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TELFED TURNS 60

Some don't like to be reminded of birthdays. One's fiercest critic - the mirror - diminishes the excitement. Not so for **Telfed** and the State of Israel that share a 60th this year. Both are *looking good* after an adventurous six decades and are *shaping up* to meet tomorrow's challenges.

For Telfed that means – increased aliya. “Over sixty aliya files were opened in January in SA,” says Israel Centre Director **Ofer Dahan**, “representing nearly a third of the total aliyah figures for an average year.” Whether it's the power outages or maybe South African Jews are “seeing the light”, they are coming, and on the 5th July an El Al plane will be arriving from South Africa with a planeload of olim.

So while Telfed will be organizing during the course of 2008 a number of events and activities celebrating the achievements of the past, “we are preparing for the future,” says Telfed Director **Sidney Shapiro**. “As it is, we have enormous strains on our financial resources from providing scholarships to our youth to monthly stipends to our aged and now with an increased aliya, we have to be prepared. This is why we are going out on a fundraising campaign as we last did in 1993.” (See article on page 42)

Telfed was established in 1948 to service the volunteers who came from Southern Africa to fight in Israel's War of Independence. Sixty years on, it is now servicing a community that has grown and settled the length and breadth of the country, contributing in nearly every facet of this enterprising nation. What better way to embrace the future than to welcome and support our fellow Southern Africans who are ‘coming home’ in Israel's and Telfed's 60th year.

David Kaplan, Editor

Telfed Magazine thanks the following institutions and individuals for co-sponsoring the printing and distribution of this issue in South Africa.

- the **IDC, Herzliya, Raphael Recanati International School**
- the Jewish Agency's **Baruch Kostsewa**, Director of the **Publications and Information Section of the Immigration and Absorption Department** and **Barbara Meltz-Kahn**, Director of Western Languages for the Publications and Information Section of the Aliyah and Integration Department.



STIRRING TIMES

Dear Editor,

Your Cover Story in the Telfed October 2007 issue commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War played an



important part in highlighting those who came as volunteers to help in Israel's reconstruction – many of whom remained in the country or returned later.

I was pleased to see you included letters from my book, "A Shield About Me", from those who lived through those momentous days contributing to a picture of the young State under the threat of annihilation.

Muriel Chesler, Beth Protea

TIEING THE KNOT AT TELFED

Dear Editor,

In your October issue you mentioned that some Nachal volunteers had been married at the Telfed Hostel in Tel Aviv. **Perla** and I met

Please Note: The date on the right corner of your mailing label indicates the date of your last payment for Telfed Magazine. If no date appears, we have not yet received payment from you.



Simie Weinstein officiating at the wedding ceremony of Roy and Perla Chweidan in the Telfed Hostel (1958).

while we were serving in Nachal in 1956 and on my discharge in 1958 were married at the Hostel in a military ceremony officiated by **Simie Weinstein** (ז"ל). The army organized the wedding at their expense.

Life was much simpler in those days and Perla arrived at the wedding by taxi and I by bus accompanied by my friends and a bottle of brandy, which we finished before the ceremony began. There was music, the food was simple, no speeches and we received hardly any presents. But what a great atmosphere! Simie rescued me at the signing ceremony because he said I was "*ongeshnosket*".

The Hostel was packed with many recently discharged soldiers, a group from Tzora and veteran Israeli members of Perla's family.

Col. Schulman issued us with a *Ktuba Tsva-it* (Military marriage document), which remains today one of my most prized possessions.

Roy Chweidan, Netanya

HELPFUL HAND

A letter to Ofer Dahan, Director of the Israel Centre in Johannesburg from Chani Kazarnovsky, studying at the IDC Herzliya's International School of Business.

Dear Ofer,

I'd like to let you know that I have made a smooth, fast and easy 'landing' in my new home! All the bureaucratic processes went quickly, thanks to **Telfed**. I'm officially now an Israeli.

I have received a **Telfed** scholarship and am participating in their PRAS volunteering program, where I visit a senior lady twice a week. I also have a part-time job at a restaurant in the Dan Accadia Hotel in Herzliya Pituach, which is fun.

It's going well at the IDC, interesting classes and fun being on campus with all my friends. There are lots of South Africans here this year - about 32. It's growing each year.

So all in all, I'm VERY HAPPY in my new home. This has definitely been the right move for me and feels like I'm really living the dream. Just wanted to update you and hope I put a smile on your face! I sure have one on mine.

Best regards, **Chani**

To all **South Africans** wanting to subscribe to Telfed Magazine by credit card; A year's subscription: \$35 (includes postage) Telfed's toll-free number from SA is 0800 - 997 - 495. People who wish to pay by credit card from SA should speak to: Helayne - ext. 220 or Sharon - ext. 201.

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Simon Ash, a deaf oleh, working in the Ra'anana Park.

Ear to the Ground

By Dorrn Kline

Twenty-five-year old **Simon Ash**, communicates in sign language and lip reading. Having been the only Jew at the Catholic St. Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg, he quickly picked up from his class mates how to become anti-Semitic. "I hate Jews!" he one day expressed to his older brother Craig.

"It was time to join Betar," the older brother decided.

Machane changed his life. "I was mixing for the first time with so many young Jews," but more important, "they were proud to be Jews. It felt good to belong to Betar."

Simon's fist visit to Israel was on a Jewish Agency Internship programme arranged by **Shay Felber**, the Betar shaliah in Johannesburg. At age 23 Simon kissed the tarmac at Ben Gurion airport and immediately volunteered as a sports teacher at the Keshev School for the deaf in Kfar

Saba. He quickly mastered Hebrew sign language and for four months, became an integral part of the Keshev faculty.

Last year Simon returned to Israel, this time as an immigrant. Following his initial absorption, utilizing Telfed's manifold Klita services, he soon found a job in the Ra'anana municipal gardening department. Nine months later, the head of the gardening department answered Simon's mother, **Sheryl**, "Don't thank me. He has given this city much more than we gave him!"

Simon is about to start a special six-month Ulpan for the deaf.

Herber House Reunion

In 1943, **Herber House** was acquired in Yeoville, Johannesburg, by the South African Board of Jewish Education to provide a boarding house for Jewish children whose parents lived in the far away country communities. These children came to study at schools such as Athlone Boys' or Girls' High, Yeoville Boys' School and Barnato Park. Recently, some 50 former residents of Herber House met at Kibbutz Nachshon in a first ever reunion.

Dorrn Kline, who represented Telfed at the reunion, reports:

"That was the last time he called me a Jew," related world-renowned martial arts specialist **Dennis Hanover**. Frequently defending himself against anti-Semitic



Participants at the reunion.

Reunion Organising Committee: the Shefts brothers- Avri and Gerry, their wives Galya and Lotty, Michael Yachad, Bernard Lapidus, Bennie Bar Yehuda (Croock) and Shulamit Kur - Goodman.

bullies at school, Dennis developed his own style of fighting. Returning to Herber House after school, he would then teach his fellow boarders his new 'proven' moves.

Today in his 70's, he still trains the Israeli army in self-defense techniques. "My Jewish pride, knowledge and fighting abilities are all a result of the time spent at Herber House. It was there that I learnt that a Jew must stand up for himself."

Dennis attended the reunion with his grandson, **Alon Bachar** - a Jujitsu champion who follows in his grandfather's footsteps.

Both **Avri Shefts** and his brother **Gerry** are graduates from the 1940's and were part of a South African Garin of the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* youth movement that came and established Nachshon soon after Israel's independence.

"Jewish pride was part of the ethos that we acquired at Herber House," Says Avri. "Even though we were not all religious, prayer and Jewish study were a compulsory part of the curriculum. Although we complained about it and held secret competitions in order to see who could finish Davening the fastest, it helped to cement a strong Jewish-Zionist identity."

The proof of that assertion was evident

by the number of graduates who had made aliya and attended the reunion.

Leon Glasser from Efrat recalled how his brother **Julian** "received a hiding for insolence" when he let his feelings be known to the fundraisers who came to his school to collect for the British forces in Palestine. "Julian stood firm in refusing to help the British against the "Hagana", "Etzel" and "Lechi"." Leon concluded his reminiscing - some of it in Afrikaans - with the blowing of the Shofar, the blasts of which reverberated throughout the Kibbutz.

As speakers stood up to tell their tales, the teenage love stories were revealed. Laughter shook the room when some of the female Herber House graduates discovered, 50 years too late, the identities of their secret admirers!

continued on next page

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Bernard Lapidus had been quick to stand up for his Jewish identity. His parents sent him and his sister from their farm near Piet Retief to Johannesburg, following his expulsion from a local school. The reason? “One of the pupils called me a ‘filthy Jew’ so I washed his mouth in the toilet bowl!”

Also there was the accomplished pianist **Gita Franco**, whose love for the Hebrew language developed while she was at Herber House. “I loved Hebrew so much that I decided to become a Hebrew teacher. However, music was my other great passion and so I became a Hebrew music teacher.”

Ian Rogow recalled his hidings for misbehaviour - “not unusual to be beaten with a leather luggage strap.” However, he was hardly unprepared. “Before coming to Herber House I attended a school in Upington where my teacher was a member of the Ossewa Brandwag. As a Jew, I was the prime target for his leather strap.” So although hidings were never pleasant “I preferred the ones I received at Herber House!”

Sadly, Herber House has had its Israeli fallen heroes too — **Joshua Levy** (z”l) was killed in a battle with terrorists in 1952. One of the suggestions to come out of the reunion was to set up a trust fund at Telfed in his memory, for Israeli children who live under war conditions today.

The other was not to wait too long for the next reunion!

Young Performers

Eleven year old **Talya Klompas** from Raanana ‘took gold’ winning the girls 50m freestyle in last year’s National Junior Championships. She is the daughter of **Jerome** and **Debbie** (née **Serebro**) of Ra’anana, who made aliya from

Johannesburg in 1994. Swimming for Bnei Herzliya, “she trains six times a week,” a proud dad told **Telfed Magazine**.

Open to contenders worldwide, 14 year old **Gil, son of Ron and Stephanie Haimovitz** of Gedera recently won

the bronze in the Croatian Open Ta Kwan Du Championship. No less proud are his grandparents, **Gaby and Freda Haimovitz**, residents in Telfed’s Ra’anana complex and **Bella Alswang** of

Netanya.

Gil will be competing in the world championships to be held in Turkey in May 2008. •



(above)
Champion swimmer Talya Klompas and (below) Ta Kwan Du Champion Gil Haimovitz



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The Drom Afrika II

Many former Southern Africans in Israel are familiar with the exploits of the 'Drom Afrika', the ship that brought seven young South African 'sailors' to Palestine in 1947.

While that full story has been published in Telfed Magazine, few know about the dramatic voyage of the Drom Afrika 11, which arrived in 1949 with another group of South Africans.

Solly Blecher (Ben Ami) from Moshav Orot was on board and tells his story:

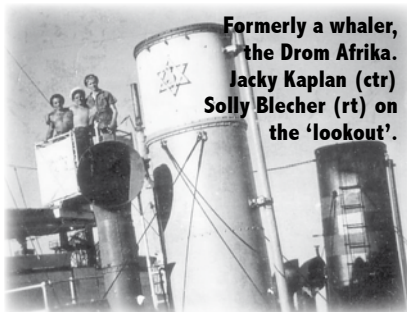
After studying for six months at Wits in 1947, I went on *hachshara* at Northcliff spending six months working on the land, occasionally venturing into Johannesburg on

Sunday nights to fight the Afrikaner fascists on the City Hall steps. The Communist Party was heavily outnumbered and appealed to the Zionists for support. We were keen to oblige, after all, we had a common cause in fighting the anti-Semitic Ossewa Brandwag.

In June 1948, **Zvi Infeld** of the SAZF appealed for volunteers to man a mine-sweeper, the Hector IV, which the Africa Palestine Fisheries had purchased for a future Israeli navy. I volunteered, as did **Jacky Kaplan, Cecil Abrahams, Sydney**

Goldman, Jack Witkin, Peter Silberman, Harold Levitan, Solly Meltzer, Mike Shakonovsky, Max Abramowitz (Australia), Cyril Spilkin, Harry Milner, Barney Smith and Zami Reef.

continued on page 8



Formerly a whaler,
the Drom Afrika.
Jacky Kaplan (ctr)
Solly Blecher (rt) on
the 'lookout'.

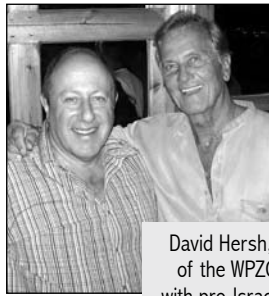
The Drom Afrika II berthed in Haifa harbour at the end of March 1949 alongside the abandoned Exodus. How fitting that its predecessor, the Drom Afrika I, arrived in port the same day in 1947 as the Exodus.

Telfed spoke to **Issy (Greenberg) Granot**, a retired architect, who was on board the 'Drom Afrika'. "As we sailed into Haifa, we saw the Exodus being towed into port. We watched as some 4,500 passengers, mostly Holocaust survivors, were transferred from the Exodus onto three British ships. That night Haifa port was alive with activity. Police launches patrolled the harbor, dropping depth charges to scare off Jewish frogmen. How excited we were to see at least one British ship used for transporting Jews from Palestine to Cyprus sink at the wharf."

We renamed the ship the 'Drom Afrika II' and attached a Magen David to the funnel. The fo'c's'le originally had a 6-pounder cannon, so our first job was to paint over the base on which it rested, covering up any signs of military intent. Our mission was supposed to be secret, but the crew could not shut their mouths and very soon the boat became a sort of curiosity attracting inquisitive onlookers. But soon there would be far more

continued from page 7

So off to Cape Town we went and spent two months chipping and scraping away at the ship's hull and showering each day at the Seaman's Mission. In our spare time we tried conducting ourselves like 'experienced' sailors. We must have been somewhat convincing as we became favourably acquainted with a lot of pretty girls! We were viewed as heroes-in-the-making and were well received by Cape Town's Jewish community.



David Hersh, Chairman of the WPZC in Israel with pro-Israel advocate, entertainer Pat Boone who wrote the lyrics to the theme song of the movie "Exodus."

AS FOR THE CREW!

The captain was a drunken Welshman, the Chief Mate a drug addict, the bosun, a coloured man from Cape Town, the chief engineer an anti-Semitic Englishman, the second engineer a sensitive Dane and the cook a coloured man with a heart of gold.

serious leaks!

Weighing anchor we set sail, but before reaching Walvis Bay we sprang a leak and were forced to return. Limping back into Victoria dock, baling water throughout the night, The Cape Argus could not resist the headline: "Drom Afrika II makes a false start".

After a month of repairs we set sail again and made it to Walvis Bay where we were welcomed by the Jewish community.

A week later a feud broke out at sea between our Captain and his Chief Mate, each accusing the other of drunkenness, incompetence and drug abuse. This led us to sail up the Congo River to Matidi for the British consul to resolve the dispute. In the meantime, we entertained ourselves by playing soccer against local teams. I still remember the scores!

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No sooner were we on the move again, than we were beset by a terrible storm which almost capsized the ship. It wouldn't have taken much, as our ship was so low that if sitting on the edge of the deck, one could dangle one's feet in the water. Fish were frequently swept on board.

We survived and sailed onto Takaradi, Lagos and Dakar, where we met with the ship 'Captain Markos' bringing a shipload of Shanghai Jews to Israel. In Oran, in French-controlled Algeria, we were lucky to escape with our lives. One of our idiotic crew members mouthed off that we were off to fight Moslems. Before we knew it, a group of 200 irate locals blocked our path to the ship. Were it not for the French police intervening, we would not have made it back on board. One of our crew did receive

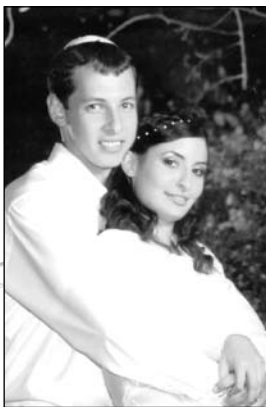
a bump on the head from a rock. From there we sailed onto Malta, where the British took a mild interest in us, they could do little else as we were no longer sailing to *their* Palestine, but to *our* Israel.

What a welcome we received! Whether it was the fault of our 'drunkard' or 'drug addict', but no-one in our crew had thought it prudent to radio the Port Authority of our arrival. The result — we were fired upon. Anyway, we sailed out of firing range, but later, guided in by a tug, we entered Haifa harbour four and a half months after leaving Cape Town. •

TOP PRIORITY: When Golda Meir held the office of Prime Minister, she tried to encourage Henry Kissinger to make Israel a top priority.

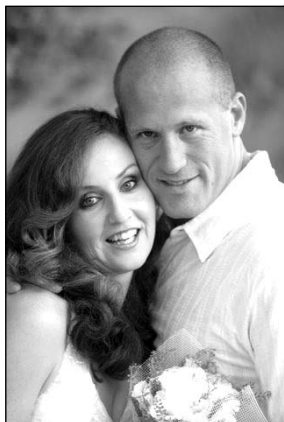
He sent her a letter: "I would like to inform you that I'm first an American citizen, second Secretary of State and third a Jew."

She responded, "In Israel we read from right to left."



Gila, daughter of George and Andy Cohen, and granddaughter of Hannah and the late Joe Cohen of Jerusalem, married Ze'ev, son of Chaim and Sheila Menachemson of Jerusalem & grandson of Mace and Ann Menachemson of Ashkelon.

Lisa, daughter of Dr. Jonathan and Shelly Cohen of Tzur Yigal, married Yaron, son of Gabi and Rivka Greenberg of Jerusalem.

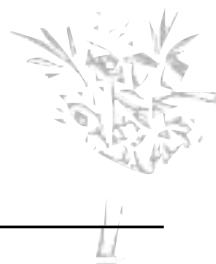


*Mazal
Tov!*



Rina, daughter of David and Lynne Conroy (Pretoria and Cape Town) of Beer Sheva, married Uzi La'aziz Ben-Shabo of Kiriat Gat, He is the eldest son of Avraham (Alberto) and Ilana Ben-Shabo of Kiriat Gat.

Shirel, daughter of Victor and Erica Hoch of Johannesburg, married Ilan Garty



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LIFE AT THE TOP

TIMORIM – THE EARLY YEARS

Les Sheer, who served on Telfed’s Executive and returned to his home town of Johannesburg on shlichut in the late 1950’s, recently celebrated his 80th birthday. He did so by offering his friends and family a history lesson.

For the 50 plus guests who packed in the bus to learn about the pioneering life on Timorim, it was not a case of heading south to where the moshav is situated today near Kiryat Gat, but north to a picturesque hilltop opposite Nahalal in the Yizreel Valley. It was here in 1951 that Timorim was originally established by a core group of some 20 South Africans, all members of the Bnei Zion youth movement. Many of them, like Les and Zippy, got married before leaving South Africa.

The bus puffed its way up the serpentine hill, where perched on top stands modern-day Timrat. “The trees on the side of the road were planted by Zippy. We were paid the princely sum of one pound a day by the JNF,” says Les, manning the bus microphone. “It was hell climbing up this hill at the time, particularly through the mud in winter, and so one of our first jobs was building a road.”

FRONTIER LIFE

Life at the top then was a far cry from today’s “Savyon of the Lower Galilee”. The group only stayed there some three years. The cataclysmic schism that tore apart the Kibbutz movement in 1952, “splitting families and friends, affected us even though we were neither a kibbutz nor connected with their ideologies.”

With the breakup of kibbutzim, more land was



Les Sheer describing life on Timorim to his guests.

needed “and they wanted ours”. Not that it upset Les who as *Merakez Meshek*, was responsible for the management of the settlement.

“We have wonderful memories, but economically it was impractical. Our fields were nearly a two-hour drive away by tractor;

east of Afula, near the Jordanian border. Being so far away, we used to set up camp there in season and spend periods of a week to ten days there at a time. Showers! In our dreams! We had no such luxuries. The water was brought in a mobile tank and used only for cooking, drinking and very sparingly for washing.”

So where was the water for irrigation? “We farmed only “dry” crops - wheat, barley, corn and hay; all reliant on rainfall. If there was a drought, you had it.” Life was harsh.

“Our wives used to take turns cooking. Life was also dangerous. We always had to be watchful for Arab marauders. There was no fence separating us and Jordan and we used to have an extra person on the tractor with a rifle over and above the driver who had his Sten gun beside him. We had some close shaves, but that was frontier life.”

What did they live in? “Converted wooden crates that the immigrants in those days brought their furniture in. We carved out doors and windows and could house up to four in a box.”

Back on the hill, business was better. “We had a few guys who had been sheet metal workers in South Africa. They set up a business

and our first order was to supply the ducting for air conditioners to the first Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv. This business became so successful; it was the precursor for Miromit (the world's first solar heating factory), which is Timorim spelt backwards." Another big order, reveals Les, "was to make the ducting for Peres' textile plant in Dimona."

THE MILKY WAY

"All over these hills," Les pointed out to his guests "we had a huge herd of sheep. One day I offered to help with the milking. To this day I still do not understand why they have to do this at 2am. Nevertheless, I reported on time and was directed to the six sheep down the row. It was pretty dark as there was no electricity, only paraffin lamps. I followed their lead by squeezing the teat in a downward motion and the next moment found myself sprawled on my back. Determined not to let a sheep get the better of me, I attacked the teat again and...thump! After being kicked a third time, the boys were hysterical. They had set me up with a bloody ram."

On another occasion, when "we were on *Hachsharah* on Gvat before moving to Timorim we were working with these young guys who had just been released from the Palmach and they thought they knew everything. This was the period of the Tzema (rationing) and I was learning about growing fodder. This bloke comes in, sees no milk in the

cooler, so opens the fridge and helps himself to some bottles. I tried to stop him - "what are you interfering for" - so I walked on into the dining room for lunch. About ten minutes later the man in charge of the cows came storming in, shouting, "What the bloody hell is going on here. The expert has come to do the artificial insemination of the cows and all the semen in the fridge is gone. Who the hell is responsible?"

The question needed no answer. Everyone turned to the only person in the dining room who had vomited.

The South Africans were joined by a group of survivors from the Holocaust. "They were a wonderful bunch of hard-working young people, who had lived on their wits to survive. For the most part they had missed out on an education and some of them did not even know their own birthdays. One fellow took the name of Pesach Purim, because he remembered celebrating his birthday sometime between the two chagim."

It was for the most part hearing about the horrors of the Shoah in Johannesburg in 1945 that made Les determined to settle in the new Jewish State. "My parents were dead against it, but the Shoah was the final straw. All the memories of my schooldays came flooding back of being taunted - "Jew boy, go back to Palestine."

At age 21 Les took their advice. •

rt: Pioneers in the fields (l-r), Barney Rosenberg, Dov Sender, Les Sheer.

below: Starting a family, Zippy and Les Sheer with Dafna and Avner.



South Africa Bnei Zion will be holding a reunion on 23rd April at Moshav Timorim from 10.00am
Contact Gidon at sgkatz@bezeqint.net or (08)673-0253

KEREN TELFED FUND

The Keren Telfed Fund was started over 25 years ago. Donations are used to assist members of our Southern African community during times of individual need or national crisis.

All donations are acknowledged in this column as soon as possible after receipt thereof.

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Mike & Naomi Heim	Anita Friedman – 80th birthday
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Uri & Beryl Milunsky.....	Issy Isacowitz – 90th birthday
Michael & Annette Weil.....	Anita Friedman – 80th birthday
Jackie & Davina Shmueli.....	Eve Silver – 80th birthday
Gessie & Belle Borok	Hilary Kaplan – 50th birthday
Allan Feinblum	Keren Telfed



Hilda Sichel

Ruth Greenman; Debbie Gador; Schiller family; Ralph & Hilda Shiller; Ilana Ehrman; Suzette Nataf; Gene & Helen Elsner; Colin Soskolne; Esther Loeb; Leslie & Leah Sher; Frances Lewis; Solly Singer & Sheila Levitan; Ines Eisenscher, Sharon Mehl; Nicole Sichel **Hilda Sichel – 80th birthday**

Hertzal & Lola Katz.....	Leon & Menorah Charney – new home
Hertzal & Lola Katz.....	Barney Mark – 88th birthday
Debbie & Yael Chitiz.....	Sharon Hatchuel – in appreciation
Debbie & Yael Chitiz.....	Debbie Sandler – in appreciation
Debbie & Yael Chitiz.....	Freda Wolman – in appreciation
Seymour & Hadassa Fisher.....	Ruth Trappler – 80th birthday
Ruth Omsky	Rona Kruger – in appreciation
Esther Shull.....	Gerald Weil – 88th birthday
Jack & Ruth Trappler.....	Ze'ev Rafaeli – birthday
Annette Milliner-Giladi.....	Stanley Lewis – special birthday
Jeanette Dick.....	Bebe Feldman – 70th birthday
Wednesday Bridge Club.....	Keren Telfed
Emanuel & Gladys Tross	Wolfie Traub – 80th birthday
Gessie & Belle Borok,	
Harry & Nili Karabel.....	Les (Haim) Sheer – 80th birthday
Debbie Chitiz	Terry Mowszowski - birthday



Cecil Slevin celebrating his 94th birthday.

Cecil made Aliyah with his wife, Pat, in 1949, coming to Eilat in 1957. In Eilat he worked at the Timna copper mines and after retiring, worked independently in Eilat designing unique concrete fences which still decorate the city.

Anonymous.....Chairman & Beit Shemesh Regional Committee – in appreciation

Hilton & Marie Tapnack.....In honour of their grandchildren Matan &
Sapir Tapuach, B'naya & Hallel Tapnack

David & Livia Greenblatt, Rafi & Jackie Schwartz; Edgar & Joyce
Kohll; Joe & Jose Grossman; Debby Chait; Bernard & Freda Boston;
Uri & Beryl Milunsky; Rona Kruger**Marabelle Swerdlow – 80th birthday**

Naty & Denise Tobias..... Harvey & Sharon Farber – silver wedding

Issy & Dot Isacowitz; Naomi Fredman;
Uri & Beryl Milunsky.....**Jose Grossman – 80th birthday**

Elana & Emmanuel Zabar & family..... Rafi & Mandy Mowszowski – marriage

Ivan & Vivienne Maron (Keitana Fund).... Harvey & Sharon Farber – silver wedding

Basil & Joyce Geller, Leslie & Tova
Berman, Gabi & Freda Haimovitz..... **Boaz Menashe – 80th birthday**

Jack & Ruth Omsky..... Basil & Lilian Sachs – 45th anniversary

SAZF (Israel)..... Marcelle & Barry Kornel – in appreciation

Beulah Levinsohn..... Basil Sandler – 80th birthday

Harold & Rona Joffe..... Alan Polatinsky

Shaun Isaacson..... Keren Telfed

Nicky Feldman; Geoff & Pam Boner; Angela Benjamin; Bennie Penzik;
Judith Finfer;Neville & Adi Berman; Michael Bachrach;
Helen & Roby Osimo; Sydney & Pam Miller; Selwyn & Nina Golomb;
Harry & Diane Shaer; Myer & Irma Zaslansky; Charles Shaikowitz;
Nicky Feldman; Orit & Guy Laufer; Doddie & Elsa Gordon;
Jay & Maureen Rosen..... **Lennie Cartoon – 70th birthday**

Naomi Fredman..... Eve Donner, Martin & Zoe Donner –
on the arrival of their great-granddaughter & granddaughter

Mati & Eric Lebanon; Stanley & Sharon, Epstein; Morris & Ruth Galgut; Yair & Janice
Morash & family; Anthony & Orna Galgut, Myrna Kolevsohn;
Arthur & Vivien Wolman**Ernest & Elizabeth Schneider-Kuper – golden wedding**

Harold & Rona Joffe..... Alan Polatinsky – special birthday

SAZF..... Jackie Schwartz – in appreciation

Berel & Rusty Koseff..... Edie Nochomowitz – 85th birthday

Jack & Ruth Omsky..... Reeva Schauder – special birthday

Julius & Fay Weinstein..... Reuben Narunsky – birthday

Sidney & Michele Shapiro; Hillel & Jennifer Hurwitz;
Selwyn & Valerie Feiblum..... **Larry Shein – 60th birthday**

Jackie Galgut, Jack & Ruth Omsky..... Reeva Schauder – birthday



Lennie Cartoon

Jack & Ruth Trappler..... Louis Hare – 80th birthday
Dennis & Charlotte Weiner.....Reeva Schauder – 70th birthday
Ernest, Nesta, Stephen & Nola Lessem; Raymond & Brenda Yagil,
Ronnie & Sylvia Davidson; Clive, Ayala, Boaz & Anat Lessem;
Raanaana Bookclub members.....**Sheila Swiel – 80th birthday**
Gerald & Freda Wolman..... Sol & Cherille Cohen – 40th anniversary
Judah & Golda Kaye; Maish & Jocelyn Isaacson & grandchildren;
Ralph & Freda Laneman; Mike, Essie, Lorraine,
Cheryl & family.....**Archie Isaacson – 85th birthday**
Doreen Miodownik..... Eddie Langer – 80th birthday
Monty & Myra Zion..... Louis Zinn – 94th birthday
Bessie, Charles, Gaby, Yael Cesman..... Miriam Stein – 70th birthday
Bessie, Charles, Gaby, Yael Cesman..... Luba Cesman – 90th birthday
Berel & Rusty Koseff..... Edie Nochomowitz – 85th birthday
Berel & Rusty Koseff..... Ettie Aman-Goldwater – 85th birthday
Hertzell & Lola Katz..... Celle Mandel – special birthday
Rona Hirschson..... Ora Hirshfeld – in appreciation
Sheila Swiel, Nina, Jonathan & family..... Peter & Denise Sanders – 30th anniversary
Hadassah Fisher..... Freda Haimovitz – in appreciation
Ruth & Jack Omsky..... Marj Penn – special birthday
Rael & Marianne Abel..... Jeff & Wendy Geri – 50th anniversary
Chaim & Sheila, Barry & Zehava,
Ralph & Dina, Maish & Hadassa.....**Mace & Ann Menachemson – 60th anniversary**
Meira Glassman & family..... Jeffrey & Wendy Geri – 50th anniversary
Simmy & Yael Adar..... Buddy Efroiken – 80th birthday
Martin Lewak..... Agbarah family – in appreciation
Children, grandchildren & great-grandchildren..... Willie & Honey Lapidus – 60th anniversary
Issy & Paula, Sidney & Michele, Heather & fams... Eddie Langer – 80th birthday



Archie Isaacson

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Isaac & Hannah Bloch.....**Paula Miodownik – special birthday**



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Meyer Planer, Becky Marock Leon & Ann Moss – 50th anniversary
Becky Marock..... Fay Sendzul – special birthday
Becky Marock..... In memory of Phil & Jack
SAZF (Israel)..... Barry and Marcelle Kornel - in appreciation

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Kevin Shulman..... Abe & Charlotte Shulman – 60th anniversary
David & Hilary Kaplan & family Bobsy Solomon – 80th birthday
Marvyn Hatchuel & LilyRose Michalowsky...Boaz Menashe – 80th birthday
Dorian & Sharon Hatchuel..... Larry Shein – 60th birthday
Bella Lipman..... Archie Isaacson – birthday
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David & Hilary Kaplan..... Les Sheer – 80th birthday



Sponsored by Keren Aliza, trustees Hilary Kaplan (L) and Janine Gelley (R) presenting English text books acquired at discounted prices from Eric Cohen to the teacher at the Ort School in Kfar Saba

reports **Alex Tolkin**

Compared with most countries, the Israeli Medical Fund system is superb. Of this, there is little doubt. So it must have come as some surprise to many of your readers on learning of a large loophole in their insurance cover.

MEDICAL COVERAGE OR A COVER-UP?

Believing we were essentially covered for all medication, many people were caught by surprise when they discovered that some of the new expensive cancer medications were excluded.

Following a media frenzy, the private insurance companies capitalized on the panic and climbed in, offering to cover all medication, transplants and overseas treatment. The fear of being financially crippled for uncovered medical bills, prompted many people — over and above their government-supported Kupat Holim — to take out private insurance.

Recently Maccabi, and I believe other Kupot as well, have included substantial extra cover; albeit with an added monthly cost to their members.

The result is that the risks to the Kupat Holim insured have been considerably reduced. This raises

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an interesting question – Are we being unnecessarily overtaxed?

People should be aware that when paying two premiums one is unable to claim from both insurers unless you exceed the limit. I assume in the case of a claim, the private insurance company will insist that the first claim be with the Kupot - as that cover is required by law - and only after exhausting the maximum on that cover, will they come into the picture.

My point in this situation is that the private insurance companies are now enjoying a reduction in potential liability, while still receiving the same premium originally set, prior to the new developments. I understand that people are free to cancel their policies but at the same time they are still uncertain if there are other risks not fully covered by their Kupot.

We deserve clarification, not obfuscation!

So I say, let's press upon our insurance companies, through our agents, to explain it all. It may be we are being unreasonably taxed.



Alex Tolkin

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Stuffing

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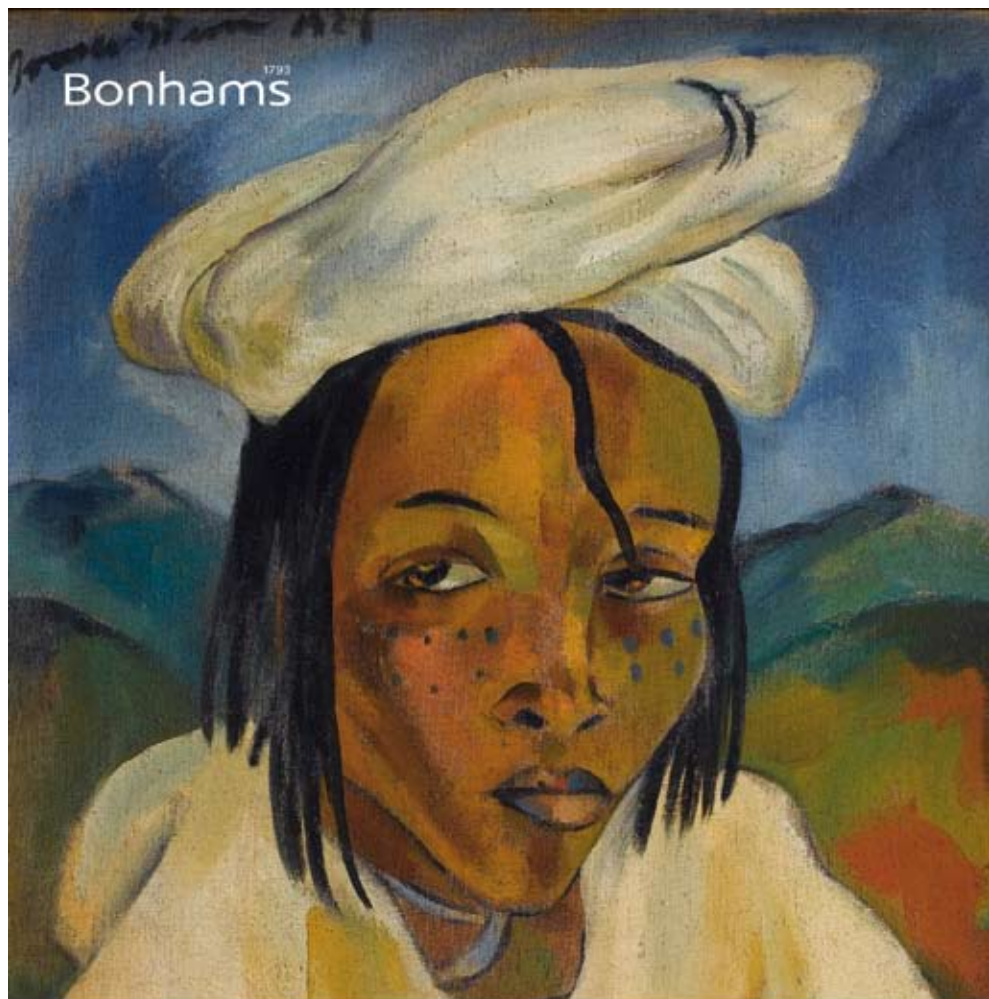
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YESHIVA

A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

*"I'm in a dilemma; whether to make aliya now or later," Bnei Akiva's 19 year-old **Avi Levy** from Johannesburg told Telfed Magazine in December. Avi was one of some 15 South Africans participating in his Movement's MTA year-programme at the Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shvut. In early January last year he was all set to fly off to London. Then, he remembered his experience as a 16 year-old three years previously when he visited the Yeshiva while on his Movement's Kfar Haroeh programme, and said, "I will return".*

He did, and by month's end, Avi was studying at Yeshivat Har Etzion.



Ilan Osrin, head of the MTA programme, and Vice-Chair of Telfed's Jerusalem Regional Committee.



MTA students buried in their books.

Telfed's Director of Special Projects and Regional Committees Forum, **Dorron Kline**, believes impassionedly that "The positive impact on aliyah of intense religious Zionist learning experiences in Israel cannot be underestimated. Time and again we see the graduates of these programmes forming the majority of the young, educated and Zionist-motivated aliyah from South Africa. We can only wish that the number of participants in such programmes continues to rise".

And rising they are.

"We have been running this programme for some twenty years, averaging between 15 and 20 South African students a year," says the Head of the MTA programme, **Ilan Osrin**, who made aliya six years ago

from Johannesburg and who is also Vice Chair of Telfed's Regional Committee in Jerusalem.

Perched on a Judean hill in the heart of Alon Shvut, the central complex of the Yeshiva contains a Beit Midrash, classrooms, offices, a dining hall and library. The conspicuously stunning architecture is boldly set against a backdrop of the blue sky above, surrounded below by the Judean Mountains. It personifies contemplation and tranquillity.

While primarily a one-year programme - participants are expected to return to

their countries and work thereafter in the movement - an increasing number have other ideas. "If I look back over the past year," says Avi, "I have found my place and plan to spend another year at the Yeshiva and then possibly join Hesder."

Hesder (in Hebrew "arrangement") is a yeshiva programme, combining Talmudic studies with military service in the IDF. It seeks to attract and develop Bnei Torah ("religious individuals") who are motivated to become serious *talmidei hachamim* ("religiously learned, knowledgeable") but who "at the same time feel morally and religiously bound to help defend their people and their country," explains Dorrón. "Participants regard this dual commitment both as a privilege and a duty."



MTA participants having a hearty meal at the Yeshiva.

(l-r): Matthew Tucker, Avi Levy and Netanel Aziz, all at Yeshivat Har Etzion.



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A WIN -WIN SET-UP

With the Yeshiva fuelling such enthusiasm to remain in Israel, does the State's gain translate into Bnei Akiva's loss? "Not at all," says MTA's head Ilan, himself a former graduate of Yeshivat Har Etzion. "If they stay on, they usually return to their countries a few years later, work in the Movement and most make aliya later. And those that remain in Israel tend to stay involved in the Movement at this end."

One such person is former Johannesburger **Pini Cohen**, a lecturer on the programme at Yeshivat Har Etzion. Together with Ilan and some 12 others members of the Movement, they spent a year at the Yeshiva in Alon Shvut in 1994. "I stayed after the year, went into the army and today I lecture here in the Yeshiva and live in Alon Shvut." Pini is 31 and married with 3 daughters.

One of Pini's students last year was 19 year-old **Netanel Aziz** a former

Yeshiva College student from Johannesburg, “When I arrived,” he says, “I realised I knew nothing. Now, a year up the track, I feel I know even less.” This young student is all too aware of the journey of Jewish self-realisation ahead. “I am only at the starting block.”

What pleases Netanel is how his Hebrew has improved. “All classes are conducted in Hebrew. There are over 500 students; some 150 are from abroad, the rest are Israelis.”

Did he not feel studying in Gush Etzion a little isolated? “Not at all,” replies Netanel. “There are benefits. We are able to focus and learn - that is why we are here. So I’m okay without city distractions.” Anyway, says Netanel, “there is a fantastic South African community living here. They are all *ex-chevra* of the Movement and unbelievably hospitable.”

On this issue, all the SA students agree. Twenty-year old **Matthew Tucker**, a graduate of King David School, Linksfield, says, “The hospitality here is something special. You can phone anyone of the Southern African families here on a Thursday night or Friday morning and say “I’m coming for Shabbat”. No problem.

Matthew returned home in January this



Craig Lubner, originally from Cape Town, a madrich on the MTA programme.

year, possibly to study at Wits. Is aliya an option? “Definitely considering it. But even if I don’t, I will always have a strong connection to Israel because of my year at the Yeshiva. For many personal reasons, not everyone can come

Following the attraction of Modiin to young Southern African families, the Overseas Director of Yeshivat Meir Harel, Rabbi Yehuda Dominitz, contacted Telfed advising of the City’s Yeshiva. “One of the aims of the Yeshiva,” says Yehuda “is to lay down the spiritual foundations of Modi’in and to be involved in all walks of Israeli society.” While there are currently only 55

students – the Yeshiva only opened three years ago - this is likely to change. “We are opening our gates to pupils from the Diaspora offering a special programme and are looking forward to welcoming South Africans.” Apart from the study of Torah, “we emphasize leadership skills, community service and fluency in Hebrew.”



Yoni Rubin (center back) with his family, Ra’anana.

Telfed spoke to 19-year-old

Yoni Rubin a second year student. Yoni, who came on aliya at the age of 10 months with his parents from South Africa, says, “We have already some 15 overseas students. With such a large English-speaking community in Modi’in and with programmes being offered in English, there should be a dramatic increase in English speakers from the Diaspora.”

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and live in Israel. Nevertheless, we leave here enriched as Jews and Zionists. We are better prepared to contribute in our Jewish communities wherever we may be.”

This observation bears out. The **Krengel** brothers were graduates of Yeshivat Har Etzion. **Avrom** today is the National Chairman of the **South African Zionist Federation** in Johannesburg and his brother **Zev**, at 35 years old, is the youngest chairman in the history of the **South African Jewish Board of Deputies**. In a recent interview with the South African daily, ‘Business Day’, Zev revealed that he wasn’t always religious, “but became so while spending 18 months after high school at a Yeshiva in Israel,” referring to Yeshivat Har Etzion. A third brother, **Rael**, a rabbi, lives on Alon Shvut.

ALL IN A DAY’S WORK

The yeshiva centres its daily schedule on the study of *Gemara*. While most of the day is spent learning *be-iyun* (in-depth), there are opportunities to learn *bekiut*, acquiring a broad breadth of knowledge, exploring other areas of Torah. In the late afternoon,

classes tend to concentrate on Tanach, Jewish philosophy and Halacha.

“There is also a strong emphasis on developing leadership skills,” says **Craig Lubner** from Cape Town, a madrich on the programme. “Students are educated to strike a balance between personal growth in Torah and public responsibility. What’s more, we are very Zionist and you can see how many of our students make aliya.”

Of the ‘Class of 1994’ of which both Pini Cohen and Ilan Osrin were participants, “nearly all the South Africans who came that year are today living in Israel,” says Pini. “They are mainly living in Raanana, Modiin, Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem.”

Return to Zion is at the core of the programme and symbolically encapsulated in the location of the Yeshiva. Situated in the Etzion bloc of religious settlements, known as Gush Etzion, it is located some 18 k/ms south of Jerusalem.

It was here, in 1929, that the Jewish settlers were forced to abandon their homes — an experience that was to repeat itself in 1937 and finally in 1948, when during Israel’s War of Independence the settlers put up a valiant defence, leading Ben Gurion to exclaim, “If Jerusalem exists today, Israel owes its gratitude first and foremost to the defenders of the Etzion Bloc.”

After the region was recaptured in 1967, many children of the original founders returned to establish the Etzion block. As part of this saga, Yeshivat Har Etzion was founded on September 27, 1967, only some four months after the Six Day War. •



Where were you on March 11th 1978?

Former South Africans Bobby and Brenda Shapiro of Moshav Ben Ami near Nahariya, have no difficulty recalling that date.

They were lucky to have survived it.

Thirty Years On A South African perspective on Israel's most fatal terror attack.

Masterminded by Abu Jihad and undertaken by the PLO faction 'Fatah', 35 Israelis lost their lives in a terrifying hijacking of a bus on the coastal highway between Tel Aviv and Haifa. It began when a boat from Lebanon landed on the stretch of beach at Ma'agan Michael. At day's end, the bus was a burnt-out, skeletal shell.

So were the shattered lives of many Israelis.

On the patio outside their pastoral home where they run a B & B and breed Arabian horses, Bobby and Brenda spoke to Telfed Magazine.

They had been driving home from Jerusalem that day when they saw a bus in the middle of the coastal road at the turnoff to Ma'agan Michael. Thinking there had been a motor accident Bobby stopped suddenly. "Next thing I saw was this frantic woman running towards us screaming, with a baby in her arms covered in blood." Brenda jumped out of the car with their two young

daughters and two of their friends.

"I'll see if I can help with the injured. You take the mother to hospital," were her parting words.

Bobby sped off. A kilometer on, the woman started screaming:

"Look what the terrorists have done."

"Terrorists, what terrorists?" Bobby asked frantically.

Then the horrific enormity of the misunderstanding suddenly dawned on him. He had left his family not at the scene of a road accident, but in the clutches of terrorists. In the meantime the infant in his car had died. "I stopped, hailed down an oncoming car with whom I left the mother and her dead child, did a u-turn and sped back."

No sooner had Bobby stopped behind the bus, when he found himself staring down the barrel of a Kalashnikov and ordered onto the bus. "There were eleven terrorists although I did not note the number at the time. I looked and shouted for my family but could not see them. I was shoved to a seat. In the front, a woman terrorist was in command and barking orders in English,



above: the Shapiro Family ((l-r)Lisa, Brenda, Danya, Bob) outside their home on Moshav Ben Ami where they run a bed and breakfast offering South African style hospitality.



right: Bobby showing one of his prize horses to General Haim Bar-Lev, President of the Israeli Arabian Horse Society,

End of the Road

The army had set up an ambush “and the next thing we knew they were shooting from both sides taking out all the tires. The woman terrorist threatened that they would blow up the bus with the grenades. We had little reason to doubt her.”

while another two were positioned in the front and back of the bus, holding grenades. Their fingers rested on the safety pins, waiting for an order to release.” That order would come later.

“The female terrorist screamed that they were from Fatah and that we were going to Ben Gurion Airport where we would board a plane for an Arab country.”

Bobby did not know whether his family was alive or dead, but he knew they were not on the bus. “I also knew that if I was to survive this day, I had to escape. Boarding a plane was not an option for an Israeli with a South African passport. These were the thoughts going through my head.”

New developments made escape a receding option. “They began tying us up and I was bound back-to-back with an old man, whose wife lay on the floor next to us suffering with gunshot wounds. She died shortly afterwards. By the time we passed the Wingate Institute, I had managed to wriggle free and waited for the first opportunity to dive out the window. It came at the Herzliya Country Club.

The order came. “Both terrorists, one in the front and the one at the back, simultaneously released the safety pins from their grenades. A passenger at the back, Yossie Hochman, seeing what was about to happen, jumped on the terrorist. The grenade exploded killing Yossie’s two children and wife. Yossie miraculously survived, although he lost both his legs.

“I was near the front and when I saw what was about to happen, I bundled myself into a ball. Don’t ask me how I survived the explosion. The bus was now on fire. The old man that I had been bound to, lay dead beside his wife. There was death and carnage everywhere. Instinct took over and I dived out the window. I got caught and found myself hanging there for some five seconds before I managed to drop to the ground. I dashed to a nearby trench where I took refuge with a woman and her daughter. She was pleading that her father was still in the bus and was trying to run back to save him. I knew that meant certain death and pulled her down. The terrorists were disembarking from the bus and shooting in all directions. I could not let her go. It was terrible and her dad died on the bus.”



Tearfully, Bobby continued, “To this day we are still friends.”

Through all the smoke and gunfire Bobby saw a man writhing in agony on the ground next to the blazing bus. “He was holding his stomach and bleeding badly. I do not know what got into me. Thinking I had lost my wife and kids, I got up and ran to the fellow, picked him up and darting through the smoke, hurried back to the trench.”

Tears again began to run as Bobby revealed that the man survived, as did his wife Shosh. Their seven year-old daughter was not so lucky. “A little blondie with blue eyes” had died on the bus. Bobby related that the couple would have more children. The night following our interview, the Shapiro’s would be attending the wedding of a daughter born after the attack. “It will be a very emotional wedding for us all.”

Which only left one question? How did Brenda and her daughters survive?

Reveals Brenda, “As soon as Bobby sped off near Ma’agan Michael, I quickly realised this was a terrorist attack and screamed at the girls to run up a hill. The terrorists saw us and started shooting. Thankfully the grass was tall and I screamed at them to drop to the ground and crawl. Bullets whizzed passed us and after a few seconds the firing stopped. I guess they thought they shot us and never bothered to come and check. To this day we cannot say how long we lay there until we heard words in Hebrew. “I screamed *“anuchnu po”* – “we are here.” They had been found by an IDF Commando Unit.

At the end of that terrifying journey, where Bobby extricated himself from an inferno and helped save the lives of others, stands a memorial. Thirty-five lives were lost that day, the most in any single act of terrorism in Israel’s history. •

Coastal Road Massacre

On the morning of March 11, 1978, Dalal Mughrabi and her Palestinian Fedayeen unit of eleven members (including one other woman) landed by boats on a beach near Maagan Michael, having departed from Lebanon. They killed Gail Rubin, an American photographer who was taking nature photographs nearby, and then hijacked a bus on the coastal Highway.

An IDF unit headed by Ehud Barak (who would later become Prime Minister) pursued the bus until it was finally stopped at Herzliya. A long shooting battle ensued with the passengers caught in the crossfire. Those attempting to escape were shot at by the terrorists, who finally blew up the bus turning it into a fiery deathtrap. The attack left thirty five civilians dead.

Mughrabi’s leadership role in the attack marked the emergence of women as full-fledged members of militant movements. The Palestinian Authority named a Hebron girls’ school in honor of Mughrabi, whose name has also been bestowed on popular children’s summer camps as well as police and military courses. The attack was the immediate trigger for the Israeli Operation Litani against PLO bases in Lebanon three days later. In last summer’s war with Hezbollah, Bobby and Brenda Shapiro again received a calling card from their neighbours in Lebanon. A Katyusha fell a few metres away from their home at Moshav Ben Ami, near Nahariya, leaving a massive gaping hole in their garden.