



# Durban United Hebrew Congregation

Michael Greenbaum

## The Perling Hall: “Extreme Makeover” Evening

The transformation of the Perling Hall at the Great Synagogue was celebrated with a special Shabbat “Extreme Makeover: Perling Hall Edition” evening with “Blintzes and Bailey’s”. Congregants expressed their admiration for the modern and stylish refurbishment of the newly decorated facility where so many memorable Shul functions and simchas have been enjoyed. The hall has been transformed into an elegant and tasteful room with neutral paint colours, freshly varnished wood features and plush new upholstery on the chairs. As always, this beautiful venue is used weekly on Shabbat for Friday night Kiddush l’chaim, Shabbat brochas and seudah shlishit. Congregants and their families are urged to attend Shabbat services and enjoy the new hall as well to consider using the facility for future simchas and celebrations. The DUHC thanks Dr. Jonathan Beare for his generous sponsorship, and Vice-Chairman Aubrey Nathan and his team for coordinating the renovation.

## Our New Mechitzah

As some members have moved to other centres, it was decided to re-locate the ladies from the upstairs section to the downstairs level of the Great Synagogue for Shabbat services. For this purpose, a new modern Mechitzah has been constructed in the downstairs section. The new Mechitzah has been well-received and has added a more warm and heimische atmosphere to Shul services. Only during the Yom Taivim and the Yamim Noraim will the ladies section upstairs be used. Vice-Chairman Aubrey Nathan said the upgrades to the Perling Hall and the new Mechitzah have been done to enhance the Shul experience and to show that the DUHC is moving forward into the future.

## Hachnasat (Dedication) of a New Sefer Torah

The DUHC celebrated a Hachnasat Sefer Torah (Dedication of a new Sefer Torah) at an unforgettable event attended by nearly 200 people when a beautiful new Sefer Torah was presented by the Nathan family in honour of their parents Max and Lyn z”l.

Prior to the service at the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Zekry, Max Nathan and honoured friends of the Nathan family were invited to each inscribe a letter in the final lines of the new Sefer Torah assisted by the sofer (scribe) from Johannesburg. Rabbi Zekry praised Max for his ethics and integrity and paid tribute to him and his late wife Lyn z”l for raising an outstanding Torah-observant family. He said the meaning of the name “Nathan” is related to the Hebrew word “to give” and the family continues the Nathan tradition of giving so much to the community. He commended Max for his many years on the DUHC Chevra Kadisha and thanked the whole family for their continuing contributions to the community. The ceremony began with the appropriate prayers followed by the series of seven *Hakafot* (circles) around the Bimah with Torah scrolls accompanied by singing, dancing and great rejoicing which is customary on the dedication of a new Sefer Torah.

To celebrate the day with the congregation, a splendid Seudah Mitzvah lunch was sponsored by the Nathan family. At the Seudah, Aubrey Nathan thanked his father for being an example of a man of humility, honesty and strong ethical standards. Max then thanked all for the honour given to him and he especially mentioned that his late wife, Lyn z”l was responsible for encouraging and raising a religious and observant family. The DUHC thanks the Nathan family for this magnificent addition to the Great Synagogue.



Celebrating Hachnasat Torah



Max Nathan inscribing a letter in the Torah



Rabbi Zekry and the Sofer



Michelle Nathan at the Seudah Mitzvah in the Newly Decorated Perling Hall



The Nathan Family

# Dedication of the Umhlanga Jewish Centre

Lauren Shapiro

‘At Sinai we received the Torah, and 3000 years later at Sinai Indaba we launch a new Torah project,’ commented Rabbi Dr. Pinchas Zekry at the official dedication of the Umhlanga Jewish Centre (UJC) on 17 June.

He unveiled the foundation stone along with Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag and Dr. Jonathan Beare. Mezuzot were affixed to the entrances to the centre, and the Rabbis, dignitaries and donors rejoiced with Hakafot around the exquisite new Shul. To mark the occasion, two Sifrei Torah were donated to the UJC by the Mann and Zekry families. The Aron Kodesh was dedicated by Morry Sacher in loving memory of his late parents.

The ceremony incorporated the official opening of the Leah Masinter Mikveh, the library of the Beit Midrash (endowed by Ronnie and Erica Wellisch in memory of their parents Walter and Lilly), and the Gunter Lazarus Media Centre in the Umhlanga Jewish Day School (donated by Gaynor and Sidney Lazarus and Joan Handlesman in memory of their father and husband), all on the same campus.

The dedication was followed by a gala dinner to mark the occasion. The magnificent hall and balcony were packed with well-wishers. Mary Kluk’s elegant décor created a beautiful ambience, and Selma Lurie and her catering team excelled themselves.

Guest of honour Chief Rabbi Goldstein likened the builders of the UJC to the prophets Moses and Joshua, and the chalutzim of early Israel. ‘This community has come together with vision and enormous courage,’ he noted. ‘Tonight we salute and celebrate with the builders of the UJC.’

Rabbi Kurtstag paid tribute to Rabbi Zekry and his wife Dina for thirty years of service to the community this June. The full Beth Din was present to lend support to this worthy cause.

Rabbi Zekry thanked his steering committee for their sterling commitment over the past three years. The committee comprised congregants with several years of community leadership experience: Julian Beare (Project Management), Mary Kluk (Marketing and Décor), Lew Heilbron (Community Liaison), Judge Philip Levinsohn (Legal Advisor) and Gaynor Lazarus (Education). Over and above their obvious skills, Rabbi praised their positive attitudes and passion for the project.

Rabbi also thanked the many generous benefactors - chiefly Dr. Jonathan Beare - whose support made this centre possible. “In times when many communities in this country are sadly shutting down, we are privileged to witness the opening of a new community,” he said.

The UJC is a haven for Jewish life on the east coast, with its thriving school, flourishing Shul with dedicated Beit Midrash, beautiful Mikveh, superb function facilities, state of the art auditorium, gym, tennis court, and more.

Become part of this amazing development. For more information contact 031 201 5177, or follow our blog on [www.durbanshul.co.za](http://www.durbanshul.co.za)



## Go noooorth...

The Village People got it wrong. It’s northwards you want to be heading, if you want a change of pace and a new life under the clear blue skies.

Izinga has a laid-back atmosphere that’s difficult to describe unless you’ve experienced it. Minutes from the beach, it’s as if the salty air blowing over the ridge washes all your stresses away. The entire suburb has been designed around fostering a safe, active lifestyle - there are walking paths, nature reserves, and security patrols 24 hours a day. Kids walk to school and ride their bikes to the park.

Add to this a thriving shul and school, and what more do you need? (Whatever it is, you can probably get it at Gateway, the largest shopping mall in the southern hemisphere, that’s a two-minute drive away).

So go on, go north. Life is peaceful there... lots of open air... okay, someone stop me before I bring out the karaoke machine!



Izinga residents and their children enjoy a lazy afternoon at the local playground