentioned that CRC accounts for most gastrointestinal cancers. It is the most significant cause of GI-related death. CRC causative factors include age and gender (the disease tends to be worse in men than in women). Also, the western lifestyle includes smoking, obesity, a high-fat diet, and meat consumption. More recently, the incidence of new cases has been declining, likely due to the early detection of polyps by colonoscopy. Unfortunately, younger people are being affected more frequently, prompting the guideline recommendations to start colonoscopy screening at 45.

Most CRC is sporadic (not linked to solid genetic factors). However, a small percentage of

CRC is associated with polyposis syndromes, of which Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP) is related to congenital abnormalities occurring in 6-12% of Ashkenazi Jews.

Colonoscopy screening is essential as CRC can be prevented by early detection and removal of polyps. Other tests to detect CRC include DNA and stool blood tests. Removing pre-cancerous adenomatous polyps in the colon decreases the risk of developing CRC later in life. The controversy surrounding the use of aspirin continues about when to start and what dose to take. The benefits seem to occur when aspirin is taken earlier in adulthood, but it takes about ten years to see the benefits. However, the risks of complications increase in one's 60s.

## Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

The condition known as IBD was discussed by Angelina, explaining that IBD consists of two distinct diseases, Crohn's Disease (CD) and Ulcerative Colitis (UC). IBD are chronic progressive immune-mediated inflammatory diseases of the digestive tract (gastrointestinal tract). There is no cure; however, treatments can control the disease and prevent recurrence and complications. IBD tends to be diagnosed early in those under 30 years old. This is NOT the same as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), in which patients experience constipation, diarrhea, and abdominal pain but no inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract.

Causes of IBD appear to be a convergence of genetic susceptibility, immune response, and the environment. Genetic factors with a family history occur in about 10% of patients

with a first-degree relative with IBD and may be associated with other autoimmune diseases like psoriasis and lupus. There is a slightly increased incidence in the Ashkenazi Jewish community, 2 to 4%. IBD is associated with certain lifestyles; smoking, nonsteroid anti-inflammatory drugs, foods, preservatives, and food colorings may be factors. Ulcerative colitis affects the large intestine (colon) and may be mild, moderate, or severe. Crohn's Disease affects anywhere in the intestinal tract between the mouth and the anus. Different people respond differently to other treatments. Ulcerative Colitis symptoms are diarrhea, bleeding, urgency cramps, and abdominal pain, whereas Crohn's Disease symptoms include abdominal pain, cramping, weight loss, and fatigue. A strong recommendation is to see a gastroenterologist early to get the disease diagnosed and begin treatment. Angelina encourages patients to control the disease by being proactive and monitoring the condition to avoid complications and prevent progression.

Dr. Bridge Boland discussed Inflammatory Bowel Disease treatments in great detail and listed the five following treatment groups:

1. mesalamine derivatives
2. steroids
3. immune modulators
4. biologics
5. small molecules.

*\*A big thank you from SAJAC to Franklin who we asked to serve as the moderator for this symposium, as well as to provide us with a review of the event for publication.*

# Purim Party

It has been a while since we've done anything in person... and it's been even longer since we hosted an event aimed at the younger members of the community. This year, board member Kayli Amyer, took it upon herself to do just that - an in-person event for Young Jewish Professionals in San Diego hosted by SA-JAC San Diego. There were costumes, music, dancing, freshly brewed ginger beer from Preston's Ginger Beer (owned by a fellow South African), and most importantly meeting friends old and new! Overall the party was a great success and we hope to see more events of the sort in the future.







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## ARLENE SACKS

Arlene Sacks has over four decades of real estate experience in San Diego, specifically in the convent and highly sought after area of La Jolla California. She has earned a once in a lifetime award from the La Jolla Real Estate Brokers Association for her salesmanship, community involvement, and integrity in dealing with her clients and fellow agents. She is also a member of the Top Producers Group in La Jolla.

Arlene is a hands-on agent who clients can count on to assist them in every facet of their real estate transaction. She is energetic, loyal, honest and meticulous, and has a reputation for truly caring about her clients.

Arlene has built such a strong reputation as an effective Realtor that the bulk of her business comes from referrals, repeat clients and second-generation clients.



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# Hebrew Free Loans San Diego

by Mindi Frankel



Mindi Frankel.

Hebrew Free Loan of San Diego (HFLSD) aids and empowers members of the San Diego Jewish community by providing interest-free loans on the core Jewish values of dignity, respect, compassion, and confidentiality at no cost to Jewish individuals or individuals working in a Jewish communal organization. Borrowers utilize these interest-free loans to help themselves overcome short-term financial challenges or assist in their journey toward realizing lifelong dreams.

HFLSD is based on and inspired by a biblical

mandate, "If you lend money to your fellow, do not act as a creditor; do not exact interest from him." Our goal is to help members of our local Jewish community become and remain self-sufficient through various interest-free loans. The idea of bringing this organization to San Diego came after a study in 2019 that identified that 20% of the San Diego Jewish population lives at or below the poverty level. There was a need in our community that had to be addressed, and HFLSD was created to help people with temporary financial needs become and remain financially secure, and be self-supporting, self-respecting members of the community through access to interest-free loans.

As HFLSD celebrates the first year of fulfilling this mitzvah, it is remarkable to listen to loan recipients share their stories of how HFLSD empowers them to overcome whatever obstacles they face and strive for better situations. As one loan recipient shares, "I am relieved that there is an organization like HFLSD that can help community members in need during difficult times. When I lost my job, I worried about what would happen. Working with HFLSD and removing my credit

card payments monthly while receiving extra monthly for living expenses, allows me to focus on my job search and not feel strangled by my monthly expenses. I look forward to paying this loan back as quickly as possible, so I can pay it forward and watch the money help someone else in our community."

HFLSD has processed over \$300,000 in loan applications and has over \$500,000 in immediately available funds for new loans. HFLSD is funded through donations by generous private individuals and foundations. Donations are recycled as loans are repaid, assisting our community for generations.

HFLSD's interest-free loans help with living expenses, dental and medical costs, high-interest debt consolidation, transportation, home repairs, and undergraduate and post-graduate education. It covers the unexpected challenges that we are dealt with in life. Loans are also made to small businesses and the recently unemployed. HFLSD's philosophy is to provide borrowers a hand-up – not a hand-out!

To learn more about HFLSD, visit the website at: [www.hflsd.org](http://www.hflsd.org)

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# Partners in Torah San Diego

by Rabbi Weiser

Partners In Torah San Diego engage anyone interested in connecting to Jewish wisdom and thinking to join an interactive, participatory class discussion on topics ranging from the weekly Torah portion to mysticism. In addition to weekly Tuesday evening sessions, the website [www.partnersintorahsd.com](http://www.partnersintorahsd.com) offers a vast array of recorded classes. Selwyn Isakow created the program, having participated for many years in Partners In Torah when living in Detroit. Selwyn often cut short business trips to attend in person.

The concept of Partners In Torah San Diego, as expressed by Selwyn: "My interest is in providing as many Jews the opportunity to

study and participate in the beautiful values of our heritage, without regard to the level of observance, political views, or affiliation. Torah study as a foundational enterprise is essential to Mr. Isakow's vision of the Jewish community.

In tandem with shared Shabbat experiences, lending money to those in need, and promoting interpersonal kindness, this comprehensive perspective on the Jewish community is the common denominator of all that Selwyn supports and leads.

Everyone in San Diego benefits from this vision.



Rabbi Weiser.



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# Shabbat San Diego

by Simone Abelson



It all began in South Africa in 2013 when Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldberg ran one big audacious idea past his community – “What if we all got together to observe one complete Shabbat...?”

In 2014, Shabbat San Diego was created based on this idea to welcome our Jewish Community members, no matter the level of each individual’s observance, to come together as one.

Since then, this universal observance has kept the Jewish Community connected even during the pandemic on a designated Shabbat annually. As we are starting to gather for community events, now is the time to renew our sense of pride as a community, reconnect us to one another and reinvigorate our Jewish identity.

On this one Shabbat, Jews in over 1,688 cities around the world, get together annually to experience the magic of Shabbat. Jews are uniting to #KeepItTogether.

For this year’s SDS from Nov 10 - 13th, we want to welcome our San Diego Jewish community back. Expect a new and innovative SSD from intimate challah bakes, Shabbat services, and learning. There will be Shabbat Dinners (as COVID appropriate) and a live stream Havdalah. Go to our website at [shabbatsd.org](http://shabbatsd.org) to sign up and be part of another mega Shabbat San Diego. Your involvement and support are appreciated and valued and bond us in strength and unity.



by Bev Pamensky

Kindness Initiative, created eighteen months ago with Jewish values at its core, is an assistance system infused with dignity and kindness to meet vulnerable Jewish households’ basic physical and psychological needs. We refer to them as Members, and membership is free. Integral to the Kindness Initiative process is meeting Members’ immediate needs and promoting self-sufficiency.

## We help Members navigate and access many other services:

- > Food security
- > Housing and household necessities
- > Transportation assistance
- > Medical & dental service
- > Substance abuse
- > Psychological issues and domestic violence counseling
- > Essential communications technology
- > Legal and accounting services
- > Educational programs to reduce personal isolation
- > Jewish life cycle events

An important program, Kindness-Works, provides business mentoring, job preparation assistance, and connections to job opportunities.

Comprehensive, coordinated collaborations with over 260 resources and social service providers, professional staff, and dozens of caring volunteers meet the needs of our Members and their families.

We are proud to have changed the tenor of compassionate care for those in our community needing assistance.



Bev Pamensky.



Selwyn Isakow.

## Selwyn Isakow

Selwyn Isakow believes that being part of a healthy, thriving, spiritually aware, and engaged community, allows individuals to flourish. He also believes that understanding the essence of our heritage and our inherent responsibilities to fellow Jews, as well as others who are vulnerable or in need, is essential to a meaningful life.

Selwyn Isakow often quotes John Ruskin – “What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.”

Shabbat San Diego, Partners in Torah, a Kollel, Hebrew Free Loan of San Diego, and the Kindness Initiative, as well as a bank and several businesses, were incubated in Selwyn’s La Jolla business office.

Selwyn has been involved in many non-denominational organizations seeking to impact humanity, including being the immediate Past-Chairman of the City of Hope, a leading national cancer treatment, research, educational, and biologics manufacturing center transforming the future of cancer care.

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# Legends & Legacies

by Bev Goldman



Bev Goldman

## **"If you will it, it is no dream."**

Theodor Herzl's prophetic words about a future Israel in 1902 could well describe Mark Wade, producer and director of the highly acclaimed documentary "Legends and Legacies."

Mark is immensely creative and forward-thinking, an amateur historian for whom understanding the past and present is vital. However, we can all agree that it is frightening and unpredictable to predict the future with the world as it is today.

Some years ago, Mark began researching the history of his wife's father and his family. Sephardi Jews originally from Spain were forced into exile during the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century and ended up in Turkey and Greece, then moved into exile once again during the Nazi invasion of Rhodes Island (Rhodos) during WWII. As the borders into South Africa were closed to Jews then, they settled in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and finally moved to South Africa in the late 1960s.

Mark began investigating the general history of SA Jewry, realizing a TV series presenting a comprehensive documentary on their history and their contributions were significant. At that time, Mark ran a weekly program on the local ChaiFM Jewish radio station. Excited with his new idea, he approached Alan Swerdlow to work with him. Alan was a talented director of stage and television. In addition, he also acted in films and was a radio presenter and theatre reviewer. Alan immediately agreed, and the

rest, as they say, is history.

Once Mark had raised the funding for this project and completed the research and writing, he and Alan ventured on a road trip from Cape Town to Pretoria, visiting communities, interviewing people, and seeing the schools and synagogues and cemeteries in many towns and villages.

They started the series on Noordhoek's beaches, proceeding to Cape Town to see the Tikvat Israel Synagogue (known today as the Gardens Shul) and the Jewish Museum. They then ventured through the Karoo, to Kimberley, and onto Johannesburg and Pretoria. They visited numerous places of Jewish interest and interviewed middle-aged and older community members. In addition, they spoke to many non-Jews who recognized and acknowledged what the Jewish community had contributed to the South African landscape.

Jewish immigrants and their descendants have left their mark on South Africa in many ways. Doctors, lawyers, Rabbis, parliamentarians, hawkers, diamond-diggers, industrialists, Randlords, Renegade Boer War commandos, Nobel prize-winners, social workers, artists, and activists were part of the rich complexity of Jewish life at this southern tip of Africa.

At its height, the South African Jewish community totaled some 130,000 people, but it is currently facing a new emigration, and we estimate that now in 2022, no more than 45,000 Jews will be left in the country.

The first wave of emigration from South Africa occurred after the Sharpsville Massacre

and the Cato Manor uprising in the early 1960s. The second exodus happened after the Soweto Student Uprising of 1976, and the third – surprisingly and even unexpectedly – transpired after the coming of democracy in 1994. Since Covid and the current poor performance of the government combined with the enormous scourges of corruption, crime, poverty, insecurity as to the future, and the constant talk of a "failed state," we are now into what many are calling the fourth exodus.

Despite all this negativity, the impact on South Africa by this small, proud community since its arrival here has been tremendous. The fields of commerce, politics, academia, the sciences, the arts, industry, and social welfare – have played a significant role in the history and shaping of this country.

Many reading this were born in South Africa. So many left because of the turbulence, the disquiet, the gloomy future. Yet, our roots go deep, and it's hard to distance ourselves from our origins as the challenges are realities we cannot ignore.

**Legends and Legacies** is the most comprehensive account of the South African Jewish community ever attempted on screen, explaining how the community came to be and how it found a home in the foot of Africa, the dark continent. The series is the proud story of the achievements, aspirations, setbacks, and recoveries, as told by South African Jewish leaders of industry and science, religion, and art, who are the last of a sadly dwindling community.



## Who is Bev Goldman?

She's the National President of the Union of Jewish Women South Africa. She feels strongly that South Africa is in her blood as it is in the blood of so many who remain living there. Many do not have the finances to em-

igrate elsewhere - despite the dismal and often disconcerting situation confronting them. She is proud of how UJW SA strives to make a difference for many.

The organization gives dignity to the community experiencing poverty, victims of domestic

abuse, child trafficking, paucity of educational resources, loneliness, and homelessness.

Staying in SA makes perfect sense to Bev when she sees many of the Jewish community's smiles, warmth, genuine friendships, and resilience.



The UJW SA is an incredible organization recognized and acknowledged throughout the country:

- The community relies on UJW for supplying cooked meals delivered daily to the elderly, infirm, and isolated Jewish community.
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# Farewell to Mr Wolf – A King David Legend

Published on Nov 4, 2021 in The South African Jewish Report

by Nicola Miltz

Johannesburg Jewry and former King Davidians around the world this week mourned the sudden passing of legendary educator and much-loved former Jewish school headmaster, Elliot Wolf.

There has been a groundswell of grief from generations of people whose lives he had a profound impact on. Hundreds of people turned to social media to express their sadness and to recount anecdotes in which Wolf, who was also director of the King David Schools Foundation, featured.

Wolf was laid to rest in the section of Westpark Cemetery reserved for people who have displayed exceptional commitment to the community. His contribution to Jewish education for 50 years in South Africa was extraordinary.

His identical twin brother, Jeffrey Wolf, is distraught, said his family. "My father is battling," said Graham Wolf. "It's as though he has lost a limb. He feels like he has lost his other half."

"For the community, this is a huge loss, but for our family, uncle Ell was a giant as well," he said.

The Wolf twins are synonymous with Jewish education in South Africa and the King David School system. Born and bred in Yeoville, Johannesburg, the brothers devoted their careers to teaching and made it their life's ambition to enhance Jewish education.

This week, Elliot was looking forward to visiting the Westcliff Hotel with his long-time close friend Sheryl Benjamin to admire the jacarandas which are in full bloom across the city. Elliot, an avid horticulturalist and gardener, delighted in the purple display each season. The two taught together for more than 40 years.

"Elliot had a special, empathetic way of dealing with children's problems. He'd share their heartache, joy, and pain, and he was fair," she said. In later years, when they attended school reunions together, he was always the favourite, while she was "second best".

"Past pupils absolutely adored him. They marvelled at how he remembered almost every one of them down to the minute details of their school career and family lives."

News of his passing sent shock waves through the community. Up until last week, he had been well and enjoyed spending a few days in the Kruger National Park with members of



his family. It was an extended 80th birthday celebratory holiday for Barbara Wolf, Jeffrey's wife, with whom Elliot was very close. They arrived last Thursday, and enjoyed a few days in the bush, one of Elliot's favourite places. A few days into their holiday, he took ill and was rushed to hospital in Nelspruit, where he later passed away. Pictures of them in the bush show a happy, smiling Elliot.

To those who knew and loved him, Elliot was the quintessential gentleman and mensch. He had a keen understanding of the teenage mind, saw through their pain and innumerable behavioural quirks, and revelled in their achievements in the arts, sciences, sports, and academics.

"Every child mattered," said Benjamin, "he took notice of all his students and cared about their well-being."

As head of the King David Schools Foundation, Elliot travelled the world, meeting up with alumni whose lives he had an impact on.

Raelene Tradonsky, the executive director of the foundation, described Elliot as "a dear colleague, mentor, and a loyal and trusted friend".

"He had a real passion for Jewish education and particularly the underdog. He had come from very humble beginnings and believed that everyone should be afforded the opportunity of a Jewish education of excellence, irrespective of their parents' financial position," she said.

He was an excellent fundraiser who was "un-

comfortable" asking for money. "I told him it was our job to ask, and they could only say no," she said.

"On one of our first trips to Australia, a wonderful alumnus and donor remarked that we made a great 'horse and pony show' – I was the 'iron-fist' and he, the ultimate gentleman, was 'the velvet glove'."

She said alumni were stunned at Elliot's memory as he took delight in reminding them of stories from their school days which they had long since forgotten.

"He remembered because he took a genuine interest in people, and he cared. He really cared.

"Elliot would revel in the success of his former pupils, and delighted in sharing his pleasure with them, reminding them how their interests and passions were sparked at school," she said.

"We shared a passion for travel and boy, did we have fun doing it! We were wined and dined by some of the wealthiest alumni to have come out of King David, and he relished in being treated like royalty by many a successful Davidian. They embraced Elliot as someone who had played a pivotal role in their success," she said.

An alumnus, Discovery Group Chief Executive Adrian Gore, said this week that much would be said of Elliot's legacy and incredible achievements and he was determined to add to that narrative over time.

"But on the day of his passing, my overriding emotion is one of sadness, and particularly of loss for the community. This brings with it a realisation that is important to me: Elliot Wolf was and always will be "Mr Wolf" to me. You see, it wasn't because he was my headmaster; bear in mind that we worked as colleagues for more than a decade in building the King David Schools Foundation. Instead, it's because he possessed this rare quality of integrity, conviction, and timeless style. And this, together with his wisdom and sheer intellect, created an ability to shift generations of people. His impact is humbling, and his example is a light for the entire community."

Alumni this week set up a Facebook page called "In Loving Memory of Elliot Wolf" which has more than 1000 members.

Hundreds of tributes have continued to flow in, testament to his profound influence over so many people's lives, young and old.

"School was more than academics to him" said former head girl Karin Kopenhager-Mervis. "He refused to allow me to take history as a seventh subject in matric. He said I had enough on my plate and should rather focus on enjoying my final year of school. I could always read up on historical events that inter-

ested me in years to come. I took his advice [who didn't?], and he was so right."

Her sister, Dena Bloch, remembered being visited by him during a long stay in hospital when she was in Grade 10.

"He brought me a book, *The Color Purple*. He asked me to read it and said he would like to discuss it with me when I was done. I was never much of a reader, but read the book because, hey, Mr Wolf said so! He visited me a week later, and sat chatting to me about the book, recommending others. Not only did he instill in me the love of reading, but I was in awe of his genuine care for me."

"He really believed in me when I certainly didn't believe in myself!" said Dani Janks.

Journalist Shira Druion wrote, "I recall a particular discussion we had for the purpose of a newspaper article I was writing about him. I asked him what he attributed his success to as an educator. His reply made an indelible impact. 'I grew up in a house in Yeoville. My mother was an extremely outgoing person, and so my brother and I stayed on the quieter side to keep up. This taught me there was beauty in silence and from that, I learned to listen. So when I interacted with my students,

I listened more than I spoke.' I was so moved, I promised myself I would take that forward with me into my life as an educator."

Elliot's November letter to the foundation, which is still to be published at the end of this month, was prophetically titled "Reason for Introspection".

In it, he wrote how a recent fall and injury to his shoulder had given him the opportunity to reflect on his life and times.

"At this stage of my career, I feel I must have a further challenge – to compile with much assistance a history of KDHS Linksfield. This is certainly not an easy task, as how does one restrict oneself when there is such a diverse and rich record of achievement. However, I shall try to accomplish this with an advance apology for any oversights. Chazak ve'ematz [be strong and have courage] will be my watchword in compiling this record. I hope that that it will reveal as many of the threads as possible that make up the rich tapestry of King David High School Linksfield."

**The SA Jewish Report encourages everyone to please visit [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za) for their latest news, views & newspaper.**



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# Simone Abelson

Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage



Simone Abelson is a professional leader, philanthropist, and real estate agent. She grew up in San Diego and returned here to make it her home after a brief stint in the Long Beach area. She spends most of her time serving on various boards and committees in the San Diego Jewish Community.

Simone is in her fourth year of the JFNA National Young Leadership Cabinet. She recently returned from a life-changing experience traveling with a national delegation of 100 Jewish leaders to Israel for their first international mission since the pandemic. She began her trip by running 10k through the rainy streets of Jerusalem and ended it with a most spiritual Shabbat and praying at the Kotel.

The week was spent learning, engaging in dialogue with Israeli peers, and creating proactive approaches to social issues in Israeli society. Highlights included meeting President Isaac Herzog and visiting his home; hearing stories of JDC's work in the orthodox community of Bnei Brak; visiting Na Laga,

a one-of-a-kind, non-profit arts and cultural center, a place for the deaf and blind, as well as individuals who were both deaf and blind, to meet; and visiting the Peres Center for Peace & Innovation, learning about its past, present, and future.

Simone serves on the Executive Committee and General Board of the Jewish Federation of San Diego and volunteers in various roles in other Jewish organizations. Simone has multiple years of professional experience in non-profits and has been involved as a volunteer as far back as she can remember.

Simone is the project manager for Shabbat San Diego. Powered by the LFJCC, she is the Administrative Director for Kindness Initiative, an essential organization that serves households in the San Diego Jewish community struggling with financial insecurity. As a real estate agent, she enjoys helping her clients find a home in San Diego. She is a proud aunty to Sienna, Jaxon, and Ellie & loves spending time with her family and her vast network of friends. Simone, who is single, would love to find her bashert.



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## Gabriel Bloch **Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage**



At four, Gabriel told his parents to “stop interfering in my business.” That fiercely independent spirit has followed him through high school, college, and now in his startup, Quokka Brew. As an only child, Gabe had to carve a place for himself amongst friends who already had playmates in their siblings. He often found himself as the only child in a sea of adults at the dinner table discussing world affairs and social issues. He not only listened but unknowingly honed in on his social and critical thinking skills.

In high school, Gabe blossomed into the leader he is today. Together with Zevi New of the Youth Action Movement, they successfully brought ReSurf to California, initiating surf camps in Mexico, Hawaii, and South Africa for underprivileged youth. In his final year of high school, Gabe led a group of ten teens from San Diego to Israel to explore the diverse nature of a conflict with both Israeli Jewish teens and Bedouin Arabs from the Negev.

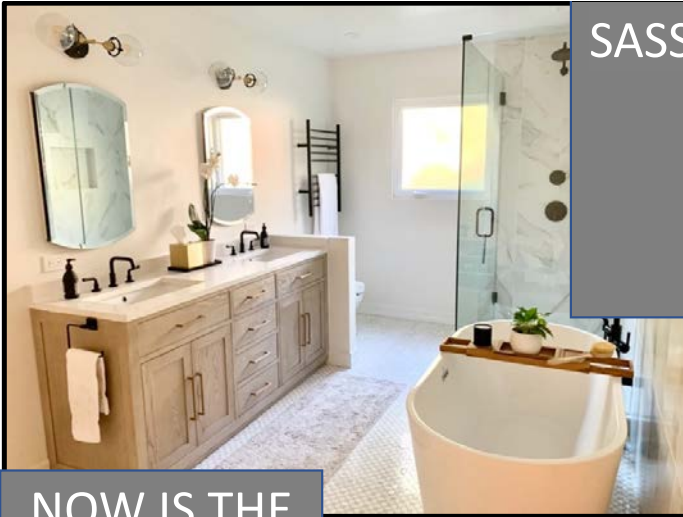
While at UC Berkeley, he completed 2 degrees: A BS in Business Administration from Haas School of Business and a BA in Cognitive Science. In his second year, Gabe consulted for Marriott International and

Grammarly while in the Berkeley Business society. He also founded the Interfaith Action Initiative, where he taught a class on the similarities and differences between Judaism and Islam, thus creating a space for discussion amongst the leaders of Faith communities. That summer, Gabe traveled to Israel for an internship and was chosen to host the first annual Israeli Sports Tech Summit at the Tel Aviv Stock exchange.

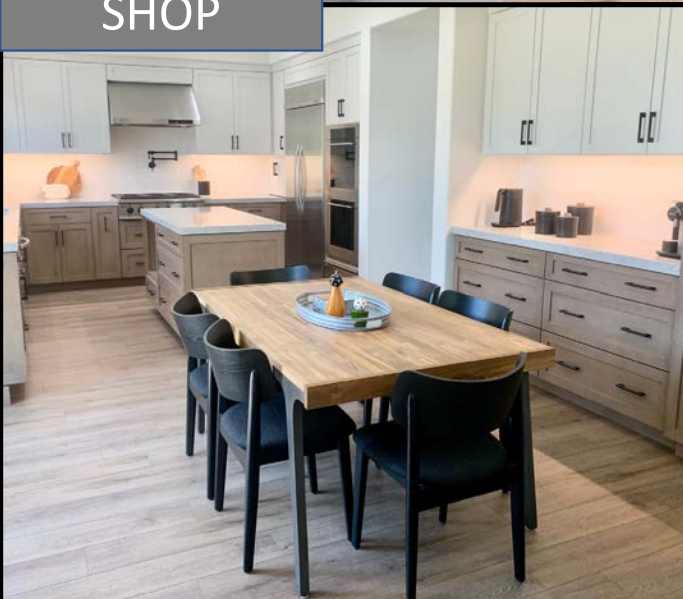
Gabe balances risk and reward, challenging himself through snowboarding, surfing, and rock climbing. He is an accomplished pianist, DJ, math tutor, and avid reader interested in philosophy, history, and world affairs.

As the Chief Business Development Officer and founding member of Quokka Brew, he has tasked himself with revolutionizing the coffee industry. In the past year, Gabe brought his Jitter-less coffee to student stores on ten college campuses across California, built and continues to manage a 150 student brand ambassador program, and secured over 100 retail accounts. Gabe now leads his way down the entrepreneurial path, taking each step with curiosity, determination, and hope for a better tomorrow.

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## Kayli Amyer **Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage**



Kayli was born in Israel but grew up in San Diego after her parents moved back to the States. As a child, she attended many SAJAC events with her family - For those of you that recall the SAJAC Mock Wedding, her grandfather, Charles Frank, was the beautiful bride. After finishing high school and giving SDSU a shot, Kayli decided to fulfill a lifelong dream and moved back to Israel to serve in the IDF. She spent seven years in Israel, first as a fitness instructor for a special forces unit in the army, then as a student at IDC Hertzliya, and finally working in marketing for a startup in the high-tech industry.

Since moving back, Kayle joined her mother in the insurance industry, working with seniors to help them understand and choose Medicare plans, among other types of insurance. Her close contact with the medical world eventually brought her to SAJAC as the host of many medical symposiums they organized throughout 2021. She also gave a Medicare 101 presentation to members last year be-

fore the Medicare Open Enrollment period to ensure that SAJAC members were up to date on Medicare! If you missed the first, SAJAC will again present the program in the coming months.

On a more personal note, Kayli loves her dog more than just about anything else, would rather sleep in a tent than a hotel, and prefers to be barefoot when socially acceptable.

Kayli joined the SAJAC board this year. She continued to host their Zoom events and branched out to organize and host the first-ever Purim Party! In addition, she hopes to grow the presence of young Jewish professionals within our organization through similar social events.

Kayle is counting on us all to encourage the younger generation to get involved! SAJAC thanks Kayli for adding a young and enthusiastic spark to our organization.

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## Dylan Marks Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage



Find a job you love, and you will never work a day in your life

...Mark Twain

Mark Twain said, "Find a job you love, and you will never work a day in your life." If Mark Twain was correct, then this applies to Dylan Marks. From the day his dad gave him a set of drumsticks and a hundred bucks worth of lessons for his birthday until now, it has been a labor of love that has taken him from an eager novice to one of the most respected and sought-after drummers in San Diego and beyond.

Dylan may not call it 'work,' but his work ethic and dedication to his craft are mind-numbingly brutal. He spends thousands of hours alone, behind locked doors, practicing, drilling, and jamming. His hands are calloused; he fights tendonitis, studies, and reads theory and practice. In his never-ending quest to keep improving, his goal is to be the best.

When I asked him what separates a good drummer from a great drummer, he pondered for quite a while and then said,

"A good drummer plays the drums well, but a great drummer understands the whole picture. No matter how sophisticated a beat or how complicated the timing, the great drummer understands that in the end, it's only about the music and making it sound the best it can."

Over the last decade, that is precisely what Dylan Marks has been doing. Already on the list of the ten best San Diego drummers alongside Travis Barker of Blink 182 and Ilan Rubin of Nine Inch Nails, he has developed this reputation among his peers and fans of being technically brilliant, but even more important, he makes every band better, and the music sounds it's very best.

In high demand, he plays in his band, Beekeeper, an innovative thrash metal band, and Fermentor, a highly creative musical project. Over the

past years, he has collaborated on multiple live and studio projects.

His uncompromising professionalism, range, and expertise are highly sought after. Over the last ten years, he has played the drums on seventeen albums for bands in San Diego and across the country. In addition, he has toured nationally with both his bands and others.

I asked him what it is about drumming that he likes. He was pretty surprised and almost taken aback by the question and said,

"It's a part of who I am that I could never imagine ever asking myself that question."

His uncompromising professionalism, range, and expertise are highly sought after. Over the last ten years, he has played the drums on seventeen albums for bands in San Diego and across the country. In addition, he has toured nationally with both his bands and others.

I asked him what it is about drumming that he likes. He was pretty surprised and almost taken aback by the question and said,

"It's a part of who I am that I could never imagine ever asking myself that question."

The Covid pandemic was tough on all performing and touring musicians. Dylan's passion for sharing his love of music kept him firmly centered on giving back in a challenging time. Teaching multiple classes to kids of all ages reminds him of how lucky he is to have a life that is both fulfilling for himself and a joy to others. "Find a job you love, and you will never work a day in your life." I am jealous as few of us can claim that same reward.

**Aaron Wertheimer**  
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## Housing People with Disabilities

by Aaron Wertheimer

USA4RSA Foundation is a nonprofit created to aid and empower individuals with disabilities in South Africa. The organization maintains the rights of the poor, the weak, and the needy.” (Psalm 82; Psalm of Asaph)

The USA4RSA Foundation provides 24/7 in-house healthcare, programming, and housing for zero-income long-term psychiatric and physically disabled children, adults, and elderly citizens in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Roy Harris is the Chief Executive Officer and Founder. Since its inception in 1991, Roy and his wife, Tilla, have overseen the creation of seven mental health facilities that provide full-time residential and medical care to adults and children in South

Africa with no income. In addition, due to its growing need for funding, the USA4RSA Foundation was created.

Since then, USA4RSA Foundation has provided services and housing for over 310 long-term psychiatric patients living in the Western Cape, South Africa. They employ 122 dedicated healthcare personnel and administrators in their frail clinics and satellite-care facilities. USA4RSA Foundation presently has over 200 anxious families and hospital social workers waiting to admit applicants on its waitlist.

Their affiliate nonprofit, Community Diners (CD), prepares over 1,200 meals daily, and the Community Mental Health Academy (CMHP) trains 30-40 mental health caregivers annually.

Thanks to the South African community, the USA4RSA Foundation has secured funding for irrigation and infrastructure systems for its 3ha farm and provided renovations to its Harris House and CMHP Head office. Additional funding has also been used for its adult assisted living center for individuals with high-functioning autism.

Current projects include acquiring two vital signs monitors for its residents, solar panels for renewable energy, and beds to accommodate its growing waitlist of prospective residents.

**To learn more about or donate to: USA4RSA Foundation, visit their website at: [www.usa4rsa.org/donate/](http://www.usa4rsa.org/donate/).**



## John Berks—the ‘Boykie’ who changed South African radio

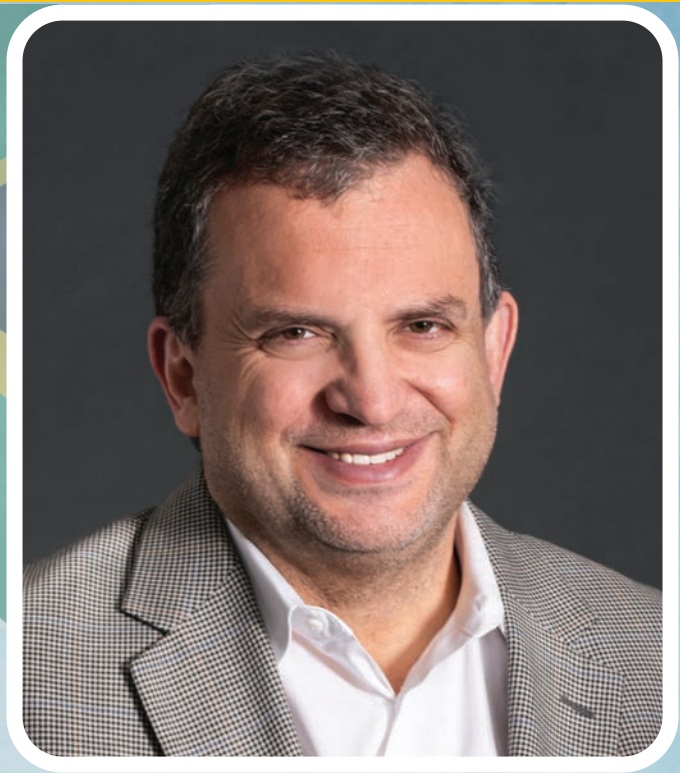
Sad news ...John Berks, a legend 702 broadcaster of South African radio has passed away at the age of 80 after a long illness. Berks revolutionized morning radio in South Africa and was known for his prank calls and quick wit.

Back when John Berks was the king of morning radio, people would tell the story about the times when commuters driving in their automobiles, simultaneously pulling up to a red traffic signal in different cars, with all of them laughing in their separate cars, giving each other thumb’s up signs so everyone at the traffic stop would know that they were all listening to another bit of Berksian broadcast mayhem. Or, as one of his 702 colleagues, Aki Anastasiou, said of Berks on the airwaves, “He created the most authentic theatre of the mind experiences for his listeners.”





## Ami Kassar Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage



Ami Kassar, who graduated with an MBA from USC, founded MultiFunding in 2010 to help small- and mid-sized businesses meet their growth goals with creative and personalized funding solutions. He is the author of both *The Growth Dilemma* and his second book, *Amisights*.

Ami and his family still live in Philadelphia and he has earned a national reputation as a leader in business and finance. He is an in-demand speaker and trusted advisor to growth-focused business leaders; Ami has advised thousands of business owners to achieve ambitious growth goals through creative and personalized funding solutions. In doing so, he has helped create so many jobs. Ami has challenged executives to think differently about how they capitalize on their growth.

Regularly featured in national media, including *The New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Entrepreneur*, *Forbes*, and *Fox Business News*, Ami also writes a weekly column for *Inc. Magazine*. He has advised the White House, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Treasury Department on credit markets. Ami regularly speaks at corporate, academic, and industry events on entrepreneurship and access to capital.

Ami adds: "Things were going along smoothly for Multifunding, as we built an excellent base. Then, suddenly all the rules changed. COVID enveloped our country. We were inundated with clients (both existing and new) who needed our help. It was even more challenging as we had to quickly get familiar with how to best access new federal loan programs. Once we were able to secure SBA and PPP loans for clients — and proved that we could be helpful to them — word of mouth helped us

grow. Speaking to affinity groups regularly was also beneficial, including me positioning myself with the media as a small business expert and attracting new clients. The right move was to have someone dedicated to the task, so I hired a senior business development director. We also now have a marketing manager.

"The Multifunding team stays on top of the ever-changing world of financing options. We have to know those options better than anyone if we want to continue to attract clients. We do not stand still. We've revamped our website, but the pandemic has given us as much business as we can handle. We are one of the rare businesses that have benefited in the past two years. Our excellent team must stay on top of the ever-changing world of financing options. Any company is only as good as its employees. I trust them. I hired the best, most experienced people, gave them the needed resources, and let them do their job. My team knows the ins and outs of financing better than anyone. Equally important, they excel at listening to understand the client's needs."

I wish my Dad could still be with us to see how Multifunding has grown and succeeded! I could not have written this article without thanking my father, Barry Kassar ז"ל. A great human being, husband, parent, grandparent, friend, and Ophthalmologist. Diagnosed with colon cancer in 2008, Barry managed to fight it for 11 years. He endured 23 surgeries, numerous rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, and unsuccessful clinical trials. He never gave up, remained positive, and inspired our family and me with his courage. He was a talented businessman who encouraged and gave me good advice.

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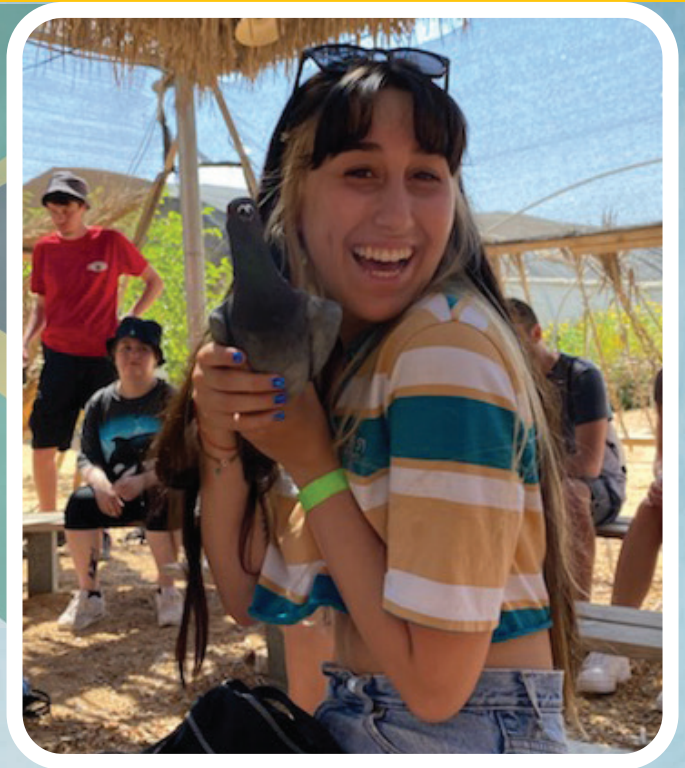
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## Nikka Frank Our 2nd & 3rd Generations Take the Stage



I was very fortunate to revisit Israel with Taglit Birthright in 2021. Although I had been to Israel before when my family went to celebrate my cousin's Bar Mitzvah, this was a completely different experience.

Firstly I met around 15 other Jewish young adults from around the U.S, including our staff, Jon and Rachel. When we were in Tzfat, we met three soldiers, Omer, Alon, and Hagar, who joined us on the trip, and soon became our close friends.

Besides all the fantastic fun we had, this trip was so educational, as we visited Yad Vashem and Mount Herzl to pay our respect and learn more about Israeli and Jewish history.

We went wine tasting, and we hiked the most beautiful trails. We even got to go clubbing which was a first for many of us as you have to be 21 in the U.S. We went to the Dead Sea and relaxed at the beach in Tel Aviv. We also fed camels and slept in Bedouin tents.

One morning we woke up at 4 am to hike Masada, which was the best and most beautiful hike I've ever been on. One of the best experiences was picking tomatoes at a ranch; I even held a pigeon. My favorite place we visited was the Jerusalem Market or "the shuk," where we got to eat knafeh and hang out at night. On Shabbat, we spent our weekend at a kibbutz where the group continued to bond and enjoy our time together while we relaxed and ate fantastic food.

Taglit allows you to extend your stay, and they then cover your flight home. Two friends from Birthright and I found a last-minute Airbnb in Tel Aviv, on Dizengoff street. This was the best experience ever. We met up with other friends from our trip, and I even saw friends from Israel, who came to San Diego in 2017 with the Jerusalem Zoo Exchange Program.

Anyone privileged to travel to Israel with Birthright should do so.

It's an experience of a lifetime that I will never forget!

# Gemilut Chesed Update

by Sandy Braff



Thank you to those who made donations to The Gemilut Chesed (acts of loving-kindness) Fund when they renewed their membership. This year we helped a family who needed medical attention. We are thankful to those who made contributions to help them. Payments towards outstanding loans have come in monthly without fail. We are delighted to provide interest-free loans to our needy members.

We're glad to be able to provide interest-free guaranteed loans to our members in need and assist wherever we can.

With gratitude,

Sandy Braff



by Arlene Sacks

Homesnap is an award-winning mobile app that provides accurate real estate data for over 90 million homes. Get the Homesnap app to see how much the homes in your neighborhood are worth.

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to new listings, price changes, and any other market updates in the zip codes you want to watch. You'll be the first to know about the real estate news you care about.

Please accept my invitation to connect on Homesnap. Next time you have a real es-

tate question or need advice, contact me via Homesnap. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

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# A New Torah For Downtown San Diego!

by Rabbi Zalman Carlebach



Rabbi Zalman Carlebach & Family

I participated in the Annual Chabad Rabbi's Conference in New York this past November. The trip's highlight for me was picking up the new Torah Scroll written for our Downtown San Diego congregation and made possible by the generous donations from the Hechter, Chakoff, Seitel, and Shor families. Many community friends and members also contributed to this project.

As I carried the scroll on my flight home, many bystanders stopped to say something nice. I was surprised that the TSA agents, airline personnel, passengers, and people on my flight to San Diego neither mocked nor made fun of me. On the contrary, they showed respect and stood in awe of me even though I had a beard, was wearing a yarmulke, and carrying a weird object.

The experience reminded me of the story of the twelve scouts Moses sent to Israel on a reconnaissance mission. Ten of the twelve

returned with a negative, unsolicited opinion indicating not to head to Israel despite G-d's instructions. I believe one statement that the scouts said sums up the identity that has been challenged since our founding, "There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, descended. We seemed like grasshoppers in their eyes." Feeling insecure, they thought the people in Israel were too intimidating for them to take on, and therefore they projected their insecurity onto the entire Jewish populace.

I meet Jews all day, every day. Unfortunately, some not feeling optimistic about being Jewish, feel like "grasshoppers." When we were boarding, a fellow passenger asked: "You're bringing a Torah to S. Diego? Are you Chabad?". When I responded in the affirmative, he said, "my father-in-law studies with the Chabad Rabbi in Austin." We then continued our friendly conversation.

As Jews, we never push our faith down other people's throats. However, we shouldn't shy away from being comfortable in our Jewish skin. We are not grasshoppers; we are children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

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# Selwyn Lurie Turns 100

## WWII Combat Fighter Pilot, CEO, & Family Patriarch

by Pamela Nathan



Selwyn & Barbara Lurie.

Selwyn was born in Durban on August 7, 1922. During WWII, he volunteered to join the allied forces against Germany and Japan and was trained as a fighter pilot in South Africa. He then served with the RAF, flying the British Hurricane, in the North African campaign, against the Germans. He was later transferred to the Burma campaign, where he flew the then-new generation American P-47 Thunderbolt against the Japanese. Both these aircraft were single-seat fighters.

Most of his missions were in Burma with 135 Squadron. The primary function of the P-47 was low-level air-to-ground strafing in support of the advancing ground forces and the escorting of Liberator bombers. When strafing, to be in range, one had to fly within 50 to 100 yards of the target through all the anti-aircraft flak before firing the eight .50 caliber machine guns. This was dangerous and very different from present-day fighter pilots, who, with high tech, can hit targets from an altitude beyond the reach of ground fire.

He recalls that when diving from 40,000 feet

at a speed well over 600 mph, the freezing of the controls and buffeting resulted from approaching the sound barrier, which was not known then. He survived five crashes caused by adverse weather conditions and mechanical problems, the last being in a P-47 successfully belly landing the aircraft at 170 mph without wheels and flaps, for which he was given an award.

After the war, while practicing as Selwyn Lurie & Partners, Chartered Accountants & Auditors, he married his secretary, Barbara. The wedding was at the main orthodox Shul in Durban, South Africa. They have been married for 67 years but in love for 74 years.

After selling the practice, they moved to Ashkelon in Israel, where Selwyn was appointed CEO of Afridar and Afrihon, the founding companies of modern Ashkelon. This decentralized, scientifically planned, new garden city was established by South African Jewry in collaboration with the Government of Israel for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of Nazi Germany.

Selwyn met and worked with David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and other Government leaders during this time. This experience, including the birth of their first son Alon, forged a deep love for Israel in Selwyn and Barbara. After completing his work there, his last task was to transfer the entire Ashkelon project to the Government of Israel as a gift from South African Jewry.

Andrew Viterbi once wrote, 'To join the fight to save our people and the world, and then go on to build a city to welcome the survivors, is a pair of remarkable achievements.'

For family reasons, Barbara and Selwyn moved to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) for seven years. Selwyn was elected Chairman of a Town Management Board and appointed CEO of a large engineering company and Chairman of a pharmaceutical company. He also continued his honorary work in Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Doron, Michael, and Adina were born in Zimbabwe. Tragically, Alon ז"ל passed away at a young age.



Selwyn's last 21 years in the business world were in the textile manufacturing industry in Durban. He became CEO of one of South Africa's leading companies, with factories throughout Southern Africa and a workforce of 35,000 employees. He was also Chairman of the South African Textile Manufacturers Association and appointed a JP (Justice of the Peace) by the South African Government.

After his retirement in 1986, Barbara and Selwyn decided to return to Israel, and they lived in Raanana for 11 years. In memory of their son, they donated the Gan Alon park to the Municipality of Raanana, opposite their home. Finally, in 2001, persuaded by their three children, who had all moved to San Diego, they decided to move here permanently to be close to their children and grandchildren.

Barbara and Selwyn were among the founders of the first Jewish modern Orthodox congregation in Carmel Valley. On their Golden Wedding anniversary, they donated a new Sefer Torah from Israel.

Throughout his life, Selwyn has devoted much time helping others in war and peace. Service to others has always played an essential part in his life. He is known, too, for giving F.W. de Klerk considerable assistance in South Africa's transition from apartheid.

He speaks very highly of Barbara, who has supported him in all his accomplishments in the four countries in which they have lived.

Barbara and Selwyn have three children, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. We wish them and their family Mazal Tov and continued health and happiness on this momentous milestone.



Linda  
Bernstein

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# Real Estate:

A very hot market is cooling down this summer as we see soaring inflation, higher interest rates, and global economic woes.

by Linda Bernstein



In San Diego County, we recorded home prices over the last year, with recent data showing the market has started to cool off in the past 60 days.

As interest rates rise, we are seeing houses stay on the market longer and price reductions across the board. Sellers are receiving far fewer offers, and instead of offering prices being way above the list price, we are seeing more requests come in at the asking price.

C.A.R. reports that Home sales in California dip below pre-pandemic levels as the effects of rising interest rates begin to show even as prices set another record. Single-family home sales totaled 377,790 in May on a seasonally adjusted annualized rate, down 9.8 percent from April and 15.2 percent from May 2021. May's statewide median home price was \$898,980, up 1.6% percent from April and 9.9% percent from May 2021.

## Year-to-date statewide home sales were down 8.9 percent in May.

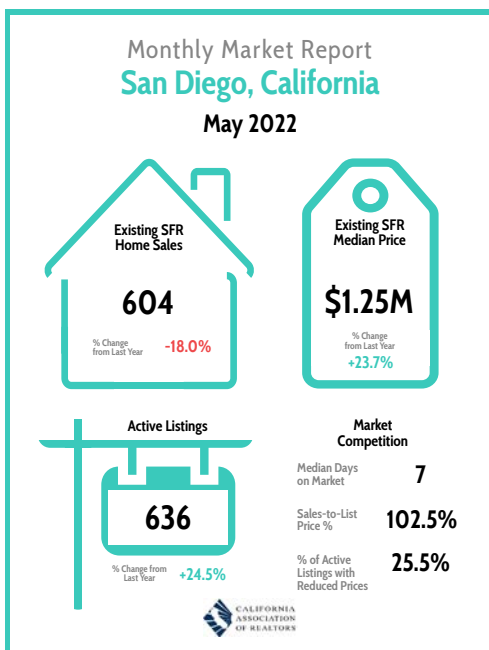
Inflation is much more significant than predicted and is driving interest rates higher. Real estate is beginning to exhibit more clear evidence of a shift, with mortgage applications dropping below pre-pandemic levels for the first time since the market went into overdrive in 2020. Active listings are sitting on the market longer, and the share of homes selling over list price has been shrinking consistently since April. Mortgage applications dropped to a 22-year low: With mortgage rates continuing to climb further, after a brief decline in May, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage rate has reached levels not seen in over a decade. As a result, mortgage demand has dropped to the lowest level in 22 years, with rising rates significantly impacting affordability.

The U.S. 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 5.78% for the week ending June 16, according to data released by Freddie Mac on Thursday. Point. The average rate on the 15-year fixed-rate mortgage rose over the past week to 4.81%. "Mortgage rates surged as the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage moved up more than half a percentage point, marking the largest one-week increase in our survey since 1987," Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist, said in a press release. Higher mortgage rates will lead to moderation from the blistering pace of housing activity we have experienced coming out of the pandemic, ultimately resulting in a more balanced housing market."

The housing market is getting less competitive: The evidence that buyers struggle to grapple with the twin challenges of rising home prices and mortgage interest rates is beginning to mount. Market competitiveness in last week's MLS data points to tapering buyer demand. As a result, the average weekly inventory of existing single-family homes has grown, and the current batch of active listings has been on the market twice as long as those homes that continue to sell. More sellers are beginning to reduce their asking prices—last week, the share of active listings in California with price reductions was nearly 30%, up from 14.9% toward the end of March.

## Is Now a Good Time to Sell or Buy?

For sellers who have owned the property for several years, the equity appreciation can be realized and capitalized upon with the sale of your home. For buyers, the market has begun to shift in your favor. You can now negotiate terms more favorably, such as getting the sellers to pay rent during a rent back and shortening the time allowed to do so. Buyers have also put contingencies, such as appraisal and loan contingencies, back into their offers. With more supply and fewer bidding wars, buyers may now have a window of opportunity to purchase a home.



# Where is the *San Diego* Real Estate Market Going?

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# San Diego Jewish Community Study

by Shana Hazan



Shana Hazan

We're excited to share that in mid-June we will be launching the survey for San Diego's Jewish Community Study: A Blueprint for the Future!

We know that the best decisions are made using the best data, and when it comes to our Jewish community we simply don't have the data we need. We haven't completed a community study since 2003 and don't have valid information that reflects the true contours of Jewish San Diego today.

Over the last year, in partnership with research partners at the University of Chicago and Brandeis University – and with insight from community leaders like you – our organizations have worked together to design San Diego's next Jewish Community study. You can learn

more at [www.sdjewishblueprint.org](http://www.sdjewishblueprint.org).

From June through September, our survey will be sent to a random sample of thousands of San Diegans so we can collect data about the demographics, identities, needs, attitudes, and engagement levels of those who identify as Jewish to strategically inform decision making across our community.

We know that the survey results and study report will stimulate a renewed orientation toward research-driven and evidence-informed decision making across organizations, initiatives, and programs, and look forward to working with you in the years ahead to bring this vision to fruition.

In partnership, San Diego Jewish Community Study Leadership Team

Beth Sirull, President and CEO, Jewish Community Foundation

Michael Hopkins, CEO, Jewish Family Service

Heidi Gantwerk, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of San Diego County

Betzy Lynch, CEO, Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS

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San Diego Jewish Community Study  
BLUEPRINT FOR OUR FUTURE

# New Year Fusion

by Rachel Barnes



Rachel Barnes.

Traveling around the world has indeed taught me to appreciate different cultures, traditions, and my love for international foods. Three such encounters with diversity took place in Israel, the U.S., and Poland. What follows is a culinary journey that began in 1977, when I moved to Israel from South Africa.

## ISRAEL

The diversity of Israeli cultures helped me discover the amazing “melting pot” of Israeli Jews from communities of European, African, American, and Asian ancestry and an influx of new immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia as well. Not just Jewish culture, Israeli Arabs [note: “Arav” in Hebrew comes from three Hebrew roots meaning “mix”] have quite a diverse population in their own right, including Muslims, Christians, Armenians, and Druze.

Because of such a rich diversity, Israel became not only a world leader in advanced technology but also a treasure house of culinary art from all of the world. What a treat was it for me to taste just a bit of the vast culinary pleasures one could taste in such a small country. Talking about pleasure there is nothing more awesome when walking the streets of Jerusalem especially before Shabbat or a Jewish Holiday. The smells, sight and sound of it fill the air and

your soul with joy!

## UNITED STATES

It was only after I arrived in the United States in 1990 that the opportunity to own a bakery and restaurant opened up in Philadelphia. There, I learned so much about baking and cooking, and the business of creating prosperous food establishments. So, “the City of Brotherly Love” began a new stage in my journey of culinary love.

## POLAND

During my trip to Poland from California in 2019, I came across a bakery shop that had the identical delicious apple cake we had served in our Eastern European Continental bakery on Haverford Avenue, Philadelphia. The only difference was that the Polish bakery made it with butter and the one we served in our kosher bakery was “parve” (non-dairy so that the baked goods can be eaten with meat dishes) which meant that we used oil instead of butter which in my opinion makes all the difference. As in Rosh Hashanah we make necessary changes and reflect in ourselves, and so I have improved this recipe for us all to enjoy!

# An Original Polish “Apple Cake”

## Dough

2 cups of flour  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 1/3 cup brown sugar  
 1 cup softened butter  
 2 yolks  
 1 tablespoon vanilla essence  
 1/4 teaspoon of salt  
 1/4 cup of milk

I always begin with whipping butter with sugar but you can also mix all the ingredients together.  
 The dough is halved. One for the bottom layer and the other halved dough for the top.

Thinly roll your dough on top of greased parchment paper the size of your baking pan and pull on top of baking pan

## Filling

4 large green apples, peeled, cored and cut up into cubes  
 2 tablespoons of lemon juice to mix into the apples to avoid browning  
 Place 2 tablespoons of butter in your saucepan  
 1 tablespoon of cornstarch mix in with 2 tablespoons of water and lemon juice mixture  
 Add diced apples into the butter  
 Add 1/2 cup of brown sugar  
 Add a pinch of salt

Cook for about 8-10 minutes until all liquids dissolve  
 Completely cool off mix to add on top of your first layer of half of your thinly rolled dough

Move your bottom layer of your dough on top of your baking sheet.

Add your cooled down filling on top and then add the second layer of dough that's now also on parchment paper rolled thin and place on top of your filling with the dough facing down and peel off parchment paper.

Press all sides of the cake and bake on 350° degrees for 40 minutes

Of course you may enrich this recipe by adding ice-cream or whipped cream before serving this cake to your guests

From your camera QR code will link to recipe video.

After the apple filling is cooled off - add it to the first layer on a baking pan and cover with another layer on top. Simply take the second layer that's on the parchment sheet and place the dough side on top of the apples and peel off the dough from the parchment paper.

**Optional:** 1 Tbls. date molasses or honey





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# The 2nd South African Film Festival Is Coming To Town!

by Brenda Sacks



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The second South African Film Festival USA (SAFF USA) will be streamed across the country from October 8 to 18th, 2022.

SAFF USA is chaired by former South African Brenda Sacks and her team of committed expat volunteers, Allan Saltz, Linda Ravden, Sherril Schlesinger, Carol Baum, Loren Rojany, Sandy Sacks, Michael Eliastam, Hilary Cohen, and Michelle Bachman. They are proud to bring you a carefully curated program of highly entertaining and informative South African-made feature films, documentaries, and shorts that showcase the talent, culture, and diversity of South Africa.

The South African Film Festival was the idea of former South Africans Cecil and Ruth Herschler. It was initially started when they emigrated to Vancouver,

Canada, in 2011 to raise funds for their non-profit organization, Education Without Borders (EWB), established in 2002. It provides after-school tutoring and mentoring to underprivileged children in the township schools of the Cape.

Please visit our website at <https://saffusa.net> and subscribe to our mailing list to receive updated information about the upcoming film festival. The funds raised by the festival will enable EWB to continue its life-changing work in making a crucial difference in the lives of young South Africans. The South African Film Festival USA is a non-profit organization; all donations are tax-deductible. For information on becoming a volunteer or a sponsor or for further details on the festival, please contact us at [info@saffusa.net](mailto:info@saffusa.net).



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## Ryanair forces South Africans to prove nationality with an Afrikaans test

by Padraic Halpin and Siyabonga Sishi

Ryanair says move to curb the entry of fraudulent passport holders. Afrikaans is spoken by only 12% of South Africans. The South African government clamping down on fake documents.

DUBLIN/JOHANNESBURG, June 6 (Reuters) - Ryanair (RYA.I) is requiring South African passengers to prove their nationality before traveling by completing a test in Afrikaans, a language used by just 12% of the population that has long been identified with apartheid and the white minority.

Europe's largest airline by passenger numbers, which does not operate flights to and from South Africa, said it required any UK-bound passengers from the country to fill in the "simple questionnaire" due to what it described as a high prevalence of fraudulent South African passports.

"If they are unable to complete this questionnaire, they will be refused travel and issued with a full refund," a spokesman for the Irish airline said.

South Africa's Home Affairs department, which has warned of syndicates selling fake passports, said it would issue a statement on the Ryanair test.

The UK High Commission in South Africa said on Twitter that the Ryanair test was not a British government requirement to enter the United Kingdom. The Irish High Commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



# Education Without Borders

by Brenda Sacks



The article you just read about the SA Jewish Film Festival was the idea of former South Africans Cecil and Ruth Herschler to help fund Education Without Borders, EWB they established in 2002. They believe that an investment in the education and care of South Africa's at-risk youth provides them with solid prospects for their future development. This ultimately provides hope for the future social stability and success of South Africa.

The evidence proving the success of EWB is shown in the increased numbers of high-school students who graduate from the program and go on to university and other career training centers. Some return to EWB as tutors while studying at university, pass-

ing their knowledge and skills onto the next generation of SA students.

To hear more about student's experiences with EWB, please go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmOZJxWOBBA&t=11s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmOZJxWOBBA&t=11s)

Additional programs have been added as people worldwide have been inspired by EWB. EWB and ex-pat Cy Charney established a mentoring program via Zoom in 2021. This was to develop the talent of a selected number of students in the after-school program connecting them with mainly retired exp-pats in North America keen to give back. They guide navigating challenges the students face now and in

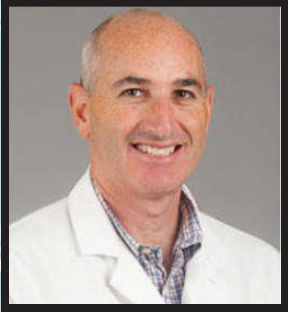
the future on school, careers, family issues, and improving their English communication skills. A group of high schoolers from Long Island, New York, who heard about EWB now volunteer their time online via Peerlab to tutor EWB students in South Africa.

All of this reinforces the work of EB. The fund-raising goal this year is to help EWB with a central hub and permanent home as well as fund the running and expansion of the program.

**Please visit these websites for information about EB:**  
[www.educationwithoutborders.co.za/](http://www.educationwithoutborders.co.za/)  
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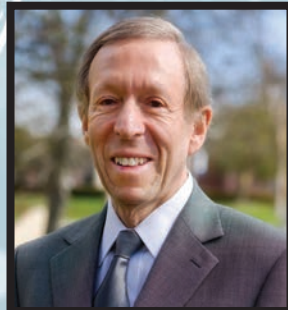
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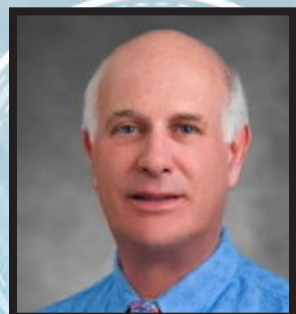
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# YAAANA & Yiddishland California

## A Year in Review

by Jana Mazurkiewicz Meisarosh – Founder & Director

The growth of YAAANA has been both challenging and exciting.



Jana Mazurkiewicz Meisarosh

Our efforts were dedicated to fundraising and growing the organization.

We then established our first physical location in La Jolla and Yaana and Yiddishland California opened to the public in November of 2021. Having a physical space to host classes, events, and art exhibits allowed our organization to enhance our connection with the San Diego Jewish community. It has also increased exposure for the artists and scholars we work with locally and internationally. Another major accomplishment of 2021 was founding our Yiddish Theater Academy, where famous teachers such as Mike Burstin and Shane Baker conducted theater workshops.

Yiddishland California is a shtetl-inspired

community space and an art gallery.

With art from all over the world, including South Africa, Israel, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, the UK, and the Netherlands. We have been fortunate enough to display and sell the work of talented artists such as Marc Chagall, Salvador Dali, Seymour Rosenthal, Oleg Tsank, Emil Für, and the Polish avant-garde Holocaust survivor Jan Lebenstein.

We have hosted numerous musical events at our La Jolla location and outdoor venues around San Diego. These performances have featured many international artists. We have included the music of many genres, from traditional Klezmer to Rock and everything in between. One of the highlights was a performance by the world-renowned, Grammy award-winning Klezmer ensemble, the Klezmatics, who shared their modern approach to the Eastern European Jewish musical tradition. We also hosted the acclaimed singer and actress Lisa Fishman. She recently performed in a dynamic Jewish cabaret performance in the role of Bobe Tsatyl in the Off-Broadway Yiddish production of Fiddler on the Roof.

In addition to our artistic work, YAAANA continues to offer language classes and has expanded course offerings in Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino, Ukrainian, and Polish. Zoom has allowed us to share our classes with the international Jewish community

and locally in San Diego.

On September 4, 2022, we look forward to hosting our annual fundraiser. Our focus is to raise enough funds to allow Yiddishland California to move to a larger space in La Jolla that would enable us to host international Yiddish summer programs, an after-school program for kids, and create a museum exhibit. More information will be available closer to the date.

**To learn more about Yiddishland California, please visit us online at: [www.yiddishlandcalifornia.org](http://www.yiddishlandcalifornia.org), contact us directly [info@yiddishland.ca](mailto:info@yiddishland.ca) or call 858-220-2992. Abi gezunt!**



# Planning Your Charitable Legacy

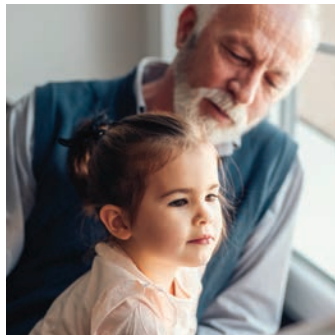


## What will your legacy be?

When you include ChaiSouthAfrica as a beneficiary in your estate plans, you make it possible for us to continue to serve the most vulnerable of the population in South Africa for generations to come –

**Let Your Name Be A Blessing!**

**Jewish Tradition** teaches that one of our key responsibilities is to make the world a better place for future generations.



## What is a legacy plan?

The beauty of a Jewish legacy is that it's yours to create. You can leave a bequest to any of the homes that are close to your heart.

## Options Include:

- Simple bequest in will or trust
- IRA or retirement plan
- Life Insurance Policy
- Charitable Gift Annuity and more



**ChaiSouthAfrica** raises awareness and funds to support Jewish Residential Homes in South Africa serving the Aged, Mentally and Physically Challenged, Mentally Ill, and Children in Need.

**Founded in 2000** by Claire Ellman, David and Felicia Mandelbaum, and Charles Jaffe.

**A fund of the Jewish Community Foundation San Diego**

# Shana Tova U'Metukah

**ChaiSouthAfrica** offers complimentary consultations for Legacy Planning, with the utmost confidentiality.

Contact **Mandy Katz** at (858) 279-2740 x100 or [chaisa@jcsandiego.org](mailto:chaisa@jcsandiego.org) to schedule!

# 21 Year Milestone for Shalom Baby

by Jennifer Meltzer



Reunion with parents and kids.



Shalom Baby Together - You & Me.

The Lawrence Family JCC – Jacobs family Campus and Jewish Federation of San Diego County started a new program, Shalom Baby, 21 years ago. Since then, Shalom Baby has reached thousands of new parents and created hundreds of playgroups and support groups. They have offered many classes such as infant massage and sleep training. Shalom Baby joined forces with the PJ Library and, with the help of a parent, created Little Mensches as a way for families with young children to gather and engage in tzedakah projects.

We are immensely grateful to Jean and Franklin Gaylis for their continued support of Shalom Baby. They have been involved and supportive from its inception, and we are the proud recipients of their commitment and belief in our work.

We also want to thank our amazing volunteers Brenda Abelkop, Shelley Binder, Felicia Belcher, Linda Busschau, Silvana Christy, Susan Levin, Rosy Matola, Judi Sofer, Brenda Silvers, and Phyllis Strauss. These dedicated women are the reason for the success of the program.

While COVID managed to curtail our programming for quite a while, we are happy to have in-person activities again. We used our downtime to create a brand-new Shalom Baby Together – You & Me program. Parents (and other family members) join their crawlers or walkers for a session of music and movement. It has been a pleasure to welcome

generations of families, including many of our South African/American community. Additionally, despite our dependence on zoom, our WhatsApp groups have continued in full force, keeping our playgroups connected even while we were all forced to isolate and support expectant moms socially.



Sue Swersky, Lauren, and Lily at Shalom Baby Together - You & Me.

As new moms have joined the San Diego community, we have connected them to other groups with children of the same age, and we are delighted to have our new playgroups meet in person again. Some of our playgroups have truly stood the test of time. One of our playgroups recently celebrated 18

years of friendship. Three of the moms in the group shared their stories about their journeys with parenthood and Shalom Baby:

Stacey Brodman says she will never forget the moment she held Emily in her arms for the first time. Her planned delivery had not gone as planned, and it was rough. Who knew motherhood would be so hard? I felt physically awful, emotionally exhausted, and way over my head. In survival mode, my husband and I worked around the clock to care for Emily. We were both exhausted and overwhelmed.

On Emily's three-week birthday, I attended the first January/February 2004 Shalom Baby playgroup informational meeting; that meeting changed my life. When I met these incredible women and babies, I knew these people would be the support system I desperately needed. We started getting together weekly, which quickly became daily, sharing our motherhood concerns, fears, successes, and missteps. We laughed a lot, we attended lactation meetings together, we spent hours at the park, we watched shows at Sea World, we went to the Zoo, and, on our babies' 1st birthday, we celebrated together.

Eighteen years later, we got our sweet "babies" together to celebrate their 18th birthdays. Now taller than most of us, these Shalom "babes" are forever connected, and so are we as moms and families. I still look to these women for support and advice. They are among some of my most special friends. We have



been through highs and lows together, our kids have become lifelong friends, and we have the special bond of early motherhood. We needed each other in a way that we had never needed anyone before, and because of Shalom Baby, we found each other 18 years ago.

Stacy added that Shalom Baby was the first Jewish community I was involved in as a new mother with my baby, Anna. The support I found from other moms was instrumental in getting me through the often complex and lonely experience of early motherhood. Having friends going through similar struggles made keeping a positive perspective more accessible. It was also the beginning of a solid Jewish identity for Anna, who would later go on to Jewish preschool, synagogue religious school, Jewish day camp, Jewish sleep-away camp, Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, and coming up, a trip to Israel, each experience with

many of those same Shalom Babies. For me, I made friends I would not have met otherwise. We continue to share our stresses, our pride, and our wisdom with each other.

Ellie Livingstone says Shalom Baby was (and is) a unique program that supports families just starting their San Diego Jewish journey. It offers "community" without walls, connection with no annual dues, and friendships that last a lifetime. I don't know where I would have been without Shalom Baby when I had my first child. My Shalom Baby "alum" is 18 years old and about to embark on her college adventure. Along the way, her peers in our cohort celebrated Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvot together, and we moms shared stories of personal milestones and asked for advice on how to handle the challenges of motherhood. We laughed, commiserated, and comforted each other when one of our Shalom Baby mamas

passed away from breast cancer five years ago. Shalom Baby will always hold a special place in my heart, and I am profoundly grateful.

Lorraine Fisher added that as our community grows, we are blessed to have a fantastic resource like Shalom Baby to support our new families, facilitated by Judy Nemzer and Vivien Dean.

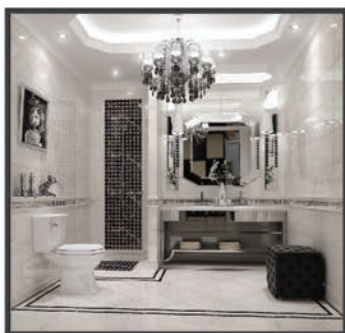
We want to extend a hearty Mazel Tov to Judy Nemzer, our fearless Shalom Baby Director, who received the Ana Kozlowski LFJCC Staff Award; this exemplifies the most vital commitment and dedication to the holiness of her work.

For more information about Shalom Baby/PJ Library, please get in touch with shalombaby@lfjcc.org.



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# The Contribution of South African Jews to Australia.

by Judy Maltz, Sydney



Raised on the value of giving to the Jewish community, former South Africans enjoy more than their fair share of representation in Jewish communal life in Australia and breathed new life into Sydney's Jewish community. Another prime destination for South African has been the city of Perth on the west coast, where they account for nearly 30 percent of the Jewish population.

## **The following organizations are all led by South Africans in Sydney:**

Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Australian branch of United Israel Appeal, Jewish Board of Deputies, Australian Jewish News, CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum, chief Jewish chaplain of the Australian Defense Force, Australia's leading businessman, and Rabbi of Melbourne's synagogue.

Suzanne Rutland, a leading authority on Australian Jewry, has conducted extensive research on the different Jewish immigrant groups in Australia. A professor emerita at the University of Sydney says the dynamics of the apartheid system in which many of these South African Jews were raised may explain their powerful sense of Jewish community and identity. "It was a system that encouraged Jews to see themselves as a sep-

arate ethnic group and a community apart from other groups in South African society," explains Rutland; the overwhelming majority of South African Jews originated in one place, Lithuania, and this further contributed to their sense of cohesion."

The Jewish day school system and Jewish communal organizations had taken root in South Africa long before they had in Australia, notes Rutland, so when South African Jews began moving to Australia, bringing the experience and expertise in these areas, they were able to fill a vacuum that existed.

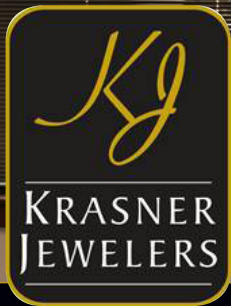
Australia has seen several waves of South African Jewish immigration. The Jews who came in the 1960s were mainly professionals. By contrast, the big immigration wave of the '70s and '80s was dominated by small business owners, including many ideologically opposed to the apartheid regime. Another large group came in the late '90s and early 2000s after apartheid had ended. Many were motivated by concerns about personal safety, the soaring crime rate in South Africa, and worries about economic prospects for their children.

Given the well-known challenges of immigration, Australia provided South African Jews with the advantage of something famil-

iar. It was also part of the Commonwealth and a country where English was spoken. Located in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons and school holidays fall at the same time of year. The weather tended to be mild, people drove on the same side of the road, and there was a penchant for the same sports – cricket and rugby. Also, it was a plus to have an already established community of former South African Jews who were waiting to welcome and help them get on their feet.

Many of those early arrivals moved to St Ives, where they established the Masada Jewish Day School. Eventually, they spread out to the eastern suburbs of Sydney. They became a dominant force at Moriah College – the most prominent Jewish day school in Sydney.

In the last major survey of Australian Jewry, South Africans are by far the largest group among Jews born outside the country. Among South African immigrants, 20% indicated their main reason for coming to live in Australia was to join their family or a partner; another 20% stated they were brought over as children by their parents. In comparison, 17% said they sought a better future for their children, and 11% sought a safe environment.



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# San Diego Jewish Academy

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San Diego Jewish Academy, a pluralistic community K-12 school with a thriving early childhood center, inspires and supports students with personalized and innovative learning. Educational and community experiences are infused with Jewish values and help to create meaningfully Jewish life for generations. Our students and graduates are leaders and positive change-makers in their communities and worldwide. The school's excellent teacher-to-student ratio and well-connected campus enable all students to grow and try new activities in a supportive environment.

SDJA is excited to continue our upward trajectory with another year of enrollment growth. Next year we are projecting 125 students in our Early Childhood Center and 620 in Kindergarten through 12th. Our high-quality academic experience and warm environment contribute to a 90 percent retention rate of current families. We embrace learning experiences that bring creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking alive on campus and expand thinking through real-world experiences.

SDJA's Open Door Program reduces the cost of an SDJA education by at least \$10,000 for incoming K and 9th graders and keeps that reduced tuition cost stable for four years. This in-

credible advancement of our school is due to community leadership, support, and belief in our school and our mission. Additional significant tuition assistance is available to families in all grades, making high-quality education and a meaningful Jewish community accessible for more families. We thank all those who make this possible.

### Here are some exciting developments:

We instill a deep understanding and respect for the values and insights of Jewish Tradition and a personal connection to Israel. Tikkun Olam is a core value at SDJA. This past year, students made and delivered holiday baskets during Sukkot, Channukah, Tu Bishvat, Purim, and Pesach to Holocaust survivors.

SDJA's Wellness Initiative supports the whole child, addressing their physical and mental health across the school day. We have an on-campus garden where students work and learn, a healthy community dining program, and opportunities for students to strengthen their social and emotional learning skills.

The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking provides opportunities for cutting-edge experiments and work in science, technology, business, and more. This enables students to work together across grades and

with the broader community in new ways. Through the CIET, the Upper School Physics launched a High Altitude Balloon, achieving the incredible feat of establishing a weather balloon at 90,000 feet — the highest attainable altitude in the Earth's atmosphere before space. The project allowed students to integrate their understanding of buoyancy, forces, and motion through a hands-on challenge.

SDJA proudly offers a diverse array of extra-curricular programs and inclusive curriculum classes in sports, arts, music, and science, which are integral to SDJA's goal of developing well-rounded students through various experiences. Toward that goal, the school just opened a new, state-of-the-art Ana "Janche" Galicot Performing Arts Auditorium (PAA). The 5,000 square-foot facility features three multi-purpose rooms, theater space, an auditorium, and state-of-the-art audio, visual, lighting, and acoustical design.

Choosing the right school for your child is among the most important decisions you can make. We encourage you to review our website at [sdja.org](http://sdja.org) to learn about what SDJA offers. Keri Copans, our Director of Admissions, is here to answer any questions you have, and we look forward to meeting you and your family.



The rabbi was an avid golfer and played at every opportunity. He was so addicted to the game that if he didn't play he would get withdrawal symptoms. One Yom Kippur the rabbi thought to himself, "What's it going to hurt if I go out during the recess and play a few rounds. Nobody will be the wiser, and I'll be back in time for services."

Sure enough, at the conclusion of the morning service, the rabbi snuck out of the synagogue and headed straight for the golf course. Looking down upon the scene were Moses and G-d.

Moses said, "Look how terrible—a Jew on Yom Kippur. And a rabbi besides!"

G-d replied, "Watch. I'm going to teach him a lesson."

Out on the course, the rabbi stepped up to the first tee. When he hit the ball, it careened off a tree, struck a rock, skipped across a pond, and landed in the hole for a HOLE IN ONE!

Seeing all this, Moses protested: "G-d, this is how you're going to teach him a lesson? He got a hole in one!"

"Sure," said G-d, "but who's he going to tell?"

A little Jewish boy was telling his mother about how he had won a part in a play that was being done at school.

His mother asked, "What is the part you will play, Saul?" Saul responded, "I shall play the Jewish husband," to which the mother replied, "Well, you go right back to that teacher and tell her that you want a SPEAKING part!"

Goldstein had been going to the same restaurant for 10 years. Every day he starts with the same thing, barley soup. One day, as soon as he comes in, the waiter brings the soup over to his table.

"I want you to taste the soup," Goldstein says as the waiter starts to walk away.

"What's the matter?" the waiter asks, "Every day you take the same barley soup."

"I want you to taste the soup," Goldstein repeats.

"You don't want the barley soup?" the waiter says, "I'll bring you something else."

"I want you to taste the soup," Goldstein says once more.

"Is it too cold? Too salty? G-d forbid is there a fly in it? What's wrong with it?" said the waiter.

"Just taste the soup," insists Goldstein.

"Okay, okay, I'll taste the soup," says the waiter, wearily. "Where's the spoon?"

"Aha!"

Who was the greatest financier in the Bible? Noah: he was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible? Pharaoh's daughter: she went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a prophet. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible? Samson

Abe was doing some roofing work for Yaacov. He nears the top of the ladder and starts shaking and going dizzy. He calls down to Yaacov and says "I think I will have to go home; I've come all over giddy and feel sick."

Yaacov asks, "Ave yer got vertigo?"

Abe replies, "No I only live round the corner."

Place and time: somewhere in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The phone rings at KGB headquarters.

"Hello?"

"Hello, is this KGB?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I'm calling to report my neighbour Yankel Rabinovitz as an enemy of the State. He is hiding undeclared diamonds in his firewood."

"This will be noted."

The next day, the KGB goons come over to Rabinovitz's house. They search the shed where the firewood is kept, break every piece of wood, find no diamonds, swear at Yankel Rabinovitz and leave. The phone rings at Rabinovitz's house.

"Hello, Yankel! Did the KGB come?"

"Yes."

"Did they chop your firewood?"

"Yes, they did."

"Okay, now it's your turn to call. I need my vegetable patch ploughed."



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LitvakSIG is the primary internet resource for Lithuanian-Jewish ("Litvak") genealogy research worldwide.

Our mission is to preserve Litvak heritage by discovering, collecting, documenting and disseminating information about the once vibrant Jewish community of Lithuania.

 Search the site:press enter or [click here](#)

Login to Your Account

by Carol Hoffman

It is my pleasure and honor to present LitvakSIG, a Special Interest Group for Lithuanian-Jewish genealogy research, founded in 1998. We are the primary internet resource.

Our mission is to discover, collect, document, disseminate and preserve information about Lithuania's once vibrant Jewish community. LitvakSIG is a financially independent Iowa (USA) non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. We are managed by nine elected Directors who volunteer their time and numerous other volunteers who coordinate fundraising, research groups, and projects. The borders of Lithuania changed many times over the centuries. Therefore, we have some records for communities in Belarus, Latvia, Poland, and Russia.

Jews settled in Lithuania in the 14th century. During the next six centuries, Jews migrated to and from Lithuania, depending on political and economic circumstances. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th-century, massive emigration occurred,

with Litvaks leaving for South Africa, North America, and England. Today we have Litvak researchers and followers in Australia, Canada, the US, South America, South Africa, England, and Scandinavia, to name a few.

LitvakSIG prepares the All Lithuania Database ALD. The database is freely searchable on the internet through our website. Working closely with the archives in Lithuania, we find and translate records such as vital records (birth, marriage, death), revision lists, tax, and voter lists, passport lists, directories, holocaust lists, and some burial records. The ALD is the jewel in the crown with over 2,500,000 records and growing daily. Source records are in Lithuanian, Russian (Cyrillic), Polish and Yiddish. We translate the details to English for the ALD.

One of LitvakSIG's notable projects is the Vilnius Household Registers VHR. These records contain a wealth of information tracking details about people living in Vilnius city between 1919-1940 when the city was un-

der Polish control.

There are 14 District Research Groups (DRG) matching administrative districts ("uyezds") of the Russian Empire period (1795-1917). There is one Guberniya Research Group (GRG) for Suwalki Guberniya. The premise on which Research Groups are organized is that families often lived in one shtetl but were officially registered in another or had extended family within proximity. Each group has its dedicated volunteer coordinator.

The LitvakSIG website has a broad scope of information about Litvak heritage. Examples are the original articles found in the Online Journal, interactive shtetl map, some Terms and Glossaries, details about the source archives and how to order complete records from them, video recordings of various sessions, i.e., an overview of LitvakSIG, how to search for documents, Birds of a Feather virtual meetings with in-depth information about individual District Research Groups, and more.



# A Trip Down Memory Lane



# Grace & Grit

by Debra Jedeikin PsyD

**We are challenged to change ourselves when we can no longer change a situation."**

I first read Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* in 1977 while studying psychology at the University of Cape Town. As a desperately seeking 17-year-old, this book spoke to my developing existential questions and has served as a roadmap throughout my life. I continue to read the book every five years, and it has remained the relevant and



Debra Jedeikin.

significant source of comfort and inspiration as it was decades ago. The book has been identified as one of the most influential in the United States. At the time of Frankl's death in 1997, the book had sold over 10 million copies and had been translated into 24 languages. Today, 76 years later, it remains on best-seller lists all over the globe.

Viktor Emil Frankl (26 March 1905 – 2 September 1997) was a Jewish Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist, philosopher, and writer. Now married, in 1942, Frankl, his wife, and his family were deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. His father died there within a year from starvation and illness. In 1944, Frankl and the surviving members of his family were transported to Auschwitz, where his mother and brother perished. His wife died later of typhus in Bergen-Belsen. Frankl spent three years in four concentration camps.

Following the war, he became head of the neurology department of the Vienna Polyclinic Hospital. He had developed his theory called Logotherapy (Greek for "healing through meaning"), an approach that describes the quest for one's life purpose as the central human motivational force. In 1946, they wrote '*Man's Search for Meaning*.'

Frankl did not subscribe to the pursuit of happiness, believing that happiness ensues only once we have found meaning. "He who has a reason to live can bear almost any how."

So... what does this have to do with Grace and Grit? I've witnessed people of all ages, life stages, and socio-economic and ethnic groups struggling with pain, depression, sadness, grief, anxiety, and fear. The last three years have been emotionally tumultuous, and the ongoing stress of COVID, inflation and continued uncertainties may result in feelings of helplessness.

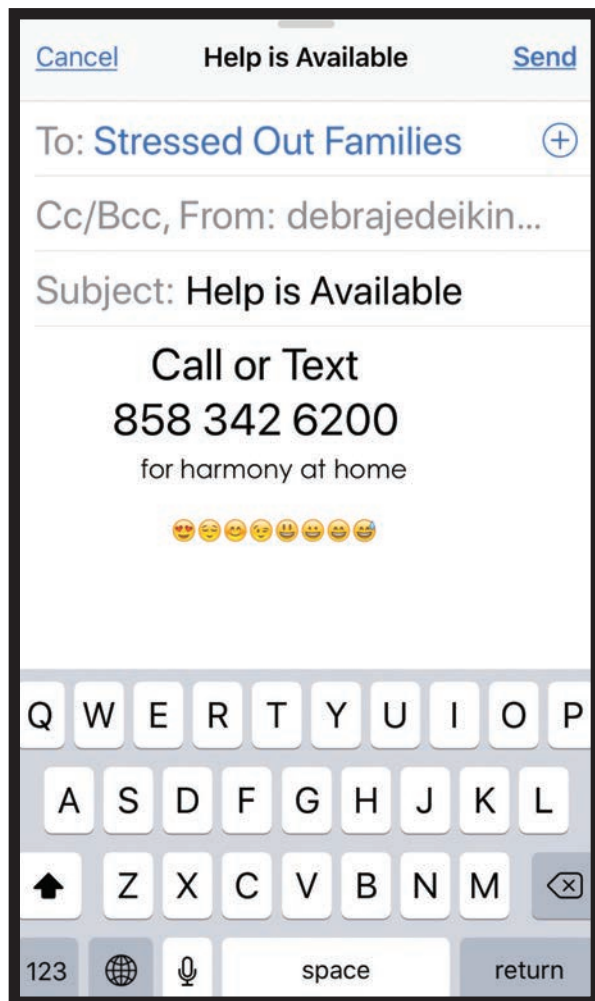
However, from Frankl, we learn that we can choose how to respond to our struggles: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's way... This spiritual freedom – which cannot be taken away – makes life meaningful and purposeful."

This echoes the well-known prayer which asks for serenity. ".....to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."

Both speak of our innate ability to choose a response to even catastrophic stress and hardship. Life throws us many challenges ranging from simple inconveniences (a traffic jam) to tragic and heartbreaking (illness and death of our loved ones). We all know no one escapes these and continue to rail against the perceived unfairness of these trials. Our unique human opportunity lies in the 'how' we bear our burden.

So often see, human beings make meaning by turning personal tragedy into a universal benefit, e.g., by creating a foundation representing the illness to which their loved one succumbed or lobbying for legislation for gun control after losing a child to a shooting.

I see 'Grace' as the ability to acknowledge and accept what we face and cannot change without judgment, blame or shame. 'Grit' is the courage, fortitude, and determination to find a way to transform despair by looking at how we perceive it and what we do in response. Both grace and grit feel impossible at the times of our most profound anguish. They are so hard to find in such turmoil. And at the same time, moving through our lives with grace and a good measure of grit is the kindest thing we can do for ourselves.



# A Trip Down Memory Lane - Our Seniors





# Finding Jewish Connections Wherever You Travel

## Even Along the Interstate 5 in San Diego County.

By Donald H. Harrison\*



Donald H. Harrison

Before our fellow Jews travel to other cities or countries, they like to do a little research. Is there a synagogue there where I may daven? Are there any kosher restaurants? Do any notable Jews live in this place? Can I find museums or other sites associated with Jewish history?

Other travelers prefer to learn by serendipity. They go to markets or sightseeing attractions, and while there, they watch, listen, and sometimes follow up. Is that person wearing a Magen David pendant? Did I hear that fellow speaking in Yiddish? Or in Hebrew?

We like to make Jewish connections wherever we go.

As much as I enjoy traveling to other cities and countries, I've found that it's not necessary to find surprising Jewish connections. They are here throughout San Diego County. I utilized research and serendipity to find ones I hadn't already told in previous books. San Diego Jewish World's motto holds true that there is a Jewish story everywhere.

Currently, I am completing a three-volume book series titled *Schlepping and Schmoozing Along the Interstate 5*. Each volume has at least 30 stories. The first volume takes readers from the U.S.-Mexico border through Old Town San Diego. The second advances the tour to the San Diego County Fairgrounds at Del Mar. The final

volume concludes the journey at the Orange County line.

At the moment that I am writing this article on the gracious invitation of SAJAC's Pamela Nathan, I am still in the process of researching stories for Volume 3. Volume 1 has already been published and is available via Amazon. Volume 2 is written but awaits formatting and proofreading.

Volume 1 provides a taste of the wide variety of Jewish stories one may find in San Diego County. There are examples of national retail, restaurant, and hotel chains started by Jews, among them the Las Americas Premium Outlets shopping center developed by Melville and Herbert Simon; Loews Coronado Bay Resort owned by the Tisch Family; and the International House of Pancakes created by brothers Al Lapin Jr. and Jerry Lapin. There also are venues associated with such antisemites as Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh, whose legacies are being renounced.

There are stories recalling local Jewish entrepreneurs and personalities – M. Larry Law-

rence at the Hotel del Coronado; the Klaubler-Wangenheim Company, which briefly owned a salt works in the South Bay; liberal newspaper publisher Lowell Blankfort of the *Star-News*; and Bill Kolender, San Diego's first Jewish police chief and later its first Jewish sheriff.

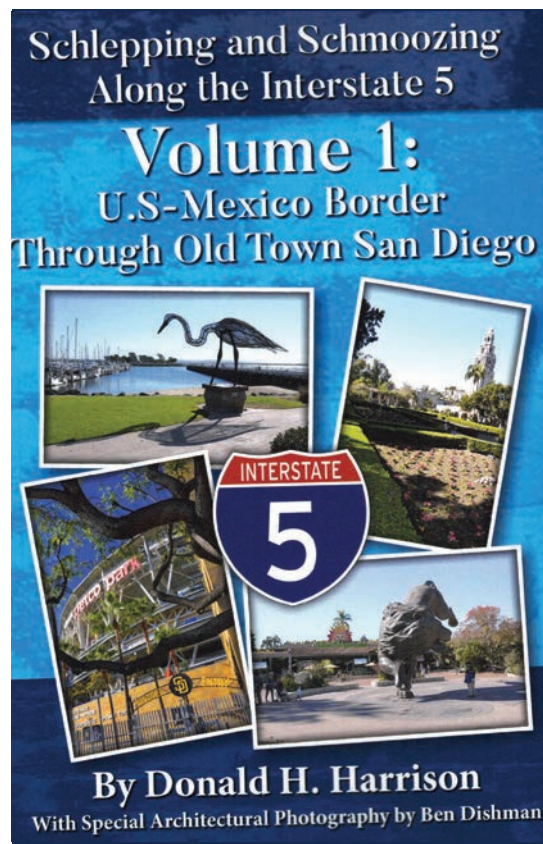
We are taken to other places of entertainment off Interstate 5, such as the new Sesame Place San Diego, based on a television show that Jews helped to conceptualize; the Hotel del Coronado, which Marilyn Monroe helped to make even more famous; Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres (which has had 11 Jewish players over its Major League history); Balboa Park, where we go on a museum-by-museum Jewish tour; Copley Symphony Hall, where violinist Eileen Wingard played under five conductors; and Old Town Trolley Tours of San Diego, which I helped to start.

Of course, there are places related to Jewish religion and rituals along the way. They include an area of San Diego Bay utilized as a Mikvah for conversions; and Temple Beth Shalom and Ohr Shalom Synagogue. Likewise, places are recalling our biblical heritage and Israeli connections, such as Mount Olivet Cemetery and the Little Landers Colony.

There are stories about Jewish subjects and educators at Southwestern College and San Diego City College, including Jewish officeholders at the City Administration Building, County Administration Building, and the Port of San Diego. As I had a role in it all, I couldn't resist sharing a story about the gaffes that accompanied Queen Elizabeth II's visit to San Diego in 1983.

Volume II and Volume III find Jewish stories in such venues as Mission Bay, Pacific Beach, La Jolla, Del Mar, Solana Beach, Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Camp Pendleton. Next time you ride up or down the I-5, you'll come to an exit and perhaps think, "Oh yeah, that's where..."

*\*Donald H. Harrison is editor emeritus of San Diego Jewish World (www.sdjewishworld.com) and the author of six books preceding the current three-volume work.*



# ANU MUSEUM OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

## Who We Are

Founded in 1978 as the Museum of the Diaspora (Beit Hatfutsot), the museum has turned its attention over the past decade to the central, existential challenge facing the Jewish people today: a growing disconnect of many young Jews from the diverse global Jewish family, a personal sense of Jewish belonging and a connection to Israel.

In response to this ongoing crisis, the museum was re-imagined and completely transformed, and with a new museum comes a new name: ANU - Museum of the Jewish People.

ANU - Hebrew for we, us - is a name that reflects our mutual roots, history and heritage, our unity and diversity, and the sense of belonging to the Jewish people that transcends time and space.

The museum, a living monument, the largest and most comprehensive museum of its kind, has been permanently enshrined in Israeli law, designating it as the National Center for Jewish Communities in Israel and Around the World and affirming its continued frontline status on the global Jewish map.

## What We Do

While continuing to showcase the Jewish past - and doing so with more impact, depth and breadth than ever before, ANU - Museum of the Jewish People celebrates the successes and creativity of Jews around the world today, and their contribution to humankind in all fields of modern life; while embracing the diverse ways in which Jews choose to practice and express their Jewishness.

Through this approach, unparalleled in Israel or any other location globally, the museum serves as a platform for a shared, optimistic Jewish future, connecting modern Israel with global Jewish life, and the voice of each individual with the fate of the collective Jewish people.



Bobby Fox, Pamela Nathan, Joel Berger, Maureen Mograbi, Felicity Nathanson, Front Simon.

## Maureen Mograbi & Me

by Pamela Nathan

As many of you may well know my very first SAJAC position was to interview newcomers for the Reporter. More often than not, there was 'some' connection with them, a distant cousin, a friend of a friend, and this happened time and time again.

Fast forward 35 years later, Tanya Bacher Middleton sent in the blurb on her mom, Maureen, who recently emigrated to San Diego. She included her maiden name, Mograbi. I was astonished. I know Maureen! Here's the picture with us taken on Durban Beach many, many moons ago. I can't wait to meet her in person again.

## Dry Bones



FROM THE DRY BONES HAGGADAH

# Leonard Cohen in Israel

Courtesy of ANU Museum of The Jewish People, Israel.

by Eric Basset



Photos courtesy of The Anjani Thomas Collection, Isaac Shokal, Doron Yakobi, Uri Dan – Farkash Gallery

Legendary musician Leonard Cohen's relationship with Israel was complex. Cohen, raised observant, was a devout Zen-Buddhist for thirty years, though he famously maintained his connection to Judaism throughout his life. His soul-searching – grappling with his own heritage – intermingled with Israel's story. From his first trip to Israel in 1960 as an unknown writer, when he met renowned Israeli poet Natan Zach at the iconic Café Casit in Tel Aviv, to two concerts in 1972 as a musical superstar – Cohen became one of Israel's favorite rock icons. At his first concert here, a fight broke between audience members and security at the Yad Eliyahu sports arena, when Cohen asked the audience to move closer to the stage. At his second con-

cert, Cohen famously did not feel his performance was living up to his expectations. He stopped playing in the middle of a song, and retreated to his dressing room to meditate. Half an hour later, he returned to the stage and brought his audience to tears. For Cohen, the event was traumatic – for those who were there, unforgettable.

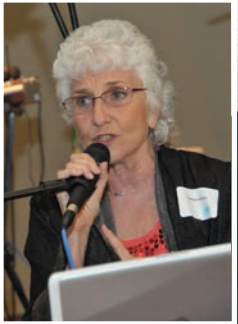
## **The Yom Kippur War**

When the Yom Kippur War broke out, Cohen was moved by the threat against Israel and arrived to help take part in the war effort. He was on his way to volunteer on a kibbutz when he had a chance meeting with Israeli singer Oshik Levi at the California Café. Levi was organizing musicians to perform for soldiers on the front lines and persuaded Co-

hen to join. Cohen, for his part, thought his songs were not uplifting enough for the beleaguered troops, but he went anyway. An iconic photograph shows Cohen with then General Ariel Sharon and Israeli rocker Matti Caspi in the Sinai. The war and the faces of the exhausted soldiers affected Cohen deeply and inspired him to write one of his most famous songs, *Love, Love, Love* – whose original version opens with the words "I saw my brothers fighting in the desert". Cohen performed in Israel again in 1985, and in 2009 for his final concert in the country, at which he spread his hands over the audience, giving them the Priestly Blessing, saying: "I don't know when we will meet again, but I promise to give you all that I have tonight."

# A Trip Down Memory Lane - 10 years ago

## Our 25th Anniversary Shindig, 2012.



# The San Diego Jewish Men's Choir

by Mark Zickel



The San Diego Jewish Men's Choir began in 1998 in the living room of Rhoda Gayles, its first musical director. Ex-South Africans got together to bring their experiences of traditional, South African-style Ashkenazi Orthodox music to our community.

After Rhoda retired in 2011, Ruth Weber assumed the role of musical director. We sing in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Ladino. Our repertoire includes a wide variety of liturgical, folk, and contemporary pop. Choir members range in age from early 20s to late 80s and hail from several countries. Since 2012, the Choir has produced three award-winning albums. Billboard Magazine listed one of them near the top of their CD winners. Music from all albums is regularly played on radio stations across the country.

The Choir has indeed come a long way. The endurance of the Choir over the years has been remarkable. We have sadly lost members due to illness as well as death. Through the COVID pandemic, we have persisted in producing and performing music. Unable to rehearse in person, each Choir member was required to mute themselves and sing along alone in their homes, listening to the accom-

paniment and direction. Despite these challenges, the Choir released the third album and produced two virtual performances that are available digitally and can be viewed on YouTube.

The Choir has performed locally in several venues, including the Lyceum Theater, Humphrey's, Avo Theater in Vista, Mark in Los Angeles, and numerous synagogues, churches, festivals, and public libraries. We have made television appearances on Jewish Life TV and for the Chabad National Telethon. The Choir has performed with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra in Omaha, Nebraska, and Phoenix.

Some of the Choir's favorite concerts are at local senior centers. Our music seems to awaken something special in these audiences. For those more unresponsive residents, seeing a hint of a smile on their faces or a slight movement of their hands is incredibly moving. "It is heartwarming to see our audiences laughing and smiling with tears in their eyes during our performances," says Ruth Weber.

The San Diego Jewish Men's Choir in-

vites new members of all ages with open arms. We embrace the opportunity to bring in new, often younger voices, fulfilling its mission by appealing to a younger generation that will continue to preserve and proliferate this vital music

Our mission reflects our love and desire to preserve, promote, and share the rich heritage of beautiful Jewish choral music. This is fulfilled through our performances at community events, senior centers, festivals, and synagogues and the worldwide distribution of our CDs and digital recordings—often free to worthy causes.

**Website:** [www.sdjmc.org/](http://www.sdjmc.org/)

**Email:** [@sdjmc.org](mailto:@sdjmc.org)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/sdjmc-choir/?hl=en](http://www.instagram.com/sdjmc-choir/?hl=en) (@sdjmchoir)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/SanDiegoJewishMensChoir](http://www.facebook.com/SanDiegoJewishMensChoir)

**Youtube:** [www.youtube.com/channel/UCSEe-6fFuYRwvEXC1mbavlg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSEe-6fFuYRwvEXC1mbavlg)

**Spotify:** [open.spotify.com/artist/6AZD-419Q3okwSzWPYECaFk](https://open.spotify.com/artist/6AZD-419Q3okwSzWPYECaFk)

# Klaberjas, San Diego Style!

by Gary Levinson



Dave Aronson, Gary Levinson, Dave Gafen & Stephen Sass.

It's a game of skill with a bit of luck thrown in. A game where you not only have to trust yourself but also your partner across from you. This is a card game that goes back many decades. It was actually started in the Netherlands but made its way to South Africa. I'm not sure if it was from the Dutch settlers, but it soon became a Jewish game played by our parents.

I remember while growing up that my dad, Ivan, played regularly with his mates. He was a skilled player, with a remarkable memory of the cards played. He played in local tournaments in Jo'burg and even did well in a championship tournament in Sun City. I remember him and his playing partner proudly accepting a prize from Sol Kerzner.

When I was a kid, he taught me the game by playing singles with me. But it wasn't until my days at Wiits medical school that Klaberjas became part of my education. Several boys played at Senate House on campus. When we moved to the Parktown campus, we played regular games in the medical school canteen. In those days, I had a regular playing partner, Neil Maresky. It was great fun. Sometimes there were even heated arguments, but this is where I honed my game.

When I moved to San Diego in 1989, one of the first guys I met was Dave Gafen, DG on Windansea beach. It took more than twenty years before we developed our regular playing school.

SAJAC hosted its 25th-anniversary celebration in 2012 and included a Klaberjas tournament. Here I met Dave Aronson, "Dov," and my long-time friend Stephen Sass, "Sassman."

Our foursome was formed, playing ever since, every week, from the Doubletree hotel and now, the clubhouse at Palacio in Carmel Valley. Our games at Palacio are social; we have a great laugh and escape from the stresses of life - a few bucks change hands every week, but overall it is wholesome fun with guys from a similar background, brought together by SAJAC. Who knew I'd be emulating my late dad?

I asked each of our players to share their fond memories of the game.

## **Dave Gafen, aka DG, says:**

Back in Cape Town we normally played Sunday and Wednesday nights. We always had a cut-off time at midnight; midnight would arrive and yet there was always time for just one more and then one more after that; I can't tell you how many mornings I went home to change clothes and go directly to the Navy or work.

As a struggling Navy man, I use to get some 'financial aid' by playing some of the students at UTC. My regular partners were Mervyn Braude and Howard Goldberg.

During the summer, I could always be found on Saunders Rocks playing on the beach, with my late friend Zivi and a few others. Klaberjas has a way of taking your mind off the regular daily stresses and routine for laughter, jokes, and fun".

For 'Stoch' please submit your name and phone number for those of you who would like to join in, before we go 'Beit'.

## **Steve Sass aka "Sassman", gives us some of his experiences.**

I was introduced to Klaberjas by my Cape Town family when I was still in high school. Whenever

the cousins came together, no matter what we were doing, someone would say, "Who wants to play Klaberjas?" Most evenings ended with a few games and a good laugh.

While at Wiits a few years later, Senate House was the venue for Klaberjas marathons. There was always a game, all day and every day.

When we moved to San Diego in 1992, I played with Dave Gafen, Russell Schechter, Barry Picker, and Charles Rubin. The evening went something like this. We'd play 2 games, have dinner, and then another 2 games. The dinners were always the highlight of the evening for me, especially when we played at Charles Rubin.

It was always a late night, but as soon as I got home, it was clothes in the wash and straight into the shower to wash away the smell of cigarette smoke and garlic.

Now Monday's at Palacio with Dave aka "Cowboy", Dov aka "Pinky" and Gary aka "Guinea" is an evening I look forward to every week. Beware the diamond .... it's doc Gary's favorite suit!

## **Dave Aronson aka Dov tells how he got into the game.**

I was forced to watch my dad and uncles play for a long time until they would actually teach me! Now I look forward to my Monday night games.

When the pandemic hit, believe it or not, we had no problem continuing our game. Thanks to the internet and software developer Robin Knip in the Netherlands, we moved our game online. iPads and WhatsApp did the trick.

I became "DocGary", Dave Aronson, "Davida1", Stephen, "Zundel" and Dave Gafen, "Kroeg". Steve Tradonsky, Neil Wainstein, Anthony Sacks & Joel Benatar also joined us. Learning the Dutch rules and variations of Amsterdam and Rotterdam was fantastic. Now that we're back paying in person, I still play a game of Amsterdam every night on my iPad against the computer or people worldwide.

Jas, Menel, Bella, Stoch, Twenty, Fifty, Guinea, and of course, the 'Gafen double' or Jack 8 take on!

I look forward to my Mondays to end my busy workday. I hope to keep laughing and playing for many years to come

# House of Israel, Balboa Park, San Diego

## Unique Educational Outreach

by Ruth Mastron



### Background/History:

Since 1948, the House of Israel in San Diego has proudly represented Israel in the heart of Balboa Park, San Diego's important attraction for visitors and locals alike. Just three months after the Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv, the Israeli flag went up in San Diego, and to the best of our knowledge, we are the first public building in the US to fly the blue and white. In addition, we believe the House of Israel is the only organization of its kind in the United States and possibly the world.

Thanks to our location, we are one of the rare pro-Israel organizations that are not "preaching to the choir." Many visitors can't find Israel on a map or know what they see in the media. No one comes to Balboa Park thinking, "I need to educate myself about Israel!" but while they're with us, visitors learn the facts, ask questions, and get a window on the reality of Israel. Every year, we welcome over 25,000 visitors and share Israel's story, from ancient history to modern high-tech. Guests can have their names written in Hebrew, and children take home small Israeli flags and stickers. And, of course, we offer our delicious feta cheese and spinach bourkas so visitors can truly get a taste of Israel.

"Shalom, welcome to the House of Israel!"

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the HOI. While our displays, exhibits, and food draws people in and tells part of the story, our volunteers bring Israel to life. Every page of our visitors' book overflows with comments like, "I learned so much from [name]!" "The volunteers are so warm and friendly," "Warm, welcoming place," "Now I do want to visit Israel in person!"—so we know the personal touch makes all the difference. We are always delighted to add more volunteers, so come by yourself or with family and friends!

### Special Events

The House of Israel is one of the 32 international cottages under the

House of Public Relations. In addition to our weekend openings, we have special annual events, some in conjunction with other international cottages organizations or Balboa Park. These draw in massive numbers of visitors and are a perfect way to showcase Israel:

- December Nights, Balboa Park's Christmas – and Chanukah, thanks to the House of Israel – Festival brings in 250,000 people. The annual Ethnic Food Fair is a feast for the senses.

- On Earth Day, we have a large booth with posters showing Israel's contributions to protecting the environment. In addition, we give each visitor a gift of a tomato plant grown in San Diego with Israeli seeds. This year, we partnered with the America-Israel Friendship

League to sponsor a guest speaker on Israel's use of limited water resources and what the world can learn from Israeli innovation.

- Celebrate Israel (Yom Ha-Atzmaut), in partnership with the San Diego Jewish Federation, brings together the whole San Diego Jewish/Israeli community for a full day of live music and dance performances, vendor booths, Israel-related activities for all ages, cooking demos, and of course, even more, fantastic food.





## Educational Program Theme Areas

The House of Israel has five core themes for educational programs. Each features a poster and playlist of video clips. We also have attractive brochures on related topics that visitors can take home. Volunteers use these themes as entry points for engaging visitors and answering questions.

- History: fact-based with archaeological evidence and primary-source historical documents
- Indigeneity: Jews as the indigenous ple of

the land of Israel and our connections to our ancestral homeland

- Israeli democracy: political freedom, freedom of religion, free press, and more
- Culture(s): the multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial, and multilingual tapestry of Israel, woven by Jews returning from the Diaspora and other groups in the land
- Innovation: the “start-up nation” and Israel’s contributions to the world in technology, medicine, research, and more
- Tikkun Olam: humanitarian work both

within various Israeli communities and throughout the world

- Shalom: Israeli efforts to bring peace to the region and the world

### Conclusion:

San Diego’s House of Israel offers a unique chance to educate people worldwide about the truth about Israel. Our history, particular location, focused messaging, and dedicated volunteers make us one of a kind.

For questions or more information, please get in touch with President: [ruth.mastron@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.mastron@gmail.com).





# In Loving Memory of...



## Johno Abro

by Carole Marks

Johno was our beautiful friend

From the very beginning, his keen wit, fine intelligence, and huge heart were evident.

He treasured everything about each individual and saw them honestly, accepting strengths and flaws implicitly, and offering lifelong love, laughter, loyalty, and friendship.

He had an open home where a drink was always offered, snacks placed on his counter, and where warmth and hilarity were the main dishes.

I can say it no better than his dearest friend Steve who said:

Johno was one of the richest people I knew, not in dollars and cents, but in the people around him and the love he gave and received.

Johno had a way of making each of us feel that we were the most important person in his life.

He lived in the USA for approximately 30-something years, and unfortunately for most of us, needed to go back to South Africa to look after his folk's house and affairs. He decided to stay there, where his only complaint was how much he missed all his friends in the US.



Johno Abro & Carol Marks.

Johno was the eternal optimist, no matter how bad things got he always found joy in life and those around him

He became the local Game Reserve Guide to those that were fortunate enough to go and enjoy time with him in the bush.

He was the stop-over for so many.

His home, like his heart, was always open.

Johno was our friend, a brother from a different mother, and he is missed every day by all those who loved him.

Forever cherished and forever remembered.



## In Loving Memory of...



### Stanley Smiedt

Stanley Herbert Smiedt was born on August 8, 1943, to Dr. Jacob and Ethel Smiedt (née Miller) in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Stan was a middle child and was doted on by his two sisters. Stan enjoyed an idyllic childhood. At age 13, he left home to attend boarding school at Kingswood College in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape. In addition to the distance from home, Stan excelled at rugby and was among the few Jewish students at the Methodist institution. These formative experiences shaped a quiet inner strength he would carry with him his entire life.

In 1968, he went on a blind date with Mal Josephson, which was unsuccessful. Six years later, in 1974, they met again, with a different outcome. They were married at Berea Shul on January 19, 1975, and welcomed their first son, Bradley, just under one year later. In September 1978, their second son, Evan, arrived.

Years before, during the Soweto riots of 1976, Stan and Mal made the courageous and prescient decision to leave home again and immigrate to the United States. The decision was a selfless act, which was characteristic of Stan as he wanted to provide his young children with opportunities and life only America offered. In 1978, Stan and his brother-in-law Julian

Josephson, who became his lifelong business partner, acquired three Burger King restaurants in San Diego, CA.

The early years were difficult, with Stan and Julian working around the clock to manage a business while flipping burgers and cleaning floors. Stan's work ethic was unparalleled, and he had little choice but to make the new business work. Over the years, the three Burger Kings grew to many more, plus other franchise concepts, including Bruegger's Bagels, Tony Romas, Houlihan's, and most recently, Popeye's Chicken. Stan parlayed his business success into a life of tzedakah, giving generously to Jewish organizations and causes that included the San Diego Jewish Academy, FIDF, AIPAC, and the San Diego Jewish Federation.

But Stan's most excellent form of tzedakah was the financial help, advice, and time he quietly gave to individuals in need, many of whose names and identities remain unknown, even his family. Stan lived the American Dream, but in his life, nothing mattered more to him than his family. Stan's humility, kindness, selflessness, and generosity were a powerful example to his sons of how to be a true mensch, or as Mal called him, "Hashem's gentleman."

Stan was immensely proud of his boys,

who revered him in return. They spoke often multiple times a day and considered one another best friends. Moreover, Stan and Mal enjoyed a beautiful marriage for nearly 47 years. All who knew them understood the special nature of their union and the unique mutual respect, kindness, and love they shared - whether they were sitting quietly in their apartment or traveling the world.

But a special place in Stan's heart was reserved for his grandchildren. As he always said, "you love your children, but you are IN LOVE with your grandchildren." Indeed, he was head-over-heels in love with his grandchildren; in his later years, his life revolved around them. His grandchildren adored him in return, speaking to him daily, sharing stories with him, and ingesting his deep wisdom. And while life had other plans, they consider themselves immensely blessed to have known their "Zaida."

Stan is survived by his wife Mal, sons Brad and Evan, daughters-in-law Jessica and Meredith, sisters Shirley and Linda, grandchildren Jonah, Arielle, Harrison, Miles, and Jacob, and his close and loving family in San Diego, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, and Sydney.

## In Loving Memory of...



### Dora (Duxie) Smukler

Duxie passed away on June 28, 2022, after a courageous battle with both inflammatory breast cancer and Alzheimer's.

Duxie's daughters, Jeanne and Arlene, her son-in-law Andy Blumenfeld, and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren will always remember her.

Duxie was born in Boksburg, Transvaal, raised her family in Sandton, and immigrated to San Diego, California in 2002. Duxie embraced her new community with enthusiasm. She became actively involved in lawn bowling at Balboa Park and played competitively for the San Di-

ego Lawn Bowling Club. In her younger years, an excellent tennis player she was the Transvaal Automobile Club tennis champion in the singles, doubles, and mixed doubles categories.

Duxie regularly attended lectures arranged by the Brandeis North County chapter and was its Board Secretary for several years. She looked forward to her weekly bridge games and attending symphony concerts and the theater.

Duxie loved to help people and regularly drove her friends to various activities. She also enjoyed reading her Financial Times, attended Pilates at the Bay Club,

and traveling far and wide.

Duxie was wonderfully warm, kind, and caring: a ray of sunshine to anyone who crossed her path and a beacon of all that is positive and good. She loved her family, and friends and always saw the best in people and the silver lining

in every cloud. She showed her resilience and strength in dealing with the sad loss of her youngest daughter, Elana, to cancer in 2000 and then also had to deal with the loss of her beloved husband Nick, who died from cancer in 2001.

### Place Ingrid Davis

Our Dearest Ingrid, z"l passed on 26 November 2021.

She always went that extra mile.

We miss you, you'll always be remembered.

Dennis Davis and Family



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Did you know there are more than 10,000 Jewish households in San Diego County that have been impacted by financial insecurity?

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- Employment Services
- Business Mentoring

If you or a loved one is struggling, Kindness Initiative can help. If you want to be a helping hand, consider volunteering or donating.

Ph: 858-216-1666 or email [info@KindnessSD.org](mailto:info@KindnessSD.org)



[www.kindnessSD.org](http://www.kindnessSD.org)