



# SJCA

SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

ESTABLISHED 2019 / 5780

082 440 2621

rabbi@sjca.org.za

thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com

www.africanjewishcongress.com

Rav Moshe Silberhaft

@CountryRabbi



with Divine Guidance

29 JUNE 2020

Dear Country Communities Friends and Colleagues,

We do hope these thoughts find you and your communities in good health and coping with the serious stresses of the current lockdown and the severe restrictions on travel and community association that we are all subject to.

Life as we knew it, is not going to return to normal soon but we all need to look ahead and begin to plan for a more settled time ahead and to find ways to continue our communal lives under the current restrictions. Never before has religious life been so universally restricted. Historically, we, as Jews, have been singled out for restriction but this time all religions have been equally affected by prohibitions on public worship and communal association.

A very hearty Yasher Koach to the First Exco of the new SJCA and to its small team of helpers, all experienced in small community circumstances and management.

It has taken almost two years to re-establish this Country Communities organization outside of the SAJBD, and although there are still some loose ends to tie up, we are now an independent body and can concentrate on the Jewish and religious welfare of the small communities of South Africa.

Jewish life in South Africa does not end south of the Grasmere Toll Plaza on the N1 South outside Johannesburg, that's where the rich *Litvak Ashkenaz* tradition of our forebears and ourselves in Africa begins - where our parents and grandparents sleep in the dust and we have a holy duty to care for their graves and where we live and our children all over the world yearn to visit us..

We are writing to you to ask for your ideas about the work of the new organisation - after all, you are the people who know the circumstances "on the ground"!

We would like you to consider about how, in the current uncertainties of virus, travel and economics, we are best able to assist *Rav Moshe* to plan his future activities.

- If it becomes possible for him to continue his visits to you as in the past, we would like your suggestions as to suitable times, *Chagim* and how your communities can assist with the costs.
- We also need to consider the new "virtual" events - participation in LIMMUD SA was outstanding so we will watch out for future suitable opportunities for all of you to participate in.

Founding Members:

Chairman Barney Horwitz (*Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation*) | Vice Chairman Selwyn Plitt (*Vereeniging*) | Vice Chairman Ann Harris (*African Jewish Congress*)  
Treasurer Meyer Gelbart

I. Gelvan (*Grahamstown*), Trustees (*Group Defunct Communities*), Trustees (*Kroonstad*), E. Berger (*Lichtenburg*), P. Feldman (*Parys*),  
Judge R. H. Zulman & D. Saks (*Pietersburg*), G. Green (*Potchefstroom*), S. Zagoev (*S A Jewish Board Of Deputies*), M. Levitas & S Leas (*Springs*), M. Gordon (*Uitenhage*),  
R. Gnesin (*Upington*), P. Gersh (*Welkom*), S. Phillips (*Witbank*)

National Director & Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft



# SJCA

SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

ESTABLISHED 2019 / 5780

082 440 2621

rabbi@sjca.org.za

thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com

www.africanjewishcongress.com

Rav Moshe Silberhaft

@CountryRabbi



with Divine Guidance

- The recent series on Country Communities on *Simcha* on SABC 2 too was heartwarming and not only gave metro Jews insight into a world they did not know existed but made Jews in the Communities featured feel part of a meaningful tradition and raised their profile in the General Communities in which they live and kind of went viral amongst the South African Jewish diaspora in the US, UK and Australia.
- We know you have already heard from Cape Town's Rabbi Gavi Ziegler about online educational opportunities for those of you who have children in your community - Rabbi Ziegler has also expressed interest in Basic Jewish Education for adults which may interest some of your members.

DON'T BE SHY TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK - IT IS ALL UP FOR DISCUSSION!

Finally, dear SJCA members, we want you to know that we are planning world-wide publicity as a foundation for fundraising to assist with the Association's work. To do that, we need your news, views and ideas to describe what we do.

In a message to an interfaith event held in Botswana, Rav Silberhaft recently referred to the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholar *Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein's* commentary on the very last of the 613 *Mitzvot*, where he notes that in the commandment of writing a Torah Scroll, Moses uses not the word Torah but *shirah* or *song*, because in this respect Torah is like music, that its greatest beauty lies in complex harmonies. Country Communities Jewish life is like music - sad at times, upbeat at others.

We have a heritage to be proud of and we need to put it in the public domain. You can help us to build a bridge between our wonderful communities and their families all over the world and we look forward to hearing from you and send you blessings and good wishes for the winter months.

Barney Horwitz  
Chairperson

Ann Harris  
Vice Chairperson

Selwyn Plitt  
Vice Chairperson

Founding Members:

Chairman Barney Horwitz (Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation) | Vice Chairman Selwyn Plitt (Vereeniging) | Vice Chairman Ann Harris (African Jewish Congress)  
Treasurer Meyer Gelbart

I. Gelvan (Grahamstown), Trustees (Group Defunct Communities), Trustees (Kroonstad), E. Berger (Lichtenburg), P. Feldman (Parys),  
Judge R. H. Zulman & D. Saks (Pietersburg), G. Green (Potchefstroom), S. Zagnoev (S A Jewish Board Of Deputies), M. Levitas & S Leas (Springs), M. Gordon (Uitenhage),  
R. Gnesin (Upington), P. Gersh (Welkom), S. Phillips (Witbank)

National Director & Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft