Library offers films and book event for Holocaust Remembrance

Emily Eisbruch, staff writer

The Ann Arbor District Library will feature three events during April in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day. The documentary The Hidden Child, the story of Maud Dahme, a six-year-old girl in the Netherlands at the time of the Holocaust, will be shown on April 9. On April 16, the Library will present the film Playing for Time, with an award-winning script by Arthur Miller. Finally, on April 20, editor Befalbaum will discuss his book Shanghai Benenbered... Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Germany. According to Tim Grimes, community relations manager at the AADL, “These are all very different and very interesting events, each of which was suggested by our community partners.”

The Hidden Child

On Monday, April 9 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Downtown Library, a free screening of the award-winning 2006 documentary, The Hidden Child, will explore the extraordinary story of Maud Dahme, a six-year-old Dutch girl who survived the Holocaust because of the decency and bravery of complete strangers. Dahme’s own story is one of courage and hope in the face of evil and death, and the film imparts important lessons about courage, struggle, survival and tolerance. This one-hour, unrated film is co-sponsored by Michigan Television. The film will be followed by a discussion led by Jennifer White, station manager for Michigan Television.

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JCC holds Film Festival opening night sponsor gala

Rachel Rosenthal, special to the WIN

The Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County will host a gala reception for sponsors of the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival on Sunday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Michigan Theater. Participants will enjoy a delicious cocktail buffet prepared by local caterer Lori Shepard of Simply Scrumptious. This event marks the beginning of four days of Jewish films from around the world.

The contributions of Film Festival sponsors make it possible for the JCC to bring the event to Ann Arbor. Sponsor categories begin at $360 for a Movie Lover; $580 — Screenwriter; $1,000 — Casting Director; $2,000 — Director, $5,000 — Producer; and $10,000 — Mogul. Sponsors receive invitations to the reception as well as passes for the entire festival. The opening night gala will honor all sponsors, especially the Charles and Rita Gelman Educational Foundation and Michael and Patricia Levine, our Producers.

continued on page 8
Deir Yassin remembered – in full

By WJN staff writers

I n Palestine “every acre of land acquired by the Jews has been bought at a price fixed by buyer and seller,” noted Albert Einstein in an outraged letter to the Manchester Guardian (October 12, 1929). Two months earlier, Arabs in Palestine had rioted for a week, massacring Jews in Jerusalem, Safed and Hebron, where the ancient Jewish community was forced out. Britain’s response was to close the country to Jews. This, argued Einstein, was punishing the victim. “Do you public opinion in Great Britain realize that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem… is the centre of all the trouble?” Einstein demanded, pointing to the Mufti’s incitement of the violence. “Is it tolerable that… so utterly irresponsible and unscrupulous a politician should be enabled to continue to exercise his evil influence…”?

In 1929, even Einstein could not foresee the evil that would be stirred by Amin al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, leader of the Palestinian national movement and future Nazi SS officer (he was given the rank of a Zionist fundraiser). A number of Arab UN delegates (Egyptian, Iraqi and Palestinian) was forced out. Britain’s response was to close the country to Jews. This, argued Einstein, was punishing the victim. “Do you public opinion in Great Britain realize that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem… is the centre of all the trouble?” Einstein demanded, pointing to the Mufti’s incitement of the violence. “Is it tolerable that… so utterly irresponsible and unscrupulous a politician should be enabled to continue to exercise his evil influence…”?

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Chaverim B'Shirim celebrates the life and work of Irving Berlin

Marilyn Krinn, special to the WJN

Chaverim B'Shirim will present songs by Irving Berlin on Sunday, April 22 at 2 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County. Chaverim B’Shirim is a JCC-based choir that performs music by Jewish composers from the 1600s to the present day.

Irving Berlin was one of the most famous and important songwriters of the 20th century. To quote Jerome Kern, “Irving Berlin has no place in American Music, He IS American Music.”

Irving Berlin was born in Tyumen, Russia, on May 11, 1888. His name was Israel Isadore Baline. The family came to the United States to escape the persecution of Jews, and arrived in New York in 1891. His father, Moses, was a cantor and shoichet (ritual slaughterer), not an uncommon mix of occupations since the small villages could not support a family. Irving was the youngest of eight children. They all had to help with earning money. One of his first jobs was as a singing waiter. The boss asked him to write an original song for the cafe since a rival establishment had a signature song published. The result was “Marie From Sunny Italy,” in 1907. When it was published it earned him 37 cents. He had written both the words and music. The cover stated “I.Berlin” as the composer. This gave him a new career and a new name. His career in “Tin Pan Alley” was launched in 1911 with “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.”

In 1917 Berlin joined the army and staged a musical revue—a tribute to the Armed Forces called Tip, Tip, Lipshurk. It contained 350 members of the army. The musical earned enough to build a Service Center at Camp Upton. “God Bless America” was written for the show. In 1918 it was revised and was introduced to the nation by Kate Smith on her radio program. It remains one of his most popular songs. He assigned the royalties to the “God Bless America Foundation” which supports the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. During World War II, Berlin wrote the musical This Is The Army, which raised $10 million for Army Emergency Relief. Opening in 1942, it played for one year on Broadway and then went on tour with a cast of 300 servicemen. Two of the hits were “This is the Army, Mr. Jones” and “I Left My Heart at the Stagedoor Canteen.”

The “Irving Berlin Music Company” was established so that Berlin would not have to share the profits from his songs with another production company. Berlin published over 3,000 songs in his lifetime. After WWII Berlin built a theater, “The Music Box,” so that he could introduce his songs to the public at his discretion. The first show was The Music Box Revue of 1921. These were shows without a story line. Every year he had a new revue with his new material. The theater is still in business.

Another outlet for his music was Hollywood movies. Al Jolson introduced music to film with The Jazz Singer, in 1927, Jolson sang “Mammy” and also “Blue Skies” that Berlin had written. The film Top Hat in 1935, with Astaire and Rogers was a wild success. He and Astaire each cleared over $300,000 dollars.

Holiday Inn was the vehicle for “White Christmas,” the most successful song of the century. Berlin received an Oscar for “White Christmas” in 1942. The Broadway Shows, Call Me Madam and Annie Get Your Gun were his best of Broadway and proved popular when transformed to film.

Berlin supported many Jewish charities and causes. He was honored by the Young Men’s Hebrew Association as an outstanding American of the Jewish Faith. President Eisenhower presented him with a gold medal in 1955, for having composed so many patriotic songs.

Chaverim B’Shirim will present excerpts from Call Me Madam and Annie Get Your Gun in their show on April 22, at 2 p.m. at the JCC. Refreshments will be served. A $5 donation is requested.

The Jerusalem String Quartet

At 3 p.m. the community is invited to participate in a ceremony honoring the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust at the Holocaust Memorial Sculpture in Raoul Wallenberg Square or, in the case of rain, at University of Michigan Alumni Center’s Founder’s Room. The concert, which will include Samuel Barber’s famous “Adagio” for strings, begins at 4 p.m. in Rackham Auditorium.

The Jerusalem Quartet is comprised of four young musicians who began playing together in 1993 when they were still in their mid-teens. With more than a decade as an ensemble, they have matured into outstanding interpreters of the string quartet literature. They display a liveliness and spontaneity that has brought international acclaim, and their 2005 UMS debut led to immediate requests for a return appearance. “Musical electricity may be unfathomable, but one thing is for sure—they have it.” (The Straf) [1]

For more information about the program, and to purchase specially priced tickets ($30.60), visit www.jewishannarbor.org/jerusalem-stringquartet. Questions about the program can be directed to Ellisha Caplan, 677-0100, or ellisha@jewishannarbor.org.

Federation observes Yom HaShoah with UMS event

Ellisha Caplan, special to the WJN

On Sunday, April 15, the Jewish Federation will honor Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) in conjunction with the University Musical Society at a concert featuring The Jerusalem String Quartet.

The Strad www.stradmagazine.com
DVD release of TBE adult choir’s Eastern European concert tour

Debbie Marion, special to the WJN

A film of Temple Beth Emeth’s adult choir’s groundbreaking 2004 concert tour of Roma-

nia, Bulgaria, and Eastern Europe is available in an extended DVD version. The DVD includes a conversation with filmmakers Steve Haskin and Debbie Marion. Previously unseen footage of the trip is shown as they chat.

The film, called Kol Halev in Concert: Eastern European Tour, can be obtained in the TBE gift shop or office for $18. Kol Halev, which means “voice of the heart” in Hebrew, is TBE’s adult choir led by Cantor Anna Rose.

On the DVD, the choir sings songs like “Tumbalalaika” and “Hine Mah Tov” in mem-
erable settings that include a magnificent re-

stored Sephardic temple in Romania and a humble Jewish Community Center in Bulgaria. An onstage camera captures the poignancy and exuberance of the faces in the audience.

One memorable highlight of the film shows an elderly gentleman standing up in the 600-member audience of the Bucharest Choral Temple to sing an impromptu solo version of “Oyfn Pripetiach” after the Yiddish libbaly is announced.

The Eastern European Tour film has been shown at TBE, Glacier Hills, the Michigan The-
ar, and the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festi-
vial in Ann Arbor. David Magidson, director of the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival, said, “I thought the performance was wonderful, well-directed and good feeling... Its greatest strength is the feeling of attachment to the Jews of Eastern Europe and to those who perished... It is a splendid document conceived in joy and music rather than weeping and instruction. How can you not like it?”

The film is being released now to fundraise and raise awareness of TBE’s next film about Kol Halev’s upcoming 2007 summer concert tour of Argentina. Funds raised by the Eastern European Tour film are earmarked directly to Kol Halev’s upcoming 2007 summer concert tour of Argentina. Funds raised by the Eastern European Tour film have been used to purchase the Kol Halev East-
to help support the Argentina film. For more infor-
amation on purchasing the Kol Halev East-
to help support the Argentina film, call TBE at 665-4744 or visit www.kolahleveast.org.

It’s great to be back in Ann Arbor,” says artistic director Jessica Brater, the cutting-edge New York theater company, Polybe + Seats, performs at the University of Michigan’s new Walgreen Drama Cen-
ter April 6 and 7 as part of the Arthur Miller Festival, marking the opening of the Arthur Miller Theatre. “This is my home town and this is where I have my theater in theater.”

Even before landing roles in stud-
ent productions at Burns Park Elementary School, Tappan Middle School, and Pioneer High in a repertory that spanned the gamut from The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe to Jean-Paul Sartre’s No Exit, Brater was always busy organizing amateur theatricals with her childhood friend, Rachel Dengiz, now a documentary film maker. Brater recalls, “We used our siblings as not always enthusiastic stage props, but fortunately they have forgiven us.” She spent many childhood summers in England, where her father, U-M Theater Professor Enoch Brater, served as director of the London Program. “I was fanatical about Cats from age five to eight, but thankfully my parents also took me to see Shakespeare.” She still remembers a production of The Comedy of Errors performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in which the actors had blue faces.

But it was at Barnard College in New York, from which she graduated magna cum laude in 2000 and where she was awarded the Kenneth Janes Prize in Theater, that Brater’s focus on directing took shape. She was es-
specially attuned to the difficult challenge of working on the plays of Gertrude Stein. She was intrigued by the possibility of finding stage solutions that would convey Stein’s richly imaginative theatrical vision. Brater’s commitment to this major modernist has never waned. The name of her company, Po-
lybe + Seats, is in a homage to Stein’s dog, “seats,” she says, “are where you sit.” Shaven-
Marie Garrett, a contributing editor to Theater Magazine, calls Brater’s troupe “the coolest new ensemble company in town.”

Brater has piled up an impressive num-
ber of directing credits. In New York she has worked at the HERE Arts Center, the Tank Theater, the Flea Theater, the American Theater of Actors, the Present Company Theatorium, the Makor Center, and the Paradise Theater, as well as in other venues in the burgeoning artistic community of trendy Brooklyn. Her directing credits also include plays mounted for the Brown Uni-
versity Festival of New Plays and at the Ger-
trade Stein Symposium held at Columbia University in 2004. Her work has also been featured abroad, at theater festivals in Israel and in Italy.

These days her major commitment rests with Polybe + Seats, an avant-garde compa-
nny that produces plays and projects experi-
menting with language and structure toward “the development of a new poetics for the theater.” Inspired by Stein’s writing for and about theater, Polybe has been highly praised by the Village Voice as “a promising young company bravely taking on the impossible Stein challenge.”

The company kicked off 2007 by pre-
miering a week of new plays by Suzan-Lori Parks in the 365 Days/365 Plays project at the New York Public Theater. Later this year Po-
lybe will begin work on a newly devised piece and will also produce a number of Stein’s children’s plays, working with kids from the local community surrounding Brooklyn’s Greenpoint Reform Church.

In Ann Arbor the group will present The Charlotte Salomon Project, which premiered at Brooklyn Fire Proof in November 2006 and was developed as part of a residency at Mabou Mines and a New Play Commission from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. The texts, visuals and actions of the play are drawn from the collection of over 1,300 paintings created by Charlotte Salo-
mon during World War II and printed by the young artist in a volume called Life? Or Theatre? The paintings illustrate her complex family history and her relationships with her mother, father, stepmother and an operatic voice teacher who became her obsession. Sal-
omon was murdered by the Nazis in a con-
centration camp, but her book miraculously survived. Polybe has transformed her text into a vibrant performance piece that has been hailed by nytheater.com as “a bubbling mixture of fine art, theatre, role-playing, and installation, making this less a play than an experience.”

The performance of The Charlotte Salomon Project offers Ann Arbor audiences the rare opportunity to witness a dramatic narra-
tive that parallels the story told in Playing for Time, the adaptation Arthur Miller based on Fania Fendes’ The Musicians of Auschwitz, in a far more realistic style. (Theatregoers may note that Arthur Miller’s Playing for Time is the inaugural drama at the new Arthur Miller Theatre in late March and early April.) Both Playing for Time and The Charlotte Salomon Project detail the experience of Jewish women artists whose lives are abruptly interrupted by the horror of the Shoah.

“Jessica Brater’s direction and Miriam Felton-Dansky’s dramaturgy are perhaps the real stars of the show,” one New York reviewer noted. “The acting, the paintings, the curating of the paintings and the tableaux, when seen as shining components of a glittering whole, are ultimately what gives this play the status of a theatrical staging that defies definition. The level of planning and thought that is ob-
vious when you are living this piece (there is no better verb) is exceptionally impressive.”

In addition to her role as artistic director of Polybe + Seats, Brater is busy working on completing her Ph.D. in Theater Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. For the past three years she has served as key administrator for the Barnard- Columbia Theater Department, where she has also taught courses and given workshops in her discipline.

“Bringing my work to Ann Arbor in a state-of-the-art facility like the Walgreen Drama Center is something I never could have imagined when I was playing with cos-
tumes and makeup on Wells Street and Lin-
collin Avenue in Burns Park. It’s a very special way to be welcomed home,” says Brater.

The Charlotte Salomon Project will be per-
formed at the new Walgreen Drama Center on Friday, April 6 at 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. and on Saturday, April 7 at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tick-
ets are free of charge but should be reserved in advance to ensure a seat. For more information or to reserve tickets call the Michigan League Box Office at 764-2358. To learn more about Polybe + Seats or to support the company, visit www.po-
lybeandseats.org.

Reflections describes the fate of Holocaust memories over the course of an entire life. Greenspan, who also authored Listening to Ho-
locust Survivors: Recounting and Life History (1998), explains, “my approach is to interview survivors as often as seemed useful to both of us. There are other survivors, too, with whom I’ve spoken many, many times, but Agi has been my primary teacher about what it means to live through and after the destruction.”

“New experiences reflect old ones,” Rubin

notes. “They put them in a different light, or
da different darkness.”

These reflections, the continuing dialogue between past and pres-
tent, are the story the book tells about Aus-
cchwitz, memory, and a life recreated.

Sharon Drum Bookshop is located at 315 South State Street. For more information, call 662-7407.

Jessica Brater, left, working with members of Polybe + Seats on The Charlotte Salomon Project.

New book explores Dialogue between past, present

Emily Einbakh, special to the WJN

On Wednesday, April 11 from 4-6 p.m., Sha-

man Drum Bookshop will host a reception and signing for Henry Greenspan’s Reflections: Auschwitz, Memory, And A Life Recreated. Greenspan, a University of Michigan psychol-
ogy professor and a playwright, wrote the book based on his 25-year conversation with Agi Ru-
bin, a Farmington Hills resident who survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps. Both Henry Greenspan and Agi Rubin will speak briefly during the event to provide insight into their collaboration and the book itself.

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formed at the new Walgreen Drama Center on Friday, April 6 at 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. and on Saturday, April 7 at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tick-\nets are free of charge but should be reserved in advance to ensure a seat. For more information or to reserve tickets call the Michigan League Box Office at 764-2358. To learn more about Polybe + Seats or to support the company, visit www.po-
lybeandseats.org.

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Measha Brueggergosman soprano  
J.J. Penna and William Bolcom piano  
THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 8 PM  
Hill Auditorium  
Program to include music by Reynaldo Hahn, Ernest Chausson, Hugo Wolf, and assorted cabaret songs of William Bolcom.  
Sponsored by  
Media Partners: WUOM 91.3 FM, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, and Michigan Chronicle/Front Page.  
A Prelude Dinner precedes this performance. For reservations, call 734-764-8489.  
This is a CLASICAL KIDS CLUB concert and a NETWORK event.

Together and Solo  
John Williams and John Etheridge guitars  
FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 8 PM  
Rackham Auditorium

Jerusalem String Quartet  
SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 4 PM  
Rackham Auditorium  
PROGRAM  
Haydn  
Quartet in f minor, Op. 20, No. 5 (1772)  
Barber  
Quartet for Strings, Op. 11 (1936)  
Tchaikovsky  
Quartet No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11 (“Accordion”) (1863)  
Supported by Jane and Edward Schulak.  
Media Partners: WUOM 91.3 FM, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, and Detroit Jewish News.  
This is a CLASICAL KIDS CLUB concert.

Bach’s Mass in b minor  
Netherlands Bach Society  
THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 8 PM  
Hill Auditorium  
Supported by Barbara Furs Sloat.  
Media Partner: WRCJ 90.9 FM.

Trinity Irish Dance Company  
Mark Howard artistic director  
FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 8 PM  
SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 1 PM [ONE-HOUR FAMILY PERFORMANCE]  
SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 8 PM  
Power Center  
06/07 Family Series Sponsor: Sponsored by Toyota  
Supported by Robert and Pearson Macek.  
Funded in part by the Performing Arts Fund.  
Media Partners: Metro Times and WEMU 89.1 FM.

Los Folkloristas  
SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 4 PM  
Rackham Auditorium  
Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.  
Media Partners: WEMU 89.1 FM and Michigan Radio.

Call or Click for Tickets!  
734.764.2538 | www.ums.org  
outside the 734 area code, call toll-free 800.221.1229
The Jewish Film Festival will hold a free screening of Stolen Summer for middle school and high school students and families. The film, a deep spiritual film with a lovely story to match its interfaith message of friendship and faith, is the true story of Germany’s most famous anti-Nazi heroine. In addition, special guests will join the festival for post-film discussions.

The Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival is made possible by the Charles and Rita Gelman Educational Foundation, the Michael and Patricia Levine Philanthropic Fund and the Michigan Theater. Ann Arbor chairs are Elaine Margolis, Rachel Seel and Roberta Tankanow. The festival will also take place in Commerce Township, Birmingham, Windsor and Flint. The full schedule is listed on the JCC web site at www.jccannarbor.org.

Tickets to each film are $10, a festival pass, good for all 19 Ann Arbor films, is available for $65. Tax-deductible sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information, call the JCC at 971-0990.

Saturday, May 6, 2007
10 a.m. – Special student screening of Stolen Summer
2002, 91 minutes, English, Color, USA
The Jewish Film Festival will hold a free screening of Stolen Summer for middle school and high school students and families. This film, a deeply spiritual film with a lovely story to match its interfaith message of friendship and faith, is the true story of Germany’s most famous anti-Nazi heroine. In addition, special guests will join the festival for post-film discussions.

The film, a deep spiritual film with a lovely story to match its interfaith message of friendship and faith, is the true story of Germany’s most famous anti-Nazi heroine. In addition, special guests will join the festival for post-film discussions.

All good art is available on many levels, and on the surface this profound film is about a Jewish attorney required by the system to defend an anti-Semitic, hate-filled criminal who has killed a Pakistani restaurant worker for nothing more than spilling something on his new steel-toed shoes. Based on writer/co-director David Gow’s own play, Steel Toes tells the story of court-appointed Jewish lawyer Danny Dunkelman (Oscar Nominee David Strathairn; Good Night and Good Luck), who is assigned the case of a skinhead, Mike, accused of this racially motivated murder.

Dunkelman is angry at both the assignment and at Mike (Andrew W. Walker), but then becomes challenged by his unremorseful client, even beginning to examine his own belief that there may, in fact, be a human being worth redeeming in the young man. Strathairn, who actually originated this role on stage, delivers a triumphant performance as Dunkelman and as the two perform an elaborate dance of life and death, it becomes clear that the film is about even more than we thought. It is a finely wrought parable that tries to answer the question about what it “costs” to be one of the “chosen people”—to be Jewish—and by extension, whether or not it is worth it.

This exquisite yet terrible film takes us on a harrowing, rewarding journey with Strathairn’s masterfully portrayed Dunkelman as we all learn what the cost of fairness, belief in God and true justice is, and having found out we can all decide for ourselves about whether it is “right” or if it is too much to pay.

The director of the film has been invited to attend. Steel Toes is presented in cooperation with Detroit’s Consulate General of Canada and is sponsored by Sarah and Harold Gotlieb.

Monday, May 7, 2007
2 p.m. – Blues by the Beach
2006, 90 minutes, English and Hebrew with Arabic and Russian with English subtitles, Color, Israel and USA
A Special Director’s Selection
Blues by the Beach is an important film about the direct taking of innocent life for supposedly political purposes. Producer Jack Baxter (Mishlovn X) focuses on Mike’s Place, a popular American bar on the Tel Aviv boardwalk, where there was beer and fun amid the tragedy of the Middle East. A merry bunch until I am on April 30, 2003 when Araf Hanif walked in with sophisticated explosives in a hollowed-out kuran and killed and injured 53, including Baxter who was, ironically, partially shielded by Hanif’s own body.

30 minutes, Hebrew,
married woman is forbidden to another man. They are condemned to be barren, as a married woman is forbidden to bear another’s child. Their voices are silenced because they are young, anonymous women whose pain and suffering is embedded in the law of a democratic country in the 21st century.

The film follows Tamar, Sari and Smadar’s Kafkaesque struggle over a period of two years. Each of these three young women is doing all she can to obtain a divorce with the help of a group of female Orthodox rabbinical advocates. Although the focus of the film seems narrow, the overriding issue, Judaism and change in a modern world, crystallizes in this documentary, as it does nowhere else.

The director of the women’s organization that financed the film has been invited to attend.

5 p.m. – Paper Dolls

2004, 90 minutes, English, Hebrew and Tagalog with English subtitles, Color, Israel

Good film can take us right to the heart of Israel’s most heated topics. This film is about foreign workers in Israel—over 300,000 have been brought in from all over the world since the Intifada reduced Arab worker availability. And while this film may seem “out there,” its motive is to uncover the human nugget from the dire and the extreme.

A movie about outsiders, the Paper Dolls of the title are transsexual Filipinos who have come to Israel and work as sensitive caregivers, willing to do what needs doing in an Israeli society that has a hard time coming to terms with who does it.

Paper Dolls is a documentary film by award-winning filmmaker Torner Heymann. The Filipinos have emigrated to Israel to take care of elderly religious Jewish men. On their one day off per week, they perform as drag performers in a group called the Paper Dolls. On the political level, it explores the perils of global immigration. On the human level, the film is about people who are rejected by their own families for being gay/transvestite and who emigrate and end up with jobs taking care of other people’s parents who have been rejected by their own children because they are old, difficult, etc.

The men in this film work grueling hours to send money back to the Philippines to support the families that have rejected them. Paper Dolls does not sook itself in its subjects’ extremity, and so becomes one of those extreme stories that tell us true things about less extreme goings-on.

8 p.m. – The First Basket

100 minutes, English, Black and White, Color, USA

Special Director’s Selection

Amazing: basketball, the ultimate Jewish sport? Well, owners and managers were, but players, promoters? It seems that everybody was Jewish! The NBA’s first points—even Scored by Jewish power forward Ossie Schectman on November 1, 1946 as the New York Knicks beat the Toronto Hawks, Irvine, Emu.

So add all the names you remember: Red Auerbach, Abe Saperstein, Leo Gottlieb, Ralph Kaplowitz, Max Cohn, Nat Frenkel, Sid Gerchick, Meyer Goldman, Manny Kaplans, Sokol ‘Bud’ Schwartz, Jack Silverman, Sy Rose, Broons Abravonic, Jerry Feinshlim, Hank Rosenthal, Delph Schuyler, Max Zadofsky and hundreds more.

Most important, director David Vyorst’s film is based on Peter Rejiger’s King of the Corner, Animal House, Crossing Delancy, is about becoming American. After nostalgia, this wonderful film observes the immigrant experience, discussing the role sports played (and still plays) in weaving the fabric of the US as we know it.

Filmmaker David Vyorst joins us as we watch this meticulously crafted work featuring 50 years of basketball and including everyone from the Harlem Globetrotters to the Celtics, Pistons and Knicks.

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

2 p.m. – Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner

2006, 98 minutes, English, Color, USA

A Special Director’s Selection

Through whether Angels in America, Homebody/Kabul, Caroline, or Change, the screenplay for Munich or his joyful commitment to his partner, Tony Kushner has changed the American arts landscape. His masterful blending of serious questions and pulse-quickening answers have made him the most important Jewish playwright alive, and now we get to see just who he really is.

Slant Magazine said, “Wrestling with Angels shows us how Kushner’s personal life has shaped his breathtaking plays… how [his father’s] lifelong musical interest [had] irreversibly affected [Kushner’s]… work, like Caroline, or Change… and his children’s book with Maurice Sendak… “

Academy Award winning director Frieda Lee Mock took almost three years to make this remarkable film.

5 p.m. – The Rape of Europa

2004, 86 minutes, English, Color

A Special Director’s Selection

The Rape of Europa is a feature documentary based on the National Book Critics Circle Award winning history by Lynn H. Nicholas. The film tells the epic story of the systematic theft, deliberate destruction and miraculous survival of Europe’s art treasures during the Third Reich and Second World War. The film interweaves the history of Nazi art looting with the stories of contemporary restitution cases.

From the book jacket: “The fate of the World’s art treasures hung in the balance during the destructiveness of the second world war. The cast of characters includes Adolf Hitler, Hermann Goering, Gertrude Stein and Marc Chagall—not to mention works by artists from Leonardo da Vinci to Pablo Picasso. Hitler diverted attention from the prosecution of the war to the systematic theft of Europe’s greatest art. His dream of building the world’s greatest museum—the Führer Museum in his hometown of Linz, Austria—obsessed him to the bitter end.”

But it does not end there. The film also tells the dramatic story of the unprecedented heroic efforts of the US Monuments Men who were sent to Europe to safeguard and return displaced art at the end of the war.

8 p.m. – The Tribe

2005, 17 minutes, English, Color, USA

If a movie claimed to cover 5,768 years of Jewish history, customs, religion, culture, fights and other tumult in 17 minutes, would you pay just to see the trick, right? Well, this is your chance. New age media with old age material from an Oscar-nominated director whose parents were Detectors, Tiffany Shlain. John Columbus, founder and director of the Black Maria Film Festival says, “The Tribe is a brilliant, irreverent, wry and buoyant film about an icon of American culture, the wasty Barbie doll and its creator, a Jewish woman. The film is a stunning achievement and I love it and so do audiences.”

Followed by…

Only Human

2004, 88 minutes, Spanish with English subtitles, Color, Spain

Starring Oscar-nominated Norma Aleandro, this glorious family comedy reworks the age-old story of meeting the parents—but this time with a hilarious up-to-the-minute Jewish twist. Using a skilful blend of warmth and humor, this picture addresses head-on what happens when cultures clash within our very homes.

When Leni comes home to introduce her fiancée Rafi to her idiosyncratic Spanish Jewish family, everyone goes smoothly until the lovers belatedly reveal that Rafi is Palestinian. Amid the ensuing hysteria, Rafi escapes to the kitchen to help prepare the dinner but drops the soup he was trying to defrost out of the seventh story window, hitting a pedestrian below. And just in the case of the evening’s not going badly enough, it turns out the pedestrian may be Leni’s father.

Thursday, May 10, 2007

2 p.m. – Sister Rose’s Passion

2004, 36 minutes, English, Color, USA

This story of Sister Rose, a Dominican Nun, rekindles faith in what any human being can accomplish.

This film is a poignant testament to the human spirit and director Oren Jacoby has captured an unprecedented sense of right and wrong that has changed the lives of millions of Christians.

Born in 1920, Sister Rose Thering spent over 50 years challenging authority, particularly institutionalized anti-semitism and bigotry inside the Catholic Church. Drawing on scripture and deeply held religious beliefs, Sister Rose spoke out for tolerance and understanding. When she met Pope John Paul II, she said what she thought and got her way.

Continued on page 8
A scene from the Queen of the Mountain

limbs and hearing impaired. Yet she abandoned the comfortable lifestyle with her conservative Jewish family in 1933 to pursue her pioneering passion at Nemrod Dagh, an isolated, mysterious mountain in southwestern Turkey. Struggling with hearing, her extraordinary site work also included bringing roads, tourists and employment to the impoverished local area. After spending most of her life there as an outsider, Goell became ‘Queen of the Mountain,’ gaining worldwide attention for her work and finding a new home among the mountain Kurds.

Martha Goell Lubell’s tender film take the shape of an epic adventure and Theresa’s saga lives through breathtaking National Geographic footage of the excavations, hundreds of photographs and finally, Goell’s own stunning oral history and letters, read by Tovah Feldshuh. Luminously restoring the legacy of this pioneering Jewish woman, Queen of the Mountain offers a unique, intriguing portrait.

5 p.m. – Sophie Scholl: The Final Days
2005, 111 minutes, English, German, and USA
A Special Director’s Selection
Everyone didn’t give in to Hilat, at least at first. One group, The White Rose, specialized in circumscribing positions contrary to the Third Reich as a matter of academic/intellectual pride. They were caught early by the Nazis and this achingly well-made film follows three members of this group as we watch trials that quickly escalate into a searing test of wills. Sophie Scholl delivers a haunting, timeless, passionate call to freedom and personal responsibility.

This true story of Germany’s most famous anti-Nazi heroine is brought to life in this multi-award winning film. It was a 2006 Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Language Film and stars Julia Jentsch in a luminous performance as the young student-turned-fearless activist. Using actual, long-buried historical records of her incarceration, director Marc Rothemund hypnotically recreates the last six days of Sophie Scholl’s life; a heart-stopping journey from arrest to interrogation, trial and sentence.

Preceded by...
Raoel Wallenberg: One Person Can Make a Difference
2006, 11 minutes, English, Color, USA
Emmy Award winning filmmaker Harvey Ovshinsky and the Raoul Wallenberg Society of Ann Arbor have put together this brief dedication to the Wallenberg (a former student at the University of Michigan) legacy. This is important, both as a dedication and as history. This film is a miniature masterpiece.

8 p.m. – King of Beiggs
2006, 98 minutes, Hebrew with English subtitles, Color, Israel and Poland
A Special Director’s Selection
Inside a 16th century Polish cemetery, two social outcasts are joined in matrimony under a moonlit sky. Fushke, a lame bath attendant weds a mysterious blind woman who wandered to the village only days before. But soon, Fushke learns that his new wife is really a member of a group of Jewish brigands out to rob the town. She runs but Fushke follows her, believing she is his lawful wife in the eyes of God.

When he catches her though, he finds a world he did not know existed—one filled with Jewish outlaws who victimize other Jews. He escapes, but the leader tracks him down, demanding revenge but finds defeat at the hands of the young Torah scholar/warrior to whom the beggars now turn to for leadership. Fushke, who believes in earning rights by fulfilling one’s duties, sets out to liberate his people and earn his torn ‘nation’ its own piece of land. A surprising and unique tale of a Jewish Robin Hood.

Gala Opening from page 1

The feature film shown that evening will be Steel Toes. Based on writer/co-director David Gow’s own play, Steel Toes tells the story of court-appointed Jewish lawyer Danny Dunkelman (Oscar Nominee David Strathairn; Good Night and Good Luck), who is assigned the case of a skinhead, Mike, accused of a racially motivated murder. ■

Tickets to the Film Festival screenings are $10. A Film Festival Pass, good for all 19 films, is $65. Ticket order forms and a full festival schedule are available on the JCC website, www.jccannarbor.org. If you are interested in becoming a Film Festival sponsor and attending the reception, contact Leslie Bash or Rachel Rosenthal at the JCC at 737-0990.

Holocaust Remembrance from page 1

raised as Christians and grew up under assumed names in Dutch farmlands, and then in a fishing village. After the war the Dahme girls were reunited with their parents. The Hidden Child is an outgrowth of a July 2004 trip to the Netherlands with Dahme and a contingent of 20 New Jersey school teachers. Chronicled by an award-winning production team, the film captures Dahme’s return to the Dutch farmouse and countryside where she had been hidden as a child and documents her emotional reunion with one of the Christian women who saved her life. The film also follows Dahme and the teachers to Vught, a Nazi concentration camp, and to the Anne Frank house as well as to the homes of some of Amster’s アメストラク’s father and acquaintances. The film’s director, Piotr Mieczyl, has made a number of acclaimed films, including the harrowing play of the Holocaust, Playing for Time. Now, the AADL and the U-M collaborate for a screening of the rarely seen 1980 CBS film that won multiple Emmy awards. Playing for Time will be shown at the Downtown Library on Monday, April 16 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. This drama features an all-star cast and tells the story of a group of women prisoners in Auschwitz who survived the gas chambers by playing in a small orchestra. This is a powerful adaptation of Holocaust survivor Fania Fanelon’s autobiography. Fanelon, a Jewish singer-pianist, was imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. She was able to stay alive by becoming a member of the prison’s female orchestra. In the process, she struck up a close relationship with Alma Rose, the musical group’s leader, as well as the other members of the band. Playing for the Nazis, however, robbed the women of much of their dignity and some of them questioned whether remaining alive was worth the abuse they constantly suffered. The acclaimed film features Vanessa Redgrave as Fania and Jane Alexander as Alma—both Emmy winners for their heartbreaking roles. Christine Baranski, Viveca Lindfors, Melanie Mayron and Marisa Berenson are among the many prominent actresses who appeared in this landmark film, which was named the best Television Movie of the Year. Arthur Miller also won an Emmy for his powerful script. Playwright Arthur Miller was a prominent figure in American literature and cinema for over 60 years, writing a wide variety of plays, including The Crucible, A View from the Bridge, All My Sons and Death of a Salesman. He was a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama among many other awards. At the time of his death Miller was considered one of the greatest American playwrights of all time.

Shanghai Remembered
It is a little known item of World War II history that about 20,000 Jews fled Nazi Europe to escape to Shanghai. On Friday, April 20, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., this period in history will be brought to light as former refugee Berl Falbaum tells his story along with others collected in the gripping book of memoriam Shanghai Remembered...Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe. This event, co-sponsored by the Eastern Michigan University Hill, will also feature a book signing and books will be on sale at the event.

Shanghai Remembered is a collection of first-person accounts telling how the refugees found themselves traumatized, stateless and penniless in a strange and inhospitable place. The editor, Berl Falbaum, was a former Shanghai refugee himself, and has spent 10 years as a reporter at The Detroit News; four years as administrative aide to Michigan’s lieutenant governor; and 15 years as a corporate public relations executive.

In the 1930s, as anti-Semitism was spreading like a cancer, Jews from various parts of Europe discovered, through word of mouth or information from travel agencies, that Shanghai was an open port. No visas or passports were required. About 20,000 refugees made the decision to flee from impending extermination—leaving behind their highly civilized and sophisticated culture for a haven that could not have been more unlike the life they had experienced. What was their new life like? How did they survive? What did they leave behind? Editor Berl Falbaum will share his own story during this event.

All these events are free and open to the public. They will be held in the Downtown Library Multi-Purpose Room, 343 S. Fifth Avenue.
For more information, contact the library at 327-4560.
Tim Grimes contributed to this article.

Downtown Library
Holocaust Remembrance Events

Monday, April 9, 7–8:30 p.m.
Documentary film The Hidden Child
Monday, April 16, 7–8:30 p.m.
Award-winning film Playing for Time
Friday, April 20, 7–8:30 p.m.
Berl Falbaum presents his book Shanghai Remembered...Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Germany

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Thinking of buying a new home? Before you even start looking, look to United, your local lending experts. We'll help you determine how much you can afford, get you pre-approved, and send you shopping with cash in hand. And as members of your community we know the market and make lending decisions right here. So call us—we know the neighborhood.

Plus, for a limited time we are offering $250 off closing costs. Call us today!
April 2007 SPICE* of Life
*Social, Physical, Intellectual, Cultural, and Educational Programs for Adults

All events are free unless a fee is listed. Programs are cancelled when the Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed.

**Mondays**
April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
11 a.m.–noon: Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, $4 or 3/$10
Noon–1 p.m.: Buffet of dairy delights, $3.
1–2:30 p.m.: Writing Group: Express yourself through personal recollections, poetry and fiction. No previous writing experience required.

**Tuesdays**
April 3, 10, 17, 24

**Wednesdays**
April 4, 11, 18, 25
10–11 a.m.: 100 Years of History. Explore the 100 years of local history.
11 a.m.–noon: Current Events with Heather Dombey
Noon–1 p.m.: Yummy Kosher lunch, $3.

**Thursdays**
April 5, 12, 19, 26
10–11 a.m.: Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, $4 or 3/$10
11 a.m.–noon: Current Events with Heather Dombey
Noon–1 p.m.: Yummy Kosher lunch, $3.

**Fridays**
April 6, 20 and 27
Yiddish Speaking and Reading Group. All levels welcome. Call JCC 971-0990.

Carol Lessure, special to the WJN

**JFS: Cruising thru 13 years welcoming strangers and promoting freedom**

As we prepare for Passover by cleaning, cooking, and considering ways to enliven our seder services, Jewish Family Services reflects on its 13 years of providing a safe haven to those in need and basic needs to “all who hunger.”

JFS celebrate and commemorate this milestone in a unique event: The JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise on Sunday, April 22, from 5–8 p.m. at Travis Pointe Country Club. Attendees can enjoy a cruise-inspired evening without leaving dry land.

Some of the accomplishments of JFS over the past 13 years include:

- Welcoming strangers—resettling 300 refugees and helping them adjust to our community
- Feeding the hungry and sheltering the poor — leveraging over $30,000 in financial assistance from partners to aid hundreds of families in need of rent, food, utility payments, and clothing
- Promoting freedom and self-sufficiency — guiding hundreds of unemployed people to new jobs
- Protecting the elderly — easing the lives of 300 older adults in the community

In reaching this bat mitzvah year, the agency has relied on hundreds of volunteers and supporters to keep the agency vital and responsive to the community needs.

The cruise-themed celebration will include a strolling international-themed dinner and champagne toasts. Attendees can choose from a variety of “excursions” including a wine tasting by Intermezzo magazine editor Becky Sue Epstein, floor show with Emcee “Big Al Muskowitz” of the WOMC Dick Puritan Show, caricaturist, magician, games of Mah Jongg or tennis, and service oriented projects for the JFS Lifecycle Story Corps and Crafts for Clients.

What would a cruise be without entertainment! The JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise will offer a multi-generational Newyewd-style game show, music and dancing to the sounds of past decades, and B’nai Mitzvah Karaoke where you can relive the good, bad, and funky tunes from your 13th year.

And this cruise offers children—middle school age and up—their own tropical pool party with pizza dinner, DJ and activities. So the whole family can enjoy a little Mitzvah magic during the JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise.

“I hope everyone in the community will come to celebrate the work of JFS at our Cruise-inspired event in April. The Ann Arbor Jewish community has been able to nurture and grow a social service agency that can distinguish itself as both the prime source of support for Jews in the area and a key provider of services to the community at large,” stated Steve Gerber, board member and chair of the JFS Friends of the Family Council.

Margie Checkoway, JFS board president added, “The professional staff and volunteers demonstrate daily their commitment to improving the lives of every member of the community, whether it be an unemployed worker, a senior who needs living assistance, a young person who is engaged in risky behavior, a person with depression, or a newly arrived individual or family who is resettling in the U.S. JFS is there for all of us when we need emotional, social, or financial support. The JFS Cruise will mark a milestone year while launching the agency into adulthood and the future. Please help us commemorate the hard work of the past that has provided a safety net, the current work that is improving lives, and the future work that will enrich the community.”

The cruise event will honor those who have made a significant contribution to the agency’s past, present, and future. Youth who have volunteered their time to special projects, tireless board members, charitable donors, and members of the community who resettled Russian Jews and provided support services before JFS existed—all played a significant role in the success of JFS—Your Family in the Community. Climb aboard the JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise for a community-wide celebration. Reserve your berth online at www.jsannarbor.org for a very special evening.

Carol Lessure, special to the WJN

**JFS seeks young artists for card contest**

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County invites young artists (from ages 1–18) to design three new tribute cards for lifecycle events including celebrations (all accomplishments from new baby to new job), wedding/anniversaries, and in remembrance of loved ones.

Winners of the JFS Tribute card contest will have their designs printed and sent all around the country as community members honor and remember others with donations to JFS. All entries will be on display at the JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise on Sunday, April 22, at Travis Pointe Country Club. JFS will recognize all artists and announce the winners and prizes for participants at the Cruise. The original artwork of winning entries will be framed and on display at the new JFS offices. The contest is open to all artists seeking to contribute your art to a meaningful project. If so, design a card—no words necessary—and submit your entry by 3:30 p.m. on April 13, 2007 to JFS. Entries may be dropped off either to the JFS mailbox at the JCC or at the new JFS offices on 2245 South State Street. Look for entry forms at the JFS office, JCC, and area religious schools or download a form from www.jsannarbor.org.
Civic life and community engagement receives attention in new JCC series

Abigail Lawrence-Jacobson, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County will present a new series on “Civic Life and Community Engagement,” which will bring scholars, community organizers, authors, researchers, and community members to speak on topics ranging from volunteering to voting. The hope is that these monthly or bi-monthly presentations will spark a dialogue on the many ways to build a vibrant and engaged community for all ages. Two April events are planned. On April 12 at 1 p.m., Eastern Michigan University professor Marti Bombyk will speak on “Civic Engagement in the Neighborhood: Building Community from the Ground Up?” as she recounts the process of organizing resident councils in Ypsilanti. On April 19 at 1 p.m., Jewish Family Services Volunteer Services committee chair Elizabeth Solomon will discuss the purpose and meaning of volunteerism. Both events will be held at the JCC and are free and open to the public.

Civic renewal—Social Capital—Engaged Citizenship—Civil Society. What are these buzz words all about? Are they relevant to the Jewish community? Read any newspaper, sociology journal, or news magazine, and you’re bound to come across a mention of troublesome trends in mainstream society, including declining public participation (as notably documented in Robert Putnam’s 2000 book, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community), growing cynicism, low voter turnout, and declining trust and social bonds among neighbors, families, and communities. Many social scientists and critics are concerned that, as Putnam wrote, “the bonds that connect us at the local level and serve as an essential counterbalance to American individualism have fallen into grave disrepair.” In response, initiatives are springing up across the country to stem the erosion of civic life and to strengthen the social fabric of communities. Locally, both the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads 2007 program (“We the People…”) and the University of Michigan Theme Semester focus on the process of fostering a sense of civic engagement, community, and a sense of belonging in the modern world.

The JCC’s “Civic Life and Community Engagement” series was launched in March with a community-wide discussion of the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads book choice, Tracy Kidder’s Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World (Random House, 2003). In addition to the two events in April, an event is planned for May 17 at 1:30 p.m. at the JCC. Jeff Bernstein, associate professor of political science at EMU, will present a discussion of Putnam’s book Bowling Alone, and the decline of social capital and civic participation in the United States. Bernstein will address the implications of Putnam’s arguments for democracy and policymaking. Stay tuned for additional presentations as part of the new “Civic Life and Community Engagement” series. For more information, contact Abbie Lawrence-Jacobson at 769-0209.
A Torah of one’s own

Peggy Adler in Israel

Until I was introduced to Pardes Hannah, Ann Arbor’s Jewish Renewal community, I’d been living in Ann Arbor for eight years without finding a congregation that felt, to me, like home. Since arriving from New York, I had long surrendere
d to being a synagogue-goer—at large, ving for tickets on high holidays, crashing services at Hillel. To find Pardes Hannah, I had to go all the way to Israel where an art-
iist in Safed told me that upon my return, I should find Pardes Hannah’s rabbi, Elliot Ginsburg. Thankfully, I did.

Since leaving New York—home to as many flaf
cout of rhythm, I was drawn to the Torah as what Renewal circles call “Deep Story.” it was here that I found a place.

In Pardes Hannah, I’ve found a commu-

nity in which members wrestle with their own inner-halahach. A spiritual community that, like many others, believes that despite the pundit-deemed culture war often per-

petuated in our university culture, intellect and faith are no less connected than the

mind and the heart.

Looking back, I can see why it took me all this time to find Pardes Hannah, why our lives intersected at this particular point on our respective journeys. Pardes Hannah is in her 13th year. She has been preparing. Now, as her coming-of-age lifecycle would have it, she is ready to receive her Torah.

The preparation of b’ni mitzvah includes the formal (Torah study), and the informal (each repeat): the tangible (Hebrew school), and the intangible (each sensory awaken-

ing). It is possible to argue that everything in a child’s life, preceding that day, has led to that moment, standing on the pulpit, reading the haftorah portion determined by,

and therefore on, their date of birth.

But the other break of the Torah in awe, fear, even disdain. Never, though, have I heard b’ni mitzvah wonder how they should be so lucky as to have access to a To-

rah. Some, the sensitive, have pondered over how there could possibly be so many Torahs when each is hand-lettered, taking a year to

spend time with Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg in Jerusalem. Just in time for Shavuot, the day the Torah was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. I learned that I had ever been bat mitzvahed, which I had not, my parashah would have been Mishpatim: Moses has been traveling on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights; he is ready to receive the Torah. I had been traveling in the desert, on the mountain, for 40 years, I thought, I, too, was ready for my Torah. That summer, I was fortunate to spend time with Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg in Jerusalem. I also befriended an artist, Yit-

zhak Greenfield, whose late, Yemenite wife’s name was Ziporah, making him a modern-day Mos 

es. Although I couldn’t read a single letter of Hebrew, I was inexplicably drawn to his stark print of the aleph bet, seemingly illuminated. I purchased it knowing that it was beyond my comprehension; that yet, somehow, it belonged to me, the way it is said that we are given the Torah in the womb and forget it upon birth. It is our life’s work, then, to return to what we already knew.

On my journey home from Israel, on Ti-

sha B’Av, I lost the print. Twice. First, I lost it in London, Heathrow. Panicked, I ran to the lost and found, assuming this was fu-
til. Amazingly, the print was there. From that point forward, I guarded it carefully, as if it were my passport, my identity. And yet somehow, again, in Newark, I lost the print of the aleph bet. I ran back to each place I’d been, searching frantically, but this time the print was gone, never to be recovered. Emp-
tied, I was reminded of how at first, Moses shattered the commandments he’d received. The people weren’t ready; for them, I can’t help wondering, though, if Moses, too, wasn’t ready, as we are all mirrors for each other. Perhaps too much came in for Moses too suddenly; and when he returned to the mountain, back to his life on ground level, he found the knowledge too much to hold. Just as we can lose our temper with our children for mirroring our own shortcomings, so did Moses with the people, breaking the commandments in a fit of frustration. He would have to prepare himself, again, with compassion and humility, to make his journey back to Mount Sinai, this time pre-

pared to live with what he received.

Since arriving back to Ann Arbor, I’ve been embraced by Pardes Hannah and her ever-growing community. The name Pardes Hannah is a rough translation of Ann Arbor into Hebrew; the orchard, or, of Ann. When I chose a Hebrew name for myself just a few years ago in order to sign a friend’s ke-
tubah, I chose Ayla, a small oak tree, and so it is with Pardes Hannah that I have planted myself. Each member, I’ve found, is on his own spiritual journey, committed to her own growth, and each person’s presence bears the weight, and gift, of being a pillar of support to the other, a tree in the orchard of Ann.

I’ve started, too, to learn Hebrew. With only half the letters, I hear myself sound out, with the slowness of a child: Sha-lem, Reb-

be, Av-ra-ham.

Last month, I was invited to join Pardes Hannah’s Torah Fundraising Committee along with long-time members. When we realized that Pardes Hannah was in her 13th year, her birthright year to receive her Torah, Miriam Blysk, a member and Holocaust sur-
vivor, said that when we received our Torah, she would be bat mitzvahed as she was un-

able to do as a child. Board member Lucinda Kurtz popped her hand on top of Miriam’s: she had always planned to be bat mitzvahed on her 60th birthday, in one year, and she, too, would do so with our first Torah. I laid my hand on top of theirs. By then, I said, I’d be reading Hebrew, and when Mishpahat came around, I, too, would have my bat mitzvah. I would be ready; ready this time to hold on to my Torah.

In our small havurah, everyone is prepar-

ing. One member has volunteered to create the Torah cover, another a band, a simple, ceremonial pomegranates, a yad.

Like a family preparing to adopt, we don’t yet know our Torah’s story, where it will come from, but we trust that it is on its way to us, as we are to it. As we raise our-

selves to the occasion of our union, so, too, we are raising the money we will need. With the help of many members, we are hosting a benefit concert at the Kerrytown Concert Hall, featuring Ian Cumming, violin, and Renee Robbins, piano, along with Noah Ginsburg and Friends Jazz Trio Ensemble.

We would appreciate your presence, your

ears, your support as we call in our Sefer To-

rah in the true spirit of prayer, like Miriam in the desert; with music.

We are ready—ready for our heart to manifest—as the Torah is seen as the heart of creation. According to Hasidic teach-

ings, the first letter of the Torah is Bet of Bereshit—"In the beginning." The last is Lamed, of Yisrael. Together, they spell Lev, heart, and the name of one of our youngest and most beloved congregants.

Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg shared this teach-

ing with Levy Yitzhak of Berditshev: we must learn not only to read the black letters of the Torah, but also its white spaces. Gins-

burg himself adds, “As we prepare to receive a Torah, we are committed to wrestling with, and hearing, what is written, even as we hold ourselves open to the larger mys-
tery: to silences not yet plumbed, melodies still unheard.”

The Torah Benefit Concert will take place at the Kerrytown Concert House, 415 North Fourth Avenue, on Sunday, April 29, at 7 p.m. Tickets, ranging from $5 for students to $25, can be re-

erved by calling Kerrytown at 769-2999.
What’s happening in April at Temple Beth Emeth
Devon Fitzig, special to the WJN

activities at Beth Israel Congregation
Elliot Sorkin, special to the WJN

Passover Services
Passover morning services are held in the Beth Israel Sanctuary on the first two days of Passover, April 3 and April 4, and on the last two days of Passover April 9 and April 10. All the services begin at 9:30 a.m. The Yiskor service takes place on April 10.

Lunch and Laugh Series
On Wednesdays, April 11, 18, and 25, from noon–1:15 p.m. Rabbi Robert Dobrusin will discuss some of the famous Jewish comedians of the past as well as look at the participants live to find humor in their own Jewish experiences. All sessions take place in the lower level of the Garfunkel – Schteingart Activities Center (2010 Washtenaw). Participants are asked to bring a dairy lunch. Drinks and desserts will be provided. There is no charge for this drop-in series.

Teen Shabbat and Kids’ Kiddush
On Saturday, April 28 at 9:30 a.m. teens take over the Shabbat morning service, including reading from the Torah, leading prayers, and even delivering the sermon. After Shabbat services, at about 12:15 p.m. everyone present will be treated to a “Kids’ Kiddush,” a Kiddush planned and prepared by interested fifth and sixth graders, under the supervision of Nikki Klein, the kitchen coordinator. The planning and kitchen preparation gives youngsters who will have a bar or bat mitzvah within the next two years an idea of what a reception is all about.

Spring Retreat for Young Families
The Beth Israel Spring Retreat for Young Families, May 25–27 at the Butzel Conference Center in Ortonville, Michigan is open to the general community. There is a charge. Activities including Shabbat programs, crafts, sports, family games, hiking, a campfire and more. The Butzel Conference Center offers comfortable resort-style facilities overlooking a private lake in a beautiful countryside setting. It is located on the grounds of Tamarrack Camps, and is staffed by experienced counselors from their summer or other family camp programs.

Tot Shabbat
Tot Shabbat on Saturday April 14 and April 28 at 11 a.m.–noon. These gatherings are intended for three to six year olds and their parents and include songs, stories, prayers, and puppets. On Saturday, April 14 the Tot Shabbat is run by Peretz Hirshbein and on Saturday, April 28 Jennifer Levine will lead Tot Shabbat. A special Kids’ Kiddush is scheduled for just for the tots follows. There is no charge for this program.

Beth Israel Reads
In conjunction with the third annual Beth Israel Religious School Read-A-Thon, the BIRS Education Committee is premiering its first annual “Beth Israel Reads” with the Holocaust novel, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne. The book may be purchased at the Beth Israel Religious School and Administrative offices. After Beth Israel’s Yom Hashoah services on Sunday April 8 at 7:30 p.m., those who have read the book are invited to a general discussion at 8:15 p.m.

Petra, Jordan
By Rabbi Robert D. Levy
If Petra were not already a movie set it should be.
A line ofoque and elegant buildios ending three miles down the narrow sandy path at a restaurant.
Then a hike to the roof of the world. I walk in the company of young men, moving fast to keep up and hide my age. At the very top, on an overhang to everything, a man sells tea with conversation.
Off to the right a shepherd and small flock. Aaron’s grave off to the left. And blue sky, so blue.
Petra only appears historic.
In its day and today Petra requires imagination.
Petra is less about the path and sand than the walk.

Israel Inspiration
This past February Rabbi Robert Levy led a group from Temple Beth Emeth to visit and hike in Israel and Jordan. Their trip included visits to Jerusalem, Elat and Petra. This poem speaks to the group’s day at Petra in Jordan.

Yom Hashoah Service
Sunday, April 22, 6:30 to 7:30 pm, in the TBE Sanctuary, there will be a commemorative Holocaust Memorial Service taking place during religious school, created by members of the Generations After group and their children. The service will feature music, the narratives of Holocaust survivors and photos of their lives before and after the war. Refreshments will follow this powerful service. Open to the community.

Adult Hebrew Courses Spring Semester
Biblical and Conversational Hebrew with Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels. The six-week class begins the week of April 15. Winter and spring semesters are a continuation of the fall semester. New students may be able to join the classes, depending on their skill level. For more information, contact Devon Fitzig, dfitzig@templebethemeth.org or call 665-4744.

Kohete (Ecclesiastes), Job and Maimonides
Instructor: Rabbi Robert Levy, Sundays, April 1, 15, 29 and May 6 from 7:45–9 p.m. Modern issues about the meaning of life in ancient garb is the topic. It is almost scary the “contemporary” ways that these three writers approached the struggle of living.

Women’s Rosh Chodesh
Sunday, April 29, 6:30 to 7:30 pm, TBE Chapel. Topic: Janice Gutfried will lead a discussion on Conversion. Co-sponsored by Caring Community and the TBE Sisterhood, each short service is followed by a discussion, study session, or special presentation. Open to the community. After this meeting, Women’s Rosh Chodesh will resume in the fall. To subscribe to the Rosh Chodesh email list or to lead a service or discussion, contact Susan Harris, srh@umich.edu or 688-7864.

Movie Tuesday: The Forgotten Refugees
April 17, 1-3 p.m., film followed by discussion. Coffee, tea and a nosh will be provided. Buried beneath the headlines of the Middle East conflict is the forgotten story of the region’s indigenous Jewish communities. The Forgotten Refugees, a film produced by The David Project and IsraelTV, tells the story of the hundreds of thousands who fled their homes, who endured in refugee camps, and who today quietly carry the memory of a destroyed civilization.

Following the film, TBE member, Alfred Gomulka, will discuss growing up as a Jew in Iran.

God’s Top Ten: The Essential Commandments
Tikkan Leil Shavuot, Adult Study Session with Rabbi Levy, Tuesday, May 22, 9 p.m. Enjoy some Torah learning and cheesecake.

Continuing Jewish Meditation
Enjoy some Torah learning and cheesecake. Peretz Hirshbein, will discuss some of the famous Jewish comedians of the past as well as look at the participants live to find humor in their own Jewish experiences. All sessions take place in the lower level of the Garfunkel – Schteingart Activities Center (2010 Washtenaw). Participants are asked to bring a dairy lunch. Drinks and desserts will be provided. There is no charge for this drop-in series.

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Auction items for you: You still have time to bid on auction items remaining at the JCC. From light fixtures, photographs and vases to mirrors, sculptures and discounted admissibility to local businesses – we have something that’s meant for you. Please stop by the JCC lobby to submit your bid(s) and support the JCC in building a new playground.
**Religion**

### Haftarah for Parashat Metzora

*Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, special to the WJN*

This article is one in a series on the Haftarah, the reading from the prophets during the Shabbat morning service. Each month, Rabbi Dobrusin comments on one of the traditional Haftarah readings for that month.

**The Torah reading from Parashat Metzora, in the book of Leviticus, is not the most popular reading of the year. It focuses in great depth on the Torah’s description of the steps to be taken when an individual is suffering from leprosy or similar diseases. The “treatment methods” are clearly archaic and reflect the belief that all such diseases are sent directly from God and are treated only with religious ritual and prayer.**

While spiritual efforts to help us or help others recover from illness are certainly part of Jewish tradition and, some argue, can be of great value in health care, clearly we do not benefit from turning only to spiritual means for healing.

Much of the rabbinic tradition focused on using these Torah chapters to impress traditions in order to avoid disease. Among those that afflicted with illnesses of one kind or another or with physical or emotional challenges to be less valued than others in our society. We tend to judge those outside of the gates either physically or metaphorically and assume that they can not be the ones who will lead us or provide for our society that which we vitally need.

The lesson of the haftarah for our day is that ostracizing those who suffer from an illness or casting aspersions on their worth as a human being only robs us of the opportunity to learn from and benefit from what each individual can contribute to society.

We can scoff at the Torah’s archaic response to those with disease. But, we have to ask ourselves how much we have learned and how far we have come from the days when those afflicted with illnesses were looked down upon and treated as less than human.

In the haftarah reading for Parashat Metzora, taken from the book of Second Kings, we read the story of four lepers who are sitting outside of the gates of the city. It is presumed that in addition to being ostracized to keep their disease from spreading, they were ostracized by a tradition that assigned a moral value to their contacting the ailment. It is therefore critical that in this story, these four men become the heroes by using the fact that they were outside of their own city to infiltrate the camp of the Aramean enemy and come back with critical information that led to their defeat.

There is a lesson to be heard in this story. While our society has hopefully moved far beyond attributing all disease to moral lapses, we do still tend to judge those who afflicted with illnesses of one kind or another or with physical or emotional challenges to be less valued than others in our society. We tend to judge those outside of the gates either physically or metaphorically and assume that they can not be the ones who will lead us or provide for our society that which we vitally need.

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### Experiencing Passover today

*Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN*

**The Seder is intended to be a personal experience. It should not, however, be a private one.**

Every person should look upon the exodus as an event of the present, not of the past. He should feel that he is leaving his personal Egypt, i.e., going beyond all the boundaries and limitations that confine his essential Godly nature.

And yet, the Torah teaches us that this realization should be experienced communally. The Paschal sacrifice, it commands, should be offered “for your families.” For however personal our Passover experience is, we should share and celebrate it together with our families—immediate and extended. Each person extends a hand to another, helping him or her understand and experience the Passover experience. It should not, however, be a private one.

**The Haggadah points to this concept in its discussion of the four sons. It is not only the wise who are gathered at the Seder table, but also the simple, those who identify Jewishly and appreciate observance, but have difficulty expressing, defining and verbalizing their identification.**

And they are joined by those who do not know how to ask—those who know that they belong and those who know that they are Jewish, but know little more than that, who do not know where to begin looking to define, express and articulate their identification.

And there is also a desire to become part of the Jewish community.

When the haggadah was written, this type of son did not exist. Now unfortunately he is a very prevalent type of person within the Jewish community. However apathetic to his or her Jewish roots this fifth son appears, within his heart, there is also a desire to become part of the Jewish experience. And when all four sons come together on Passover, the dynamic synergy that results will be powerful enough to inspire all the fifth sons to claim their place at the Seder table. ■
A new history course explores the past to find lessons to guide the future

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

Look to the past, a reflection on the future. The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute is set to launch a challenging new history course at over 200 affiliates across the globe. But unlike traditional history courses where students focus on dates, names, and events, "Flashbacks in Jewish History" looks beneath the surface at what history means to the Jews as a people.

"Jews have had to grapple with the challenge of maintaining their identity in environments that were foreign and often hostile," explains Rabbi Aharon Goldstein. "By probing the wonder of Jewish survival, we hope our students will be led to think critically about their own strategies for interacting successfully with the greater culture. "Flashbacks in Jewish History" does not attempt to be comprehensive in its coverage of any era; rather, it tries to spark curiosity and engage students emotionally. "Flashbacks in Jewish History" appeals to the intellectual and to engage students emotionally. "Flashbacks in Jewish History" is set to launch a challenging new history course at over 200 affiliates across the globe.

The Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) is the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch. JLI’s classes and programs, now offered in over 250 locations in 200 cities nationwide, as well as international locations (including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Holland, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela), have been attended by nearly 40,000 people since JLI’s creation in 1998. Many others participate virtually through online message boards and other internet-based channels.

Every course offered by the JLI is synchronized so that lessons are offered concurrently in all locations. This not only has helped to create a true global learning community; it is a unique feature that sets JLI apart from other such programs. Visit www.myjli.com for up-to-the-minute information about “Flashbacks in Jewish History.” JLI courses are presented in Ann Arbor under the auspices of Ann Arbor Chabad House. For more information, call 995-3276.

Course overview

This course covers how Jews far-flung from their lands survived cultural onslaught and the threat of assimilation. New perspectives are presented for facing the modern challenges of scientific inquiry, moral relativism, Western hedonism, and religious warfare. By probing the miracle of Jewish survival, participants will find new ways to live meaningfully as a Jew in the 21st century and beyond.

Lesson 1: Cultures in Collision: Is-rael vs. Greece and Rome

Lesson 2: Far from the Place That We Call Home: Jewish Exile and Dispersal in the Middle East

Lesson 3: All that Glitters: The Gold-en Age in Moslem Spain Prevailing Despite Hate and Oppression

Lesson 4: Rivers of Blood: Antisemi-tism in medieval Christian Europe

Lesson 5: In the Shadow of the In-quisition: The Downfall of Spanish Jewry

Lesson 6: Rising from the Ashes: The Revival of European Jewry

Twenty-five years in the writing

A reception to celebrate the publication of Reflections: Auschwitz, Memory, and a Life Recreated by Agi Rubin and Henry Greenspan

Wednesday, April 11
4 – 6 p.m.
Shaman Drum Bookshop
311 State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

"Compact, poetic, and accessible, this book will be required reading in universities and secondary schools. For all readers, it will be a milestone in their own reflections about the terrors and hopes of our times, then and now. Reflections is quite simply, one of the most important Holocaust memoirs I have ever read. It is the real thing: a landmark achievement."

—Sidney Balshoy, Voice/Vision Holocaust Oral History Archive Director

The Jerusalem String Quartet is comprised of four young musicians who began playing together in Israel in 1993 when they were still in their mid-teens. With more than a decade as an ensemble, they have matured into outstanding artists, known for their “musical electricity” (The Straad). This new generation of Israeli musicians performs with beauty and warmth in a special concert on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

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Picture of my past
Sandor Slomovits, staff writer

It was the day before my parents’ 50th wedding anniversary. My brother and I were visiting them. We’re known since we were 16, when our mother let slip one day that she was our father’s second wife, that our father had lost his first wife and three young children in Auschwitz. Long before that revelation, we’d heard about our father’s other relatives who were killed in Auschwitz. Our father occasionally told us stories of these people. The stories often ended with, “They were taken to Auschwitz.” I can’t recall a time when I felt a need for further explanations. Auschwitz was a part of our family history that I inhaled as naturally as many other far less remarkable facts. It seemed as if it was always there—air—not really hidden, but usually invisible.

Though our father sometimes spoke of his parents, brother, and sisters who perished in Auschwitz, he never mentioned his first wife and children. And while there were pictures of his other relatives in our family photo albums, we never saw any pictures of his wife and children. Our mother did tell us once, that shortly after she and our father married, she’d found a photo of them in his wallet, had asked him about it and had not seen it since.

It wasn’t until I was in my late forties that I finally braved talking with my father about his first family. He did not seem surprised then that I knew about his wife and children. I asked for stories about them, asked him to describe what they looked like. And he did. Briefly, haltingly, and with so much pain and sadness on his face that, feeling guilty about opening old wounds, I always there—air—not really hidden, but usually invisible.

in the Camps?”

Next comes grief. For the first time in my life I recognized gratitude. My father was giving me a priceless gift. He was telling me, in the only way he knew how to shield and protect his first children. But as my own father; worn, torn, patched in his beautiful Hebrew printing, was the only way I’ve sometimes felt, I’ve not needed to keep his love secret, as he kept secret his in my father’s beautiful Hebrew printing, was the only way to play Monopoly with our father. It was the one game that he ever played with us, and one of the very few leisure activities in which we could He has been your father all his life. Was it your father who cut this photo? Was it his father who cut it off so he could finally show it off to us? Or had someone cut it for him?

My father looked at me incredulously, “This was more than 50 years ago. Do you think I remember?”

Was it my father who cut this photo? Was it he who literally cut himself out of the picture, cut himself off from his first wife and children, as he was cut off from them by the Nazis? Was he who removed himself from them, disappeared from the picture, as in a way he also has from us, his second family?

In the next few days, I searched meticulously through all my parents’ photo albums. I could not find the other half of the picture anywhere. I began to question whether I ever did see it. However, I noticed with some amazement the strong resemblance between my father’s first wife and my own mother.

I noticed something else. Three sides of the photo are professionally trimmed, but the fourth, the side where Erno stands, is uneven and rough. Suddeny, I recalled another photo, one that I have seen before, in one of our family albums. It is of my father, seated in a chair identical to Etta’s. I realized with a start—this was a family portrait that had been cut in half. I was holding the picture of the family that was torn away, destroyed in Auschwitz. My father had been hiding them ever since, keeping them safe, not able to let them out of his mind.

I asked my father, “Why was this picture cut?” I reminded him of the other half. Did he cut it so he could fit this half into his wallet? Or had some- one cut it for him?

My father looked at me incredulously, “This was more than 50 years ago. Do you think I remember?”

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This is Sunday School? Reconstructionist Havurah’s Geoffrey Berdy says yes!

Jonathan Cohn, special to the WJN

Everybody knows that religious school is boring—everybody, that is, except Geoffrey Berdy.

It is an ordinary Sunday morning in early January. And Berdy, who runs the local Reconstructionist community’s religious school, has a full lesson planned for his students. There will be singing, introduction to a Jewish holiday, some discussion in Hebrew—a few words for the youngest ones, more sophisticated material for their older ones.

But before Berdy gets to that traditional fare, he has something else in mind.

It’s time for “Tora yoga.”

Standing at the front of the class, Berdy turns his shoulders and feet inward, as if he were set of a Hebrew scroll. He beckons the students to do the same and they obligate, standing up from the rug where they’ve been sitting and—by one—assuming the same position. “Breathe in, nice and easy, and now breathe out,” Berdy says, as the kids inhale and exhale as one. Then, following Berdy’s lead, they unfurl themselves with Zen-like fluidity until they are all standing feet apart, their high in the air.

It’s not the first time Berdy has started off a class with yoga. He figures it’s a good way to relax the kids and put them in the mood for learning, which is no small feat given their ages. (Some are just five years old.) But this week, yoga is also part of the official curriculum. After the kids are done pretending to be Tora scrolls, Berdy teaches them what yoga masters call the “tree position.” And that’s appropriate, he says, since the holiday of Tu B’Shvat—Judaism’s celebration of the coming soon.

A discussion of trees follows. When Berdy asks the kids why trees are important, hands shoot up. “They give us oxygen,” says one student. “They give us shade,” says another. Then a third student volunteers, “they have roots, like families.” Bingo—that’s exactly where Berdy wanted this discussion to go. Soon Berdy is recounting the story of an elderly man who plants a seedling, knowing that it won’t blossom into a tree until long after he’s died. But the man does it anyway, Berdy explains, because his ancestors did it, and this is a way of paying off tradition and strengthening the community over time.

It’s not the most conventional way to teach children about Judaism. But, then, Berdy doesn’t want to be conventional—and neither do the people who hired him.

When the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah—the local Reconstructionist congregation—set out to upgrade their religious school a year ago, they sought a director who would create a program consistent with Reconstructionism’s broader philosophy. They wanted a director who would take the Jewish faith seriously, but teach about it in a fun, innovative way—somebody who would honor tradition even as he modernized it.

With Berdy, they seem to have found just such a person.

No 35 years old, Berdy’s current strong local ties: He was born at Detroit’s Sinai Hospital and spent much of his childhood in the area. He also has an undergraduate degree from Michigan State University, a fact he hopes all of his friends in Ann Arbor won’t hold against him. But Berdy’s ecletic background also includes time abroad—some of it in Great Britain and some of it in a kibbutz in Israel. And it’s an experience that experience with broadening his horizons: Among his best friends during his grade school years in London was a fellow student at who happened to be Polish. Together they founded a group called M.E.M.O.: “Middle Eastern Minorities Organization,” in which they wrote letters to Middle East leaders urging them to initiate dialogue.

Although Berdy likes to think of himself as something of a “religious rebel,” he grew up in the Orthodox tradition and always had a strong sense of Jewish identity. He was one of the only Jewish students at that London school. (He ended up playing Joseph in the nativity play.) Later on, the years Berdy spent in Yoshiva turned him on to Jewish education—particularly the concept of tischmah, or teaching Torah for its own sake. As an undergraduate at MSU, he helped start a Jewish Student Union, in response to a planned visit by Louis Farrakhan. He would go on to spend his last undergraduate semester at Hebrew College, in Newton, Massachusetts.

For years, Berdy says, his family and friends figured he was destined to become a rabbi. And Berdy admits he thought about it. But he eventually chose a different academic path—pursuing a master’s in theology at Harvard’s Divinity School, where—in addition to studying under scholars like Cornel West and Elie Wiesel—he delved deeply into issues surrounding the philosophy of education.

It was around this time, he says, that he began to think about the disconnect he perceived between contemporary Judaism and its past. Concepts like tischmah were fading from the Jewish community’s collective consciousness, he says, with only the orthodox keeping them alive. And the practice of the faith was increasingly top-down, with rabbis increasingly adopting the exalted position of priests—preaching down to their congregations rather than engaging with them. “Rabbis came to prominence during the Second Temple period, probably as a reaction to the priests, who had been dominant,” Berdy explains. “Rabbis couldn’t absorb sins—they were just spiritual teachers, bringing people closer to God by their own knowledge and powers of persuasion.”

According to Berdy, this relatively democratic model of faith, in which the right training could lead a congregation, bett the religion that was dispersed and constantly on the run. Berdy notes that, in this respect, Judaism’s evolution closely resembled the evolution of African-American churches, where anybody who learned scripture could lead a congregation. Today, he says, that’s changing: “With the institutionalization of religion, the Jewish community has given up too much of the responsibility of Jewish learning to rabbis. Part of my personal mission is to foster the notion that we can all be Jewish teachers and lovers of Jewish learning, even with a limited background.”

Now his years at Harvard, Berdy says, he also became fascinated with the relationship between the Jewish and techology. Jews “really were the first virtual community,” Berdy says. And he’s only become more interested in this for hundreds of years Jews were scattered across the world, united only by a common text—one that passed from tablet to parchment and then to book. “People in Spain were writing to Maimonides in Egypt,” Berdy notes. “Communities were connected by tradition, across national boundaries, and not through hierarchy the way, for example, the Catholic church was.”

Among other things, he serves as vice president for Judaic studies at the David S. Stone Hebrew Academy, which is Toledo’s Jewish day school. But even with the multiple jobs—not to mention a one-year-old son, Levi—Berdy had time for one more commitment.

That’s where Ann Arbor’s Reconstructionist Havurah comes into the story. It had been offering religious classes for some ten years or so—first in the homes of families, later at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County. But with the congregation growing, its board decided it was time to hire a fully credentialed teacher. It wanted somebody with extensive experience in Jewish education but also somebody comfortable with their approach to the tradition. “Our curriculum comes out of the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism,” says Deborah Field, who is head of the Havurah’s education committee. “We are supposed to learn about the tradition, study it in its historical context, and then make decisions as a community and as individuals about how we relate to that tradition—which aspects we adopt, which we adapt, which we forge and so on.”

Those ideas led the Havurah to Berdy, whose classroom style closely matches that philosophy. He asks questions more than he answers them; he leads discussions rather than giving lectures. Berdy teaches about the Talmud and the Torah, but he’s constantly encouraging the children to develop their own interpretations of the text. He explains how different Jewish cultures from around the world celebrate holidays, careful never to suggest one method is better than the other.

That’s asking a lot of initiative and self-direction out of some very young children. But to direct their study of the Torah as they prepare for bar and bat mitzvah, picking and choosing the parts of the text that interest them the most. “We don’t want kids having cookie-cutter bar mitzvahs,” Berdy says. “We want them to have their own interests and a strong sense of their own identity.” This style of education inevitably tolerates—indeed, it embraces—a large diversity of opinion when it comes to fundamental matters of faith and spirituality. But that, says Berdy, is entirely consistent with Reconstructionism and, more generally, Judaism’s tradition of spirited debate over the meaning of text.

One other focus of Berdy’s classroom is teaching about the importance of serving others in the community, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

In one of this year’s earliest sessions, Berdy had all the students make boxes for Tzedakah out of construction paper. The boxes now reside in the kids’ homes every week, they collect donations that they bring to the school on Sunday.

I know from personal experience—my son is a student in the class—that the kids see the exercise both as exciting and meaningful. Filling the box is a game, they understand why they are collecting the money and what it will eventually mean to the people who benefit from it. But then, that’s exactly the way Berdy and the Reconstructionist Havurah like it. They want learning about Judaism to be both fun and meaningful.

This is Sunday School? Reconstructionist Havurah’s Geoffrey Berdy says yes!
Second year at JCC Camp Keshet

Peretz Hirshbein, special to the WJN

For the second summer in a row, the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw Country's preschool program will be transformed into Camp Keshet. For preschool-aged children, Camp Keshet is organized around two-week long theme sessions, taking full advantage of the ECC’s spacious outdoor facilities. Each day children will participate in specialized art, nature, sports and music activities that highlight that session’s topic. Camp Keshet will build on last year’s successful program by introducing new themes. This summer’s themes focus heavily on the natural world, including Garden Days, Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Down on the Farm, and Things that Go.

During the Garden Days theme, campers will learn how to sow, nurture and harvest fruits, vegetables and flowers as they work each day in the ECC’s garden plot. Children will not only sow and care for new plantings, they will also harvest vegetation planted previously in the spring. The theme for the second session will be Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). Campers will learn practical lessons in recycling, reusing and reducing, highlighted by a trip to Ann Arbor’s Materials Recovery Facility. At this facility, campers will get a first-hand look at what happens to the recyclables that their parents send there each week.

The third session’s theme is Down on the Farm and will focus on the mitzvah of Tza’ar Ba’ali Chayim (taking care of animals). Campers will learn about what life is like on a farm, with a field trip to visit real farm animals.

The summer will conclude with a more mechanically-oriented topic, Things That Go. Campers will take apart and (try to) put together mechanical equipment, as well as explore different modes of transportation, all in an effort to discover how things go!

At Camp Keshet, small groups of campers, with two of the Early Childhood Center’s highly qualified teachers acting as counselors, participate in art, science and nature and sports activities. The entire camp joins together for music each day, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, take a trip, via school bus, to Buhr pool, where Camp Keshet has its own private time slot at the tot swimming pool.

The entire camp also participates in field trips and special visitors that provide the centerpiece of each theme.

For more information on Camp Keshet, contact the JCC Early Childhood Office at 971-0990.

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah pre-K event

Geoff Berdy, special to the WJN

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah invites families of pre-kindergarteners, tots and toddlers to join at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County for a fun-filled morning of songs, stories, crafts and snacks and a new feature: bagels and coffee for adults. The event will take place on Sunday, April 22 from 10–11:30 a.m.

This is an opportunity to engage in some informal Jewish education with your child and the staff of the Havurah’s Beit Sefer (religious school).

RSVP to Geoff Berdy at 649-8723 or gberdy1@yahoo.com. This event is free and open to everyone, so invite a friend to join you.
Federation launches the PJ Library
Giving Jewish books to families with young children
Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

Cuddling up and reading our children a good book before bed—this special time creates a memorable bond and lifelong love of books.

Now a new Jewish Federation of Washtenaw County program is nurturing a love of Jewish books. Thanks to the generous support of an anonymous philanthropist, the Jewish Federation is partnering with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to launch the PJ Library.

Conceived as a giving library, the PJ Library (PJ as in pajamas) provides young families with a treasury of Jewish books and CDs through monthly mailings. The program is free for children ages six months to five years old and is available to the first 250 children to register.

“The beauty of this program is that it gives parents an opportunity to take a universal experience—reading to children at night—and infuse it with Jewish meaning,” said Judy, a librarian at TBE, discovered the program at an international meeting of the Association of Jewish Libraries and nationally renowned Jewish educator. “Developing a language of intimacy around wonderful stories gives kids hope and security and gives parents or other caring adults an opportunity to get a glimpse into children’s most profound thoughts. This opportunity is truly a ‘no strings’ gift to the community and an investment in the future.”

Temple Beth Emeth piloted PJ Library this fall. Through the generosity of Paul and Judy Freedman, the program is available to participants in TBE’s Tot Shabbat program.

“Developing a language of intimacy around wonderful stories gives kids hope and security and gives parents or other caring adults an opportunity to get a glimpse into children’s most profound thoughts. This opportunity is truly a ‘no strings’ gift to the community and an investment in the future.”

Judy, a librarian at TBE, discovered the program at an international meeting of the Association of Jewish Libraries and was impressed with its potential. “My husband and I were inspired by PJ Library and thought it would be a great gift for our families. People are thrilled with the program.”

Established in 2005 by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the PJ Library sends a high-quality book or music CD each month to participants who enroll. Each monthly package includes a helpful guide for parents and occasionally a parenting book as an added bonus. Early childhood experts have selected all available books and CDs to cover a wide range of topics appropriate for ages six months to five years. Themes include Jewish holidays, folktales and Jewish family life. Participating families will enjoy family programs related to the books throughout the year.

Introductory materials will be mailed to all Jewish families in the area in early April. Current funding limits require that participation be limited to the first 250 respondents. All others will be placed on a waiting list. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishannarbor.org/pjlibrary or contact Eileen Freed, at the Federation, at 677-0100 or eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org.

Sample of books and music available through the PJ Library

Books
The Opposites of My Jewish Year by L.N. Dion
Let’s Noah by Amy Wilson Sanger
Let’s Visit Israel by Judy Gruner
The Peace Book by Todd Parr
Happy Birthday World by Latino Berry Kroop
Joseph Had a Little Overcoat by Simms Taback
To Everything by Bob Barner
Something from Nothing by Phoebe Gilman
It Could Always Be Worse by Phoebe Gilman
Dinosaur on Passover by Diane Levin Rauchwerger
Noah’s Bed by Liz and Jim Coplestone
Chicken Soup by Heart by Esther Hershenhorn
The Matzo Ball Boy by Lisa Shulman
Why Noah Chose the Dove by J.B. Singer
The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
A Sack Full of Feathers by Debby Waldman

Music
ShirLaLa Chanukah by Shira Klein
Everybody’s Got a Little Music by Rabbi Joe Black
My Newish Jewish Discovery by Craig Taubman

Parenting Resources
The Blessing of a Skinned Knee by Dr. Wendy Mogel
The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
A Sack Full of Feathers by Debby Waldman

ECC and HDS hold spring Literacy Night
Peretz Hirshbein, special to the WJN

Spring is in the air, which means that it is time for the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County Early Childhood Center and the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor’s spring Literacy Night. The event, designed for children from preschool through second grade is held at the JCC on Thursday evening April 26, at 6 p.m. Literacy Night features a series of theme-based activities for children and parents to engage in together. These activities are designed for multiple reading levels, from the pre-reader to the child reading at confidence level.

The theme for this year’s spring Literacy Night is fairy tales. Fairy tales are a rich source of literacy activities, from comparing different versions of stories, to creation of alternate endings, to composition of stories, and much more. The cost is $15 per family and dinner will be included in the program.

Contact the ECC office at 971-0990 for details and to register.
YOUTH

Gan Yeladim Playgroup
Esther Goldstein, special to the WJN

This coming September, the Gan Yeladim Playgroup will be opening its fourth year of providing Jewish enrichment to preschoolers in the Ann Arbor area. Two separate classes will offer a stimulating Jewish environment for children on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Kvutza Aleph is for children age 2 months up through age five, and Kvutza Bet is for children age three through age five.

Both classes offer an age-appropriate curriculum designed to provide children with a fun and enjoyable opportunity to socialize with each other, while concurrently teaching them about Jewish holidays and traditions. The day’s schedule includes circle time highlighting tzadkus and mitzvot, arts and crafts relating to the upcoming holidays, song and story time, and an age-appropriate presentation of the weekly Torah portion. Children are also provided with a morning snack, as well as with lunch provided from home. Throughout the class, children are encouraged to work and play together in order to foster cooperative skills.

Recent examples of activities the children have engaged in include making felt shofars, learning about trees for Tu B’Shvat, baking challahs, assembling their own goghras, decorating a Kiddush cup, and other enjoyable and educational projects. While both classes are drop-off programs for the children, parents are invited to participate in several events throughout the year, such as a Chanukah party, a Purim celebration, and a parents’ coffee get-together.

All of the playgroup instructors are experienced teachers and youth instructors who love children and care deeply about their emotional, cognitive, and Jewish growth. Enrollment is limited so that the ratio of children to teachers does not exceed four to one.

New for this year are additional enrichment classes which will be offered following the Playgroup. These enrichment classes, available by separate enrollment, will provide instruction in such fun and stimulating activities as yoga, ballet, art, and music.

Registration for the fall of 2007 is now open. For more information about the Gan Yeladim Playgroup and the new enrichment classes, contact Esther Goldstein at 995-3276 or esther@jewmich.com.

JCC Raanana Day Camp hires new assistant director
Rachel Rowenthal, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County has hired Nathan Bankirer as assistant camp director for Camp Raanana. Bankirer is currently a third year student at Eastern Michigan University and is pursuing a degree in special education with a focus on emotional impairment. Bankirer teaches at Beth Israel Religious School and will bring his knowledge of Judaic programming to Raanana.

His previous camp experience includes three summers working at Camp JCC in West Bloomfield. Last summer his position as program director required him to provide creative programming for 1,500 campers in addition to the many administrative tasks associated with a large camp. “One of the reasons that I’m excited to be working at Camp Raanana this summer, is the opportunity to get to know and interact with all of the campers personally. At a larger camp, the assistant director often finds himself acting in primarily an administrative capacity and doesn’t spend much time with the campers. Raanana will be a refreshing change,” states Bankirer.

Camp Director Craig Pollack states, “Nate has the skills and personality that I always look for in an assistant director. He knows what it takes to run a safe, fun camp and he can’t wait to get to know the campers and parents. I think Nate will be a tremendous asset to our camp this summer.”

Camp Raanana is for children entering kindergarten through 13 years of age and is one of the few Jewish camp programs in Washtenaw County. The camp is located on its own private beachfront site at Independence Lake in Webster Township and at the JCC in Ann Arbor. The facility includes a large covered pavilion, a swimming beach, ball fields, nature trails, offices and a variety of other features. In addition, boating, fishing, a “spray zone” and additional facilities are available throughout the park.

For more information, questions, or a registration form, call Craig Pollack at 971-0990 or e-mail craigpollack@jccfed.org.
2007

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In Ann Arbor May 6 - May 10

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Sponsor Reception Sunday, May 6, 6:30 pm
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- Optional Overnights
- Shabbat Celebrations
- Judaic Programs
- Sports
- Arts and Crafts

Contact Craig Pollack for more information:
734-971-0990 or craigpollack@jccfed.org

“I really feel that Camp Raanana is a superior camp experience and that the director and the staff he chooses are outstanding counselors and role models,” says parent Natalie Iglewicz.
Community volunteers seek out HDS

Dina Stitul, special to the WJN

Volunteerism is flourishing at the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, and it extends beyond the parent population. This year there have been four volunteers from the community who contacted the school to offer their help, and who have arranged to share their time and talents on a regular basis. The students have greatly benefited from their efforts. Two of the volunteers have previous connections with the school, and two of them are new to the Hebrew Day School community.

Josh Berman

Josh Berman volunteered in Aaron Kaufman’s (Morch Abaron’s) first grade Hebrew class two afternoons a week during the first half of the year. Berman, an alumnus of Hebrew Day School (class of 1995), graduated from the University of Michigan in 2006, where he majored in Political Science and Psychology. “HDS was the foundation for my Jewish education,” he said. “While I didn’t realize it at the time, this education was what set the tone for my intellectual success and connection with my Judaism.”

Berman was inspired to volunteer at the HDS in order to have a chance to give back to the school. “I hope to be a positive influence in the lives of these children in the same way that many of my teachers were for me,” says Berman. “Of course, he continues, “there is no better way to say thank you to my teachers than to give them a hand in the classroom.” Berman also appreciates the great opportunity to keep up with his Hebrew.

Richard Frey

Richard Frey is a parent of two HDS alumni—Robert Frey (class of 1990), and Rachel Frey (class of 1993). Just retired from 30 years of teaching, Richard is volunteering twice a week with fifth grade students in math and language arts. He is also leading a lunch time chug (club) in chess. A U-M graduate (history, 1969), Richard has an M.A. in special education and a teaching certificate in physical education from Wayne State. “Why am I tutoring at HDS?” he asks aloud. “It’s really about the children and the relationships. I miss the kid contact.”

Richard also points out that his own children got an excellent education at HDS, which provided a strong foundation for their subsequent academic success. Robert has finished his Ph.D. coursework at Columbia for his Ph.D. in anthropology and public health. He is a teacher’s assistant for two courses, and is studying for written and oral exams which he will take in the next six months. He is also finalizing and working on funding for his research proposal, which he plans to do in Israel. Rachel is in Madrid, on a Fulbright teaching fellowship. She is working in an elementary school in a bilingual program, with many of the children being immigrants to Spain. She is teaching English to the adult staff as well as to the children. “Incredible academic achievements,” he added. “Life is short. There is much I hope to do in my retirement, but I want tutoring at HDS to be a fulfilling part of that future.”

Frey has taught many subjects to children of all ages in a variety of educational and special need settings. He taught at U-M’s Children’s Psychiatric Hospital, York Woods Center, the children’s division of Ypsilanti State Hospital, and most recently at the Beaumont Day Treatment Center, a day treatment program for emotionally impaired children in Western Wayne County. He taught math, as well as chess and sudoku as part of the math curriculum.

Leg Grossman

Lea Grossman’s love of Hebrew and Judaism brought her to Hebrew Day School. “I was born in Italy during the Shoah. By the age of fifteen I was uprooted many times to live in three countries with different languages and very different cultures. Today, as a result, I enjoy finding a common thread with virtually anyone. I enjoy being a part of the children’s community.” Grossman refers to the children at Hebrew Day School as “my new yeledim” (children).

Grossman volunteers at the U-M hospital. When she is not volunteering, she studies with Rabbi Dobrusin, exercises, sings with the Chaverim B’Shirim choir, cooks, gardens, plays tennis, works with clay, knits, crochets, paints, takes care of her two collies, and visits her grandchildren.

Jessica Taylor

Jessica Taylor volunteers as an instrumental music assistant one a week. Jessica helps in instrumental music teacher, Sharon Horneyer, teach the third grade string program. Taylor has played violin for 16 years and has taught private violin lessons for seven years. She is the orchestra secretary for the Eastern Michigan University Orchestra, and an intern with the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.

Taylor will be graduating fromEMU in April with a music major and business minor and plans to continue her studies to receive a master’s in performing arts management. Taylor’s primary responsibility at HDS is to work with string players who have had prior experience.

Cruel Volunteer Roles

In addition to these four volunteers, Rabbi Dobrusin from Beth Israel Congregation has been teaching Mishnah to the HDS fifth graders for many years. “Parents also play a cruel volunteer role in our school,” says Dina Shtull, Head of School. “If you walk into the Hebrew Day School on any day of the week, you will see parents helping in the classroom—leading an activity or preparing classroom materials. In fact, the school is unique in its Helping Hands Program, through which parents offer a variety of help as part of their commitment to the school.”

“It’s one of the foundations of our strong community,” says Rachel Beaver, an HDS parent who matches volunteers with opportunities. “Parent volunteerism is part of the culture,” says Jennifer Siegel, co-chair of PTO with Rachel Portnoy.

Hebrew Day School is grateful to parents, alumni, alumni parents, and members of the community for enriching the atmosphere at the school. “Children learn from our volunteers how important it is and how rewarding it can be to give back to the community,” says Dina. “This lesson is part of our educational mission.” To learn more volunteer opportunities at HDS, contact the school at 734-465-3.
Shabbat Dinner at the ECC
Peretz Hirshbein, special to the WJN

On Friday, April 20, at 6 p.m., the JCC Early Childhood Center’s Giraffe Room will host a Shabbat Dinner. Children from the Giraffe Room will lead attendees in Shabbat blessings and songs. Families will have the opportunity to immortalize their children’s time at the ECC by creating a ceramic tile to be added to the growing wall of tiles near the ECC’s Monkey Room.

For this creative and popular fundraiser, families can decorate and glaze their tiles, which will then be sent out to Rainbow Creation for firing. Upon their return, they will be mounted on the ECC wall, adding to the tiles created by families last year.

The ECC would especially like to invite alumni of the program to attend and add a family tile to the wall. Families are welcome to come to only make tiles, or just for the dinner. The cost for the Shabbat Dinner is $10 for adults, $5 for children 2 years and up. Contact the Early Childhood Center office at 971-0990 for details and to register, or for alternate times to create tiles.

The Backwards March: My Father’s Shtetl has a Homepage Now

Michael Alpert Performs
A free concert-lecture examining aspects of the constantly evolving Yiddish culture and identities of the modern world.
In English, with Pre-Post Vernacular.

Monday, April 23, 7:30 p.m.
Mendelssohn Theater in the Michigan League, 911 N. University

Part of Place & Displacement of Yiddish - a conference exploring Yiddish throughout the Jewish diaspora in the second half of the twentieth century.

Other public events include:
Yiddish Literature: Text & Translation
Readings of poetry and prose in both Yiddish and English.
Sunday, April 22, 6:00 p.m.
Rockham Amphitheatre, 915 E. Washington

All events are free and open to the public, please call 734-763-9047 for details.
FSU emigres revive Finnish Jewry

By Matt Siegel

HELSINKI (JTA) — Before Tamara Tuuminen left her native Moscow in 1978 with her husband, an ethnic Finn, she distanced herself from her Jewish roots. In the Soviet Union in the 1970s, “it was dangerous to be involved” in Jewish life, said Tuuminen, 51, a specialist in immunology and clinical microbiology who lives in Helsinki. “You could lose your right to study” at university. Only in Finland was she able to reconnect with her background, as have hundreds of recent Russian-born Jewish immigrants.

Those immigrants have saved the community from extinction, say leaders of the small native Finnish Jewish community.

At the dawn of the 1990s, decades of immigration to Israel and intermarriage had decimated Finland’s Jewish population. The country’s third-largest Jewish community, in the city of Tampere, was forced to cease operations in 1981, and the country appeared to have lost the fight to maintain its dwindling Jewish population.

“The future wasn’t looking very good because the number of community members had been declining all the time,” recalls Dan Kantor, executive director of the Jewish Community of Helsinki, or JCH.

The JCH runs the city’s 100-year-old synagogue, which houses Finland’s only Jewish day school, and operates the only kosher deli in Finland.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and Jewish emigration began in earnest in the early 1990s, most Jews who left went to Israel, the United States or Germany. But a few hundred families went to Finland, the USSR’s closest capitalist neighbor.

It seems an inversion of the now common story of the revitalization of Jewish communities in the FSU: These Jews helped speed the revival of what was once a small but strong Diaspora community with close historical ties to Russia. “Today we have about 1,200 members; in the 1980s we had about 800 members,” Kantor said. “And if you look at the background of the schoolchildren, some 75 percent have one immigrant parent. “There’s a very clear number, that’s what has happened.”

Taking in so many immigrants has been challenging for all involved. Most Soviet Jews had lost any connection with their religious roots. “They had very hard times in Russia,” said Binyamin Wolff, a Chabad rabbi from New Jersey serving in Helsinki, “and now we have to give them the message that times are different.”

Chabad and the JCH are at the forefront of outreach to the immigrant Jews from the FSU. Chabad sponsors monthly gatherings of Russians, and the JCH has a comprehensive program at its day school for kindergarten to 12th grade. Students can enroll in the school as long as one parent is Jewish. Both parents are required to sign a contract stipulating that they want their child to have a Jewish education and that upon reaching bar or bat mitzvah age, the child will be converted to Judaism. For boys, circumcision is required.

The school, which receives 80 percent of its funding from the state and the rest from private donors, goes to great lengths to ensure that students don’t completely lose touch with their native background. The school has an intensive language program for children who enter with no knowledge of Finnish, but lessons also are given in Russian to preserve the students’ mother tongue.

According to the mandated state curriculum, the children learn Jewish history and Hebrew.

“For the children it’s a very efficient way to strengthen their Jewish identity and also to integrate into Finnish society,” Kantor said. “And of course, through the children, the parents are very efficiently integrated into the community and, also through the community, into society.”

But how to integrate adults with virtually no knowledge of their cultural history without boring them or scaring them away? That’s a struggle for Rabbi Wolff. “I like them to feel that being Jewish isn’t something that’s religious or just in synagogues,” Wolff said. “I like to show them that being Jewish is something that’s a part of our life and it’s something enjoyable. We eat like a Jew, we do business like a Jew and we hang out with friends like a Jew, and I like to give them those opportunities.”

In some cases, time is the best aid. Tuuminen, whose two grown sons didn’t receive a Jewish education while attending state schools in Helsinki, would do things differently if she could. “When you become older,” she said, “you become more interested in your history, in where you came from.” Still caught between two worlds, Tuuminen said she feels “European, but with a Jewish background” — and, she noted with a laugh, “definitely not Russian.” She attends services on the High Holidays, as well as a yearly synagogu e commemoration of the formation of the State of Israel, where her mother now lives.

Not all of the community’s problems have been solved by the influx of Russians, however, and some may even have been aggravated.

According to Kantor, the intermarriage rate has reached a record 90 percent in the past 15 years, up from roughly 50 percent a century ago. But Kantor is wary of blaming rising intermarriage on the immigrants, noting that their contribution to Finnish Jewish community cannot be overstated. “You could say that they’ve saved the future,” he told JTA.

Finland’s short Jewish history

By Matt Siegf

HELSINKI (JTA) — For any forthcoming edition of Jewish Trivial Pursuit, the Jewish community of Finland might become a source of inspiration.

Consider just these two stumpers: Which Diaspora community contributed the most volunteers per capita during the Israeli War of Independence? In which front did Jewish fighters alongside Nazi soldiers fight the Winter War?

Most interesting, perhaps, is another local story of a Jewish soldier who defied death to rescue a battalion of SS soldiers pinned down by enemy fire. Offered an Iron Cross he refused, in flawless German.

When a German officer asked where he learned to speak so well, the soldier reportedly answered that he was Jewish, and that since Yiddish was his mother tongue, it was easy for him to speak German. He then marched out of the deafly silent tent. The Finnish government supported his refusal of the award.

The question of the Finnish government’s wartime alliance with the Nazis — the country was never occupied in World War II — is often misunderstood outside of Finland, says Dan Kantor, executive director of the Jewish Community of Helsinki.

“We allied with the Germans because they were the only ones who could help us, who came to help us against Russia,” Kantor said.

Far from betraying the country’s Jews, the dozen or so Jewish soldiers fighting for independence “was really, in a way, some kind of emancipation,” he said.

That perspective is supported by the fact that no Finnish Jew was turned over to the Nazis during the war. Eight Austrian Jewish refugees who fled to Finland during the Holocaust were deported.

During Israel’s War of Independence, the 29 Finnish volunteers constituted the 25th per capita contribution from any Diaspora community, according to Finland’s office of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

After the State of Israel was born, Finland had a high rate of aliyah, which reduced Finland’s Jewish population considerably. As a result, the country’s third-largest Jewish community, in the city of Tampere, ceased operations in 1981.

An influx of Russian Jews since the collapse of the Soviet Union has helped revitalize the community while again linking it to its Russian roots.

The Jewish day school in Helsinki now serves more than 110 students, up from about 60 in the 1980s. Kantor estimates that at least 75 percent of students have at least one immigrant in their immediate family, primarily Russians and Israelis who live and work in Finland. Besides Finnish and Hebrew, Russian is now the most prevalent language at the school.

The country’s 1,500 or so Jews continue to have a strong influence on Finnish life. From Max Jakobson, the former Finnish ambassador to the United Nations and candidate for secretary general in 1971, to Ben Zyskowicz — who in 1979 became the first Jewish member of Parliament — the Jews of Finland are part of a unique and accepting culture.
ISRAEL

There’s no place like home: Israeli campaign woos expats

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (ITA)—The message from the Israeli official addressing more than a hundred Israeli expatriates at a Los Angeles synagogue was simple and direct: “We want you to come back.”

Breaking the catchy slogan into reality is complex, Immigrant Absorption Minister Ze’ev Boim acknowledges.

In the early decades of the Jewish state, Israel’s successful efforts between Hamas and Fatah, but whether it can break up the international isolation of the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, but whether it can break up the Palestinian Authority to a full peace deal could now be a major push for Jerusalem.

While the U.S. State Department voiced accept the government unless they want us to join the Israeli army, the president of the Quartet—known as the Quartet—wants the creation of the Palestinian Authority to be a turning point for the Palestinians. It is a time of great opportunity, and the Palestinians must seize it.

According to its president, Moshe Salem. An American in a Middle Eastern country, she is closest to a central expat organization in Los Angeles, with a membership of about 5,000, and an agreed-upon solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. Israel has voiced reservations about the phrasing of the proposal, but the possibility that it would co-opt the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority to a full peace deal could now be a major draw for Jerusalem.

But Israel’s sole Arab member said the Olmert government should make its openness to rapprochement clear through greater openness toward the new Palestinian Authority. “Normalization with the Arab world is what we fought for all of these years,” said Gaela Magajel. “If, God forbid, we now give even a minimal impression of rejectionism, how will we face the entire world in another two weeks after the Riyadh summit?”

P.A. forms government amid Israeli skepticism

By Dan Baron

Jerusalem (ITA) — The Palestinians’ new unity government may well achieve its immediate aim of healing factional rifts between Hamas and Fatah, but whether it can break up the international isolation of the Palestinian Authority remains unclear.

After a year in the homelands were scorched as Weaklings, traitors and “yordim,” those “going down” from Israel to the diaspora. But the Israeli government for some time has been wooing the growing number of citizens abroad.

Boim was in Los Angeles in recently with a team of government and private industry representatives as part of a campaign in seven American and Canadian cities.

Boim is focusing on holders of Israeli passports, including those with dual citizenship. He estimates that there are 7,000,000 to 1 million Israeli expats, of whom about 600,000 are in North America, including 150,000 to 200,000 in the Los Angeles area.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles demographer Bruce Phillips maintains that there are 26,000 Israelis in the city.

In each of the cities Boim visited, expats could talk to ministry and private industry specialists about jobs, establishing businesses, housing and government assistance. They also could speak to local Israeli consulates.

Boim held out inducements in the form of tax relief, cutting bureaucratic red tape and even deferment from mandatory military service. Additional perks are reserved for those ready to settle in the underpopulated Galilee and Negev regions.

Boim cites the return of some 6,000 expats in 2005 as a promising sign. Conversely, however, about 8,000 to 9,000 Israelis left for residence overseas during the same year.

Some of those at the Los Angeles event stayed to talk about returning home.

Among them was Angie Geffen, the American-born daughter of Israeli parents who traveled from Scottsdale, Ariz., with her husband, Amir, an Israeli electrical engineer. A week later she praised Boim’s support staff as organized and helpful, and said the meeting had saved her weeks of research. “We’ll move in a couple of months,” she said confidently.

Two months later, however, Geffen was complaining about protracted disputes with the Israeli housing authorities over obtaining land and homes for her and 32 other families in a Galilee community.

France invited P.A. Foreign Minister Ziad Abu Amr, another political independent, to visit the United States, European Union and United Nations. The recognition of Israel is included in the various articles of the program,” Amt told The Jerusalem Post.

If Israel wants recognition, it has to recognize the Palestinians as well,” he said. “Today there is no excuse for anybody not to accept the government unless they want us to remain slaves of occupation and Israel, which will never happen.”

In fact, Hamas refuses to abandon its 1988 charter calling for Israel’s destruction and has publicly described the alliance with Fatah as a “transitional measure.” That has stoked contrary instincts even within the Israeli government, with some of Olmert’s coalition partners calling for a boycott of Abbas along with Hamas, and others urging stepped-up diplomacy with the P.A. president, known familiarly as Abu Mazen.

“It would be better that there be no contact with the new Palestinian government, including Abu Mazen, who in effect provides a cover for the new government,” said Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman, head of the right-wing Yisrael Beitenu party.

But several members of the center-left Labor Party, the senior partner to Olmert’s Kadima, said now was the time for Israel to empower Palestinian moderates by engaging Abbas.

“If we want to hurt Hamas politically and militarily, we must open negotiations with Hamas’ rival, Abu Mahani — a real negotiation that the Palestinian people will perceive as providing a diplomatic horizon,” said Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh of Labor.

For now, Israel may join the Quartet in extending hope for a breakthrough. The forum may be the Arab League summit in Riyadh at month’s end, where a Saudi proposal for comprehensive Israeli-Arab peace is to be discussed.

Under the proposal, Israel would win recognition from all Arab states in exchange for a full withdrawal from lands captured in the 1967 Six-Day War and an agreed-upon solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

Israel has voiced reservations about the phrasing of the proposal, but the possibility that it would co-opt the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority to a full peace deal could now be a major draw for Jerusalem.

But Israel’s sole Arab member said the Olmert government should make its openness to rapprochement clear through greater openness toward the new Palestinian Authority. “Normaliz-
Israel in a quandary over Sudanese: Let them stay or send them away

By Yosef Israel Abramowitz

A four-month JTA investigation into the plight of the refugees and the Israeli government’s handling of the situation found a system that even the top Israeli official adjudicating each of the cases has said often violates Israeli and international law.

After two years of legal challenges and growing Israeli media attention, the issue now is coming to a critical juncture. The practice of arresting and indefinitely detaining Sudanese asylum seekers on security grounds is being tested in the courts even as Israeli Border Police are showing signs of resisting the orders to arrest and detain the refugees crossing the borders.

Major international human rights figures have embraced the cause, and a handful of Kenyan asylum seekers were pressing for a resolution of the crisis. Some of these activists in turn have strong ties to the American Jewish community, which has embraced the cause of Darfur as a top humanitarian priority.

Some 200,000 to 400,000 people have been killed in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Another 2.5 million have been displaced.

Israel’s quandary is a difficult one. “Sudanese refugees are right now considered enemy nationals since Sudan is an Islamic fundamentalist country,” explained Anat Ben Dor, the country’s leading refugee rights lawyer, who has emerged as a top advocate for the Sudanese refugees. “Yet Israel is signatory to the International Convention on Refugees, which guarantees humane treatment and a safe haven from genocide.”

Ben Dor, 40, directs the Tel Aviv University Law School Refugee Rights Clinic and in late February filed suit against the government for its alleged treatment of three refugees.

Israel helped author the convention in the aftermath of World War II, Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany were routinely refused safe haven because they, like the current Sudanese, were classified as enemy nationals.

Activists enjoyed a small victory March 21 when Israel’s Supreme Court gave the state 45 days to determine whether the detainees were being held for a fair and proper judicial review.

“Bringing justice is the issue here,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice Dorit Beinisch, who is presiding over a three-judge panel hearing the case.

“This is very significant,” said Ben Dor, who together with the Hotline for Migrant Workers, filed the appeal to the court arguing that those Sudanese arrested and put in jail for illegally entering the country should not be charged as infiltrators of an enemy state.

The petition against Israel’s defense and interior ministers argues that even though 150 Sudanese have been released into alternative detention, the lack of formal judicial review makes the detention illegal.

Under Israeli law, other nationals who sneak through the Sinai desert into Israel are charged with the Law of Entry. In those cases, the government must review their cases every 30 days and justify their imprisonment. But since Sudanese are considered “enemy nationals,” they are charged under the harsher Infiltration Law, which has no official review mechanism and by which detainees can be held indefinitely.

Irwin Cotler, Canada’s former minister of justice and human rights attorney to such well-known dissidents as Natan Sharansky and Nelson Mandela, has joined with the Israel Bar Association in filing supporting documents on behalf of the Sudanese to the Israeli High Court.

“Israel should be more part of the international struggle against genocide in Darfur,” Cotler said. “If Israel grants refugee status or temporary resident status to the Sudanese, it can be Israel’s own modest contribution to speaking up against the genocide rather than in- terring them and mak- ing the opposite statement.”

Although the numbers are fluid, an estimated 308 Sudanese have arrived in Israel over the past two years. Of these, some 120 remain in prison; the rest are in alternative detention, meaning crisis centers, kibbutzim or moshavim, where many of them work and live but are not free to leave the premises.

Another estimated dozen or so Sudanese men in the Sinai are partnered with Israeli women and have children, but cannot enter Israel for fear of arrest.

Sigal Rozen, 39, co-founded the Hotline for Migrant Workers with a grant from the New Israel Fund. Her tiny fourth-floor offices next door to a Tel Aviv police station are a hot spot for undocumented workers of all colors and nationalities who come knocking for assistance.

The hotline brings them to the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees offices to get protection papers, documents that verify their refugee status so they can qualify for a temporary work visa.

“There are people from all over the world who come to Israel,” Rozen said. “If a Turk and a Chinese come across the border as a Sudanese, only the Sudanese is imprisoned. That is discrimination.”

Israel government officials say the situation is a difficult one.

“The Israeli government is endeavoring to deal with this issue as humanely as possible,” said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry. “Jewish history has made us especially sensitive to genocide. No one is being sent back to the inferno in Darfur.”

At the same time, he said, “we have to take precautions” to minimize the security risk given where the refugees come from.

In the March 21 court case, state attorneys argued that the system was working and there was no need to change the legalities under which the Sudanese are being held.

Some officials, in private conversations and in Knesset testimony, contend that be- cause the state is worried about the security concerns about individual Sudanese, the greater fear is the ripple effect of even more refugees seeking asylum in the Jewish state.

The fault line drawn around the refugee battle between those advocating deportation and those advocating granting asylum is “a paradox,” so one high-ranking Jewish organi- zational official called it.

“Israel is deeply sensitive to the issue of genocide,” this official said, “but it is also worried about a massive influx of Sudanese at its border.”

The prevailing government preference is to deport the refugees back to Egypt — if Egypt will guarantee it will not deport them back to Sudan.

“Some and a correct solution is a return to Egypt,” Elyahu Aharoni, deputy director of the Immigration Police, testified to the Knesset in late December.

“Sudan is one of six nations that supports Islamic terror,” he said. “All the security services say that there is a danger when it comes to the Sudanese. Detention or alternative detention is legitimate in a democratic country and also in the State of Israel.”

Debate is being waged about how many Sudanese would seek refuge here if the detainees are released from prison and accorded good treatment in the Jewish state.

“What we do here will determine if 3 million will come from Egypt or will stay there,” said Yossi Edelstein, director of the Enforcement Unit of the Immigration Police.

The 3 million figure is often cited by Israeli policy makers, particularly in the security services. But others dispute those figures.

“Anyone who talks about millions of Su- danese coming to Israel is scare-mongering,” said Michael Kagan, an American human rights lawyer who has worked in Israel and Egypt. “No one even knows that there are millions of Sudanese in Egypt; some estimate there are only a few hundred thousand.”

“But in any case, we’re not talking about big money, risk their lives and risk arrest to go over the desert to Israel?”

As to the porous border with Egypt, it is not the Sudanese but Israel most worries about but terrorists like Muhammed Faisal Sakas. On Jan. 29, the 21-year-old Palestin- ian crossed the border about 12 miles north of the resort city of Elat and blew himself up in a small bakery, killing three.

In either a slip of the tongue or a calculat- ed leak to remind the Knesset of the potential security risks of too liberal an asylum policy, Aharoni of the Immigration Police revealed...
to legislators in his Knesset testimony that “it appears that the Sudanese refugee belonging to al-Qaida was released.”

Half a dozen ministries, including the Prime Minister’s Office, would not respond to queries about the link.

Daniel Ben-Zaken, the director of Ketziot prison, which is holding many of the detainees, told JTA: “We asked and we received no information about anyone connected to anything like that.”

In 2005, the security forces caught 5,600 people trying to infiltrate across the Egyptian-Israeli border, including drug and weapon smugglers, women destined for prostitution, foreign workers and refugees. In 2006, 100 of those caught trying to infiltrate were Sudanese workers and volunteers to make weekly visits to Sudanese refugees in prison.

Schwartz now serves as the spokesman for CARD, the Committee for the Advancement of Refugees from Darfur, which has been particularly vocal in pressuring the Israeli government to do more.

The hotline “wanted assistance in publicizing the plight of their clients, most of whom were being kept in detention centers under terrible conditions,” Garber said. “With NIF assistance, primarily through discussions with key media contacts and behind-the-scenes conversations with government officials, the topic quickly became front-page news in Israel.”

Ultimately, he said, the more egregious aspects of government policy toward Sudanese refugees were changed, and many were released from the detention centers, although their asylum petitions were not necessarily granted.

“The depth of concern about the Darfur genocide among American Jewish organizations influenced Israeli officials to modify their posture of seeming indifference to the situation in Sudan and their treatment of the Sudanese refugees residing in Israel,” he said.

Anat Ben Dor, the Israeli lawyer who has filed suit in Israel on behalf of the imprisoned refugees, said the involvement of American Jewish groups in the issue “could be the deciding factor in winning the release of the prisoners.”

“The Israeli government has a lot on its plate right now and it can’t afford to jeopardize the support of American Jewry, who are very clear about where they stand on Darfur,” Ben Dor said.
TEL AVIV (JTA)—In a shimmering luxury hotel overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, Israel’s banking and financial elite mingled over cocktails recently with foreign investors as they watched Donald Trump on a live telecast praise the strength of the Israeli market.

Across the street from the David Intercontinental, meanwhile, more than 1,000 people protested the country’s premier business conference, chanting “welfare before wealth.”

Welcome to 21st-century Israel in microcosm.

Once idealized as a socialist paradise, the Jewish state is increasingly becoming a country of two classes—those who have soared in the increasingly capitalist economy and those who have stumbled in its wake.

Despite its much mythologized egalitarian image, Israel has always experienced economic gaps. But now the divide between haves and have-nots has grown to alarming proportions. If economic policies and other factors have spawned a privileged class, they also helped create the economically underclass populated by the elderly, Holocaust survivors, Arabs, immigrants, fervently Orthodox Jews, single parents—even two-income families.

One of the many faces representing this underclass is R., a poverty-stricken, 43-year-old mother of four.

At a Tel Aviv-area hospital, she weeps in the corridor as her children are being treated.

“Things are very hard for people like us; there is no life, no holidays, no Shabbat,” said R., who lives in the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon about five miles from the hotel hosting the business conference.

Like others interviewed for this series, R. was so ashamed of her plight that she asked that her real name not be used. Her apartment was repossessed recently by the bank, and she and her husband struggled with the dilemma of buying food or medicine to treat his ailments—including physical problems such as diabetes and mental woes like schizophrenia—until Food for the Disadvantaged began delivering weekly packages to his one-room apartment in the Hadar Yosef neighborhood of Tel Aviv.

The former professional weightlifter and wrestler with a round, thick face and bald head now is confined to a wheelchair because of a blood disease that affects his legs. Sobolos lives in a dark, dank ground-floor apartment with bare floors and little furniture—a bed, a couple of plastic chairs, a tetering narrow plywood wardrobe and a shelving unit stacked with멭, plates, computer parts and bottles.

On the walls of peeling paint hang what he calls his certificates that speak of his past as an athlete and coach. A thick layer of grime clings to the walls and floor.

Sobolos lives off of $540 a month in disability payments and volunteers teaching tai chi from his wheelchair to groups of the mentally ill. He is fighting the National Insurance Institute for an allowance that would let him hire an assistant to help him bathe and clean his apartment. The money also would pay for his medications and give him some cash so he could more easily reach the class he teaches, which is outside Tel Aviv.

“The National Insurance Institute has no feelings about sick people,” he said. “Do you know how many people there are like me out there?”

Seniors, survivors feel sting

The elderly have also disproportionately felt the sting of cuts in social spending. Unable to save for retirement in their youth, many find themselves living off monthly checks of roughly $400 from the National Insurance Institute. And as they age and become more frail and ill, their costs for medicine and nursing assistance rise while their incomes shrink.

There is no mandatory pension law in Israel, and those who do not have a source of income find themselves living off monthly checks of roughly $400 from the National Insurance Institute. And as they age and become more frail and ill, their costs for medicine and nursing assistance rise while their incomes shrink.

Among the impoverished elderly are many Holocaust survivors. Eastern European born, Yehuda Darmon, who heads an umbrella group of Holocaust survi- vor organizations in Israel estimated that about one-quarter of Israel’s 250,000 survivors are living in poverty.

“There is lots of focus in Israel on those

Continued on next page
killed in the Holocaust, but those who lived through it are forgotten,” said Flug.

The social welfare crisis in Israel was reflected in the 2006 national elections. Instead of national security taking center stage, the social gaps were a dominant theme in the campaign. Likud was roundly punished through what was seen in part as backlash against Netanyahu’s draconian economic policies.

Sharabi is part of the expanding Israeli underclass—a populace that includes the unemployed, the underemployed and the destitute. Many are casualties of what some consider draconian economic policies. STRIVE, an intensive work-readiness program, is modeled after an initiative of the same name that began more than 20 years ago in Harlem to help residents overcome their severe difficulties in finding and keeping meaningful jobs.

The program’s core message: Participants are important as individuals and therefore are worthy not just of make-work employment but of fulfilling careers. That message of personal empowerment and tough love is underscored, its organizers explain, by the professional and pleasant look and feel of the STRIVE offices, as well as the intensive personal guidance that the organization provides its clients for more than two years after they enroll.

Participants are counseled in everything from how to pay off personal debts and find creative childcare solutions to discovering and pursuing an ambitious career path that suits their interests and abilities.

STRIVE is one of at least two programs operating in Israel patterned after American-originated efforts to boost employment among the economically struggling and long-time unemployed. It is funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Israeli government.

Another such American transplant is called Mehalev, Hebrew for “from the heart,” and it is based on the state of Wisconsin’s welfare-to-work plan unveiled in the mid-1990s after the U.S. Congress revamped welfare regulations.

One STRIVE participant is Tsvika Ben-Porat, 36 who spent a decade working in hotel kitchens as a cook—he was unemployed for several months before finding STRIVE. With the help of its counselors and coaches, Ben-Porat is now working at a media company editing video, a step in his new chosen career communications.

The program, he said, “is like being given a key to a life, professionally and personally.”

Another STRIVE participant is Hanan Jaf-fay, 32, an Arab Israeli single mother of two who had been in and out of what she described as dead-end customer service jobs for years. She supports her children and herself with no assistance from her family.

Through STRIVE, Jaffay is hoping to realize her goal of eventually becoming a social worker and finally create a stable, middle-class life for her family.

Mehalev was designed as a two-year pilot program in four Israeli cities. Launched in 2005, it was aimed initially at getting at least half of the country’s 150,000 welfare recipients off the public rolls and back to work. Participants are required to report to employment placement centers for 30 hours a week or lose their welfare income, which averages about $380 per month for an individual.

Saiss Sason, 40, has his first job ever after going through the program. He had spent the majority of his adult life involved in petty crime and spent a total of eight years in prison, off and on, for offenses that included selling drugs and theft.

Sason never imagined being able to be a salaried worker, but for the past three months he has held down a job as a construction worker.

He’s doing so well, his boss is planning on giving him another raise.

“I was apprehensive about working; I had never done it before,” he said. “I’ve learned a lot, most of all that I am capable of working. In fact, I thought no one ever would hire me because of my criminal past. “I wake up in the morning and I have somewhere to go. I’m feeling great, and it’s all because of the work.”

Is Mehalev working? The program, however, has met with mixed results and has been widely denounced in the Israeli media and by social welfare advocates, who maintain that Mehalev has backfired. Rather than increase employment, detractors charge, the program has swelled the ranks of Israelis who receive neither part-time nor public assistance.

A recent report by the National Insurance Institute, the Israeli equivalent of the Social Security Administration in the United States, found that the program saved Israel $1.43 million in welfare payments since it began, but that relatively few of its participants had found work, the Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz reported.

The savings in welfare payments apparently stemmed from people who had dropped out of the program and had their payments cut off.

More than 80 of the Knesset’s 120 members signed on to proposed legislation recently that called for a major overhaul of the program. The bill calls for, among other things, canceling the stipulation that all unemployed people, such as single mothers or those with part-time work, participate full time in the program or lose their welfare benefits.

The bill also would provide alternative arrangements for the disabled, those nearing retirement age, people who speak little or no Hebrew, and others activists say are hurt by the program in its present form.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert approved the establishment of a government committee that will work to make major changes in the program to address some of these same issues.

According to Dorit Novack, until recently the administrator of Mehalev, in the program’s first year, 11,000 job placements were found for participants. About double that number initially reported to the centers.

Not all the participants stayed in those jobs, however. The figure of 11,000 job placements includes those who have been placed in several jobs successively, Novack noted. But those figures, she said, do constitute progress.

“I am not saying the project has not made mistakes,” Novack said. “But the main point of this program is trying to help people change their fate. If they are now working a minimum-wage job, that is double what they were making on welfare. I would prefer to see every person work as long as they are able physically.”

One of the main differences between the Wisconsin program in the United States and the Israeli version is the demographic profile of the participants. In the United States, the offenders disproportionately young, single, drug mothers. But in Israel, the clients are men and women, often older than 40, many of them immigrants or Arabs. Some have physical or mental disabilities or limited Hebrew-language skills.

All told, many participants were funneled into the program by the National Insurance Institute without an adequate assessment of...
WASHINGTON (ITA) — AIPAC’s annual policy conference is truly a come-one, come-all event, with a “roll call” at the gala dinner announcing the hundreds of VIPs in attendance. But this year, one uninvited guest kept turning up — the Iraq war.

No matter how hard the American Israel Public Affairs Committee tried to keep the 6,000 activists at its conference focused on the consensus issue of Iran’s nuclear threat, Republicans and Israelis officials kept bringing up what is likely the most divisive issue of the day.

The equation promoted by those who support continuing the war is simple: Israel’s security requires a continued U.S. presence in Iraq, and questioning President Bush’s policy is tantamount to undermining Israel and the United States.

“When America succeeds in Iraq, Israel is safer,” Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in a taped address from his Jerusalem home that capped the gala dinner. “The friends of Israel know it, the friends who care about Israel know it. They will keep the Americans strong, powerful and convincing.”

Vice President Dick Cheney was even more blunt.

“Friends owe it to friends to be as candid as possible,” he said. “My friends, it is simply not consistent for anyone to demand aggressive action against the menace that is posed by the Iranian regime while at the same time acquiescing in a policy that would leave Israel’s best friend, the United States, dangerously weakened.”

The situation infuriated Democrats.

The sniping on Iraq — at one point it de-

1

developed into scattered boos for Rep. Nancy Pe-

losi (D-Calif.), the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives — ran counter to AIPAC billing that the event would be an unmatched show of bipartisanship support for Israel.

But a spokesman for the pro-Israel lobby powerhouse said the Iraq issue did not detract from the conference’s focus.

“Our focus is on the things we’re lobbying on,” Joel Hirschboeck said. The March 12 gala dinner drew half the U.S. Senate and more than half the House. It featured addresses by Sen. Harry Reid (D-

 Nev.), the Senate majority leader, and Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), its minority leader.

The next morning, Pelosi and Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio), the House minority leader, headlined the traditional Tuesday-morning sendoff to the Capitol for a day of lobbying.

McConnell and Boehner also attempted to build support for the administration’s recent deployment of more than 50,000 additional troops to Iraq. Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-

Conn.) made it the centerpiece of his speech.

“There is something profoundly wrong when, in the name of a radical Islam, we think we can find safety and stability by pulling back, by talking to and accommodat-

ing murdering and burning our friends and allies,” Lieberman said to a group that he likes to call “family.”

“Some of this wrong-headed thinking about the world is harking back to the way in which we’re making a political climate where, for many people, when George Bush says yes, their reflex reaction is to say no,” he said. “That is unacceptable.”

Delegations speaking out against Iraq博彩网站背景, said they were unsettled by how Iraq kept intrud-

说 no, “ he said. “That is unacceptable. ”

George Bush says yes, their reflex reaction is to political climate where, for many people, when backdrop.

ing our enemies, and abandoning our friends pulling back, by talking to and accommodat-

ing a retreat from Iraq that would leave

ing in 2015.

The audit, released month, reported 1,554 incidents against Jewish individuals or community institutions in the United States, a 12 percent drop from the 1,757 reported in 2006.

In 2006 there were 669 acts of vandalism, a slight increase from the previous year, while incidents of harassment or assault dropped significantly from 1,140 to 885.

“The audit is just one measure of anti-Semitism in the United States,” said AIPAC Na-

tional Director Abraham Foxman. “There is also an onslaught of anti-Semitism out there in blogs, e-mails and Web sites and most significantly in conspiracy theories about alleged Jewish power which have even penetr-

ated the mainstream that simply cannot be quantified.”

Glen Lewy, the ADL’s national chair, sounded a similar tone, noting that despite the decline, approximately four anti-Semitic attacks occur daily in the United States.

Among those was a shooting attack last summer at a Jewish federation offices in Seattle in which the federation’s assistant di-

rector, Pamela Waechter, was killed and five people were wounded.

The highest number of attacks were re-

portedly in Jewish districts in the Northeast, California and Florida, reflect-

ing both the number of Jewish targets there and the increased reporting of anti-Semitic incidents in areas where the community is robust and the ADL enjoys a strong relationship with law enforcement.

New York had the most reported inci-

dents with 284, followed by New Jersey with 244, California with 204 and Florida with 179 all of which were down from last year. Connecticut and Illinois saw significant in-

creases, with the latter nearly doubling from 36 incidents to 56. Massachusetts saw a modest increase, from 93 to 96.

Two trends the league identifies as “on-

goings factors” anti-Semitism in middle and high schools and on college campuses both declined in 2006.

ADL leaders seemed to downplay what appears to be good news.

Foxman told JTA that notwithstanding yearly fluctuations, the number of incidents appears to have “settled” around 1,500 over the past 15 years, despite the community being “at the maximum” in terms of awareness, commit-

ment to reporting and investment in security.

“There’s no trend established,” Foxman said. “What we’re concerned about, there is this leveling-off which is troubling, because we’re not seeing a trend for the elimination of anti-Semitic incidents.”
New study finds more U.S. Jews; the challenge is how to engage them

By Jacob Berkman

NEW YORK (JTA)—A new study gives fairly concrete evidence that the American Jewish population could be more than one million people larger than believed—but if so, it means efforts to engage them may have been less successful than the community realized.

The United Jewish Communities’ National Jewish Population Study 2000-01 was widely viewed as flawed. Still, the Jewish community held to the survey’s estimate that there were 5.2 million American Jews.

But even using the same criteria as UJC did to define who is Jewish, it’s more likely that there are 6 million to 6.4 million American Jews, according to a report released last month by a team of sociologists at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University.

If a broader definition of Jewishness is used, the number could be as high as 7.4 million, according to a report in the Steinhardt journal, a team of sociologists at the Steinhardt research center, who led the report.

Saxe’s study suggests a larger, more diverse and less affiliated community than did the NJPS. The two surveys present very different narratives, Saxe said.

The difference, he says, can be seen in the opening chapters of Scott Shap’s new book, “Getting our Groove Back: How to Energize American Jewry.” Drawing on the NJPS results, the opening chapters paint American Jewry as a melting ice cube. But the U.S. Jewish population is actually growing, Saxe says.

That implies two very different motives for communal programming. One is alarmist: If the Jewish community is rapidly shrinking, then it must be saved. The other is optimistic: More potential Jews means more people to bring back to the core.

But the numbers suggest that the community, even if it is growing, has not been effective in certain areas—penetrating a much smaller portion of the Jewish population than previously thought—and it will take more programming to reach the underaffiliated. That also means significantly more philanthropic funding will be needed, Saxe said.

Philanthropists such as Michael Steinhardt, who funds Saxe’s institute, are looking at the new numbers as a rallying call.

“What is of great concern is the fact that the institutional Jewish world is serving fewer young Jews, according to Jeffrey Solomon, president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies. In North America, there are 5.4 million American Jews or more than a million American Jews,” Saxe told JTA before the report came out.

Another recent survey conducted by sociologist Ira Sheskin comes to a similar conclusion, but Saxe’s study involved a “meta-analysis” of some three dozen government and private foundation surveys that query religion.

A painstaking process that involves not only analyzing the data but calibrating each survey to make sure they all use the same statistical language, the meta-analysis provides a more accurate portrait than the NJPS, Saxe said.

The surveys Saxe used generally are more extensive and thorough than the NJPS and, he said, are better at finding Jews by birth and self-identified. The NJPS also missed Jews on college campuses.

But the biggest discrepancy is that most of the calls for the NJPS surveys were made during early evening hours, when many Jews in their 20s and early 30s are not home because of work or social engagements, Saxe said.

When the survey did find Jews at home, there was a greater-than-average chance that they were Orthodox, who tend not to eat out and have familial obligations at a younger age, he said.

Especially in today’s cell phone age, some young Jews may not even have land lines, giving surveyors virtually no chance of reaching them.

In all, the NIPs underestimated the total number of children by up to 30,000 per age cohort, according to the new study.

The NJPS estimates that 29 percent of Jewish children attend day school. But if there are a few hundred thousand more children than believed, the percentage attending day schools is correspondingly lower, Saxe said in his study.

The new report also represents a challenge to the federation system, which already knew it was collecting fewer dollars from fewer donors, but now must consider that it is actually receiving money from an even smaller percentage of its donor base.

If Saxe is correct, the undercounting of Jews in their 20s means that even successful programs, such as birthright Israel, will have to reexamine their efforts.

Steinhardt made his statement several days before Feb. 6, when the Adelson Family Charitable Foundation pledged $25 million a year to birthright for the next several years.

The growing wait list for birthright israel trips could provide anecdotal backing for Saxe’s findings, according to Jeffrey Solomon, president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies. In North America, there were more birthright applicants last year than young Jews having bar and bat mitzvahs.

For the organized Jewish world, the challenge is to reach the demographic of Jews between college entry and marriage, about an 11-year period.

“Those years are especially important to identity forming, but at the same time there is very little in Jewish life that targets that age group,” Solomon said. “It is time for us to play a little catch-up and see this as an enormous opportunity.”

But it’s not time to panic, according to Sanford Cardin, executive director of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, a major funder of programs that target young Jews.

The challenge is the same whether there are 5.4 million American Jews or more than 6 million, Cardin said. While more philanthropic dollars are needed, it’s up to the organized Jewish world to create excitement about Judaism that will inspire people to return to the fold, and that’s not a function only of the amount of programming.

“Jewish life is not about providing services and programs,” Cardin said. “It is about attracting, engaging and infusing people with a way of living that they can choose to live.”

“Ultimately this isn’t about creating a pot of money. This is about sparking renewed interest and understanding of Jewish life by a large number of Jewish people,” he said.

“It’s about reaching the individual. And the way that is going to work is more viral and through a network.”
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ON ANOTHER NOTE

Listening to the music of Borat
Sander Slomovits, staff writer

In her opening monologue at the 2007 Academy Awards Show, host Ellen De
Generes joked, “If there weren’t black, Jews and gays, there would be no Oscars.”
It’s probably equally true that without those populations, along with the virulent
prejudices they inspire in some Americans, there would be no movie Borat.

The Borat soundtrack CD contains most of the music from the film, though it does
not include Harry Nilsson’s version of the Fred Neil song “Everybody Talking At Me”
from the 1960’s classic, Midnight Cowboy, or about a man wildly, albeit un-
consciously, out of his element. It also does not have Steppenwolf’s heavy metal version
of “Born To Be Wild” which accompanies Borat as he heads out on his cross-country
journey to find and marry the lust of his life, Pamela Anderson of Babe, uh... sorry,
Bay Watch. Instead, there is a version of the song recorded by Fanuele Giocatza, a terrific
12-piece Roma brass band from Romania. The song is given a different rhythm and the
chorus, just the title repeated, is sung in Bal-
khan inflected English. The verses are song in
Roma, Romanian or some unidentified, and
possibly fake language.

The CD also, and I quote from the cover, “Contains bonus purchasing incentives, in-
cluding unseen footages from Borat mov-
iefilm and romantics lovesong about my
dead wife.” In addition to the soundtrack,
there are in fact two brief scenes from the
movie, one of Baron Cohen “studying” with
a humor coach, and the promotional video
that accompanies the singing of the Kazakh-
stan National Anthem. The only “unseen
footages” is a hilarious one of Borat grilling
a supermarket manager about the contents
of his cheese aisle.

Now that the hoopla about the controver-
sial comedy has died down a bit, now that
its creator and star, Sacha Baron Cohen is no
longer doing all his promotional interviews
in character, now that some of the furor has
faded about the film’s politically incorrect
(to put it mildly) content, not to mention its
heavy reliance on anti-Semitic set pieces (de-
spite that, Borat, it turns out, is very popular
in Israel), now that the film has received an
Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screen-
play (it didn’t win), now that Baron Cohen
has been nominated for a Golden Globe
Award for best actor in a musical or comedy
(he won), now that the movie is even out on
DVD, I get to focus on an aspect of the film
that has gone mostly unnoticed—the music.

I didn’t go to see Borat when it came out
last November. My wife did, and long fa-
miliar with my aversion to certain comedy
geners, she reported, “You may not like it.”
A friend gave me a two-sentence review that
also didn’t inspire me to go. “Worst movie I
have ever seen. I laughed my a—off.”

But then another friend told me that the
soundtrack was great, that it consisted of
a lot of traditional Balkan and Eastern
European music. So, I listened, and agreed,
(though most of it, as it happens, is not tra-
ditional, but modern music influenced by
those styles) and decided I should go to see
the movie.

I wanted to be sure I got my money’s
worth so I waited till the end of February
and saw Borat at Briarwood on a Tuesday
night for 50 cents. It was worth every bit of
those two bills—and then some. Even though
I didn’t laugh my toshis off, well, not all of
it anyway.

But, enough already. This is not a movie
review, but a music column.

If you hated the movie, there is still plenty
of music here I think you will enjoy. And, if
you don’t want to listen repeatedly to Baron
Cohen’s starkits, you can do what I did. After
buying the CD, I burned my own copy, edit-
ing it to include only the songs and instru-
ments I wanted.

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of music here I think you will enjoy. And, if
you don’t want to listen repeatedly to Baron
Cohen’s starkits, you can do what I did. After
buying the CD, I burned my own copy, edit-
ing it to include only the songs and instru-
ments I wanted.

If you liked the humor of the movie, you’ll
love Baron Cohen’s songs, as well as the bits
of dialog from the movie that he intersperses
between the cuts.

The soundtrack CD features the work of a
number of other prominent Balkan and East-
er European composers, instrumentalists
and singers and ranges from acoustic brass
band to synthesized, sampled and electronic
music. Names like Goran Bregovi, Stefan De
La Barabulesti and German Popov, are all well
known in Europe and the Balkans and de-
serve to be heard here more often as well. All
of this music reflects the traditional roots, of-
ten Gypsy, of these musicians, but also shows
that they have listened to, absorbed and in-
corporated modern pop and even rap, new age
and world music influences.

If you liked the humor of the movie, you’ll
love Baron Cohen’s songs, as well as the bits
of dialog from the movie that he intersperses
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If you hated the movie, there is still plenty
of music here I think you will enjoy. And, if
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Cohen’s starkits, you can do what I did. After
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If you liked the humor of the movie, you’ll
love Baron Cohen’s songs, as well as the bits
of dialog from the movie that he intersperses
between the cuts.

Sixty cents for the movie, eight bucks for
the music. Such a deal.
Deir Yassin from page 2

the dissident Jewish militia, the Irgun, had earlier tossed a bomb at Arab workers at a bus stop outside the refinery. The massacre of Jewish workers was revenged by a Haganah strike against civilians in the neighborhood where many Arab refinery workers lived.

On February 5, in Damascus, Palestinian military planners met and divided Palestine into four zones. Jewish kibbutzim in the Galilee and Samaria were to be attacked by the Arab Liberation Army, a force of Palestinian volunteers and volunteers across the Middle East, under the command of former German Wehrmacht officer Fawzi al-Qawakji. Abdul Khader Hussein (The Mufti's cousin) would command the Mufti's forces in the Jerusalem district, while the Lydda area would report to Mufti loyalist Hassan Salame. Both Palestinian commanders were graduates of Nazi SS commando training. Their mission by cutting the highway linking Tel Aviv with Jerusalem. This road, Jerusalem's sole supply route, winds through a narrow gorge. Abdel Khader organized villagers on the hilltops to snipe at the Jewish trucks, which would be off from one another by merely closing the roads between them. Abdul Khader Hussein announced a plan to “strangle Jerusalem,” to starve the city's Jews (16 percent of all Jews in the Palestinian region) into submission by cutting the highway linking Tel Aviv with Jerusalem. This road, Jerusalem's sole supply route, winds through a narrow gorge. Abdel Khader organized villagers on the hilltops to snipe at the Jewish trucks, which would be off from one another by merely closing the roads between them. Abdul Khader Hussein announced a plan to “strangle Jerusalem,” to starve the city's Jews (16 percent of all Jews in the Palestinian region) into submission by cutting the highway linking Tel Aviv with Jerusalem. 

On April 9, Irgun-Lehi forces on their own initiative attacked Deir Yassin, two kilometers south of al-Kastel. In the course of and after that battle, Jewish fighters brutally killed over 100 non-combatant civilians. Details of the massacre, and various accounts of the levels of provocation, military necessity and authority justifying the action, are fairly delineated in the Wikipedia article on the massacre.

Palestine Radio broadcast exaggerated and fabricated details of the Deir Yassin massacre. Expecting to rouse Arab states to indignation and therefore “come to liberate Palestine from the Jews,” editor Hazem Nusseibeh and Hussein Khalidi of the Arab Higher Committee miscalculated. Their broadcasts sowed panic among Palestinians. “This was our biggest mistake,” Hassan Nusseibeh, former Palestine Broadcasting Service Arabic News editor, told BBC documentary filmmakers, “We did not realize how our people would react. As soon as we heard that women had been raped at Deir Yassin, Palestinians fled in terror [The Fifty Years' War: Israel and the Arabs (1998)].

On April 13, Arab village militia fighters wreaked revenge for Deir Yassin. Ambushing a medical convoy to Hadassah Hospital, the militiamen massacred 78 Jewish nurses and doctors, dousing with gasoline and burning alive the bleeding wounded.

April 2007

**Sunday 1**

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—For Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

**Monday 2**

Shabbat Minyan and Siyum: Minyan followed by completion of study of a section of tractate. 

**Tuesday 3**

Passover Seder: AAOM. Held at UM Hillel. Call 662-8805 for time.

**Wednesday 4**

Morning Passover Services: AAOM. Held at UM Hillel. Call 662-8805 for time.

**Thursday 5**

Passover Vacation Fun Day: JCC—Youth Depart- ment. Take a high velocity rocket ship to the Red Planet, make a spacecraft from a ! M Natural History Museum. For JCC members-only. A Passover vacation will be provided. 8 a.m.—4 p.m. with extended care from 4 p.m. at the JCC. $35 program; $33/additional siblings; $8/extended care child. Contact Craig Pollack at 971-0990 or email craigp@jccfd.org.

**Friday 6**

Passover Vacation Fun Day: JCC—Youth Depart- ment. Come to the Space Age Museum. 9 a.m.—4 p.m. Noon; $5 Kinder Kite Flight. Noon; $5 Adirondack Express. 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

**Saturday 7**

Day School Outing: Older Adults: JFS. Visit the Flint Museum of Art and Hillel. Call 971-0990 for information. 

**Sunday 8**

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—For Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

**Monday 9**

Morning Passover Services: AAOM. Held at UM Hillel. Call 662-8805 for time.

**Tuesday 10**

Passover Vacation Fun Day: JCC—Youth Department. Join the Jewish Grad- bers only. A Passover lunch will be provided. 9 a.m.—4 p.m. $4/session or $15/session. Call 971-0990 or email rivia at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209.

**Wednesday 11**

Morning Passover Services: AAOM. Held at UM Hillel. Call 662-8805 for time.

**Thursday 12**

Passover Vacation Fun Day: JCC—Youth Depart- ment. Enjoy Carnival Time at the JCC (for JCC siblings; $8/extended care per child. Contact Nina Dmitrieva at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for information.

**Friday 13**

Passover Vacation Fun Day: JCC—Youth Depart- ment. Toledo Zoo Trip for JCC members only. Bring a dairy lunch. 8 a.m.—4 p.m. with extended care from 4–6 p.m. at the JCC. $35 program; $33/additional siblings; $8/extended care child. Contact Craig Pollack at 971-0990 or email craigp@jccfd.org.

**Saturday 14**

Adult Programs

- **CCCers, Arts and Crafts:** bring something that you are working on or participate in a group project. Coffee and noshes provided. 10:30 a.m.—Noon, $15 (non-CCC students) prepaid or cash/check, $15.75 at door. Contact Nina Dmitrieva at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for more information.

- **Talmud Study Group—Jewish Civil Law:** Chabad. In-depth study into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

- **Mystical Insights to the Torah—for Women:** Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimension of the Torah. 1 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

- **Shabbat Shabbos:** See listing at the end of the calendar.

- **Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—For Women:** Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

**Monday 9**

Morning Passover Services: AAOM. Held at UM Hillel. Call 662-8805 for time.

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**Saturday 14**

Total Shabbat: BIC. Led by Peretz Hirshbein fol- lowed by a trip to see the University Choir and \*Chabad. Band at 8 p.m. Call 971-0990 or email craigp@jccfd.org.
Mystical Insights to the Torah—for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. Chabad. 1 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

Laws of Shabbat—Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics. 1/2 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Tuesday 15

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—for Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Tanya—Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Hike: GAP. Hike along the Huron River and enjoy the warmer weather. Meet at Bandemer parking lot off N. Main Street on Lakeshore Drive, just before the M-14 on-ramp 3–5 p.m.

Holocaust Remembrance Day Observance: Jewish Federation Tom Hashoosh observance in conjunction with University Musical Society with a concert featuring Jerusalem String Quartet. Sunday morning begins at 3 p.m. in Raoul Wallenberg Square outside UM Alumni Center (or in the Center’s Founder’s Room in case of inclement weather). Concert in Rackham Auditorium at 4 p.m. Discounted tickets offered for $30 and can be purchased online at www.jewishannarbor.org/jerusalemstringquartet.

Concert Outing for Older Adults: JFS. Hear the Jerusalem String Quartet at the UM’s Hill Auditorium. 4 p.m. Limited number of free and subsidized tickets available through JFS. $6 transportation on JFS CareVan, if needed. Contact Nina Dmitrieva at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for information.

Minyan with Observance of Yom Hashoosh: BIC. Minyan at 7:30 p.m. followed by discussion of the holocaust-themed novel The Bay in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne as part of Beth Israel Reads program. 8:15 p.m.

Rabbi’s Class #3: TBE. Koloheit (Ecclesiastes), Job and Maimonides. 7-45 p.m.

Concert Outing for Older Adults: JFS. Hear a Cabaret Studio Recital at the UM Walgreen and Drama Center at 8 p.m. $6 transportation on JFS CareVan, if needed. Contact Nina Dmitrieva at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for information.

Jewish Concepts—for Women: Chabad. Learning the deeper meanings to the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Monday 16

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m.–noon; $4/session or $103/session; $3 Buffet of Dairy Delights, noon. Writing Group; express yourself through personal recollections, poetry and fiction. No previous writing experience required, 1-2:30 p.m. Every Monday.

“From Israel With a Smile”: JFS. Outing to the Detroit area for a Russian performance featuring Y an Levinson at 7:30 p.m. $35/ tickets with a modest fee for transportation. Contact Nina Dmitrieva at nina@jfsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for information.

Jewish Learning Institute (JLI): Chabad. See 4/9. 7:30–8 p.m. at the JCC.

Tuesday 17

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Arts and Crafts—bring something that you are working on or participate in a group project. Coffee and noshes provided, 10:30–noon; Mah Jongg, Noon–2:30 p.m. Every Tuesday.

Movie Tuesday: TBE. 1-3 p.m.

Evening Entertainment Excursion: JCC—Older Adult Programs. Enjoy an evening of music with a trip to see the University Symphony Orchestra at the UM’s Hill Auditorium. $6 for transportation. 7:15 p.m. Meet at the JCC. RSVP by 4/9 to Laurie Wechter at 971-0990 or Abbie Lawrence Jacobson at 769-0209.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. at Chabad House. Every Tuesday.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rod Glogower presents different topics each week (except during vacation) using texts from Tanach, Talmud and rabbinic literature. English translations of texts provided. Discussions in areas of law, philosophy and theology. 8 p.m. at UM Hillel. For information, call 662-5805.

Wednesday 18

Lunch and Laugh Series: BIC. Led by Rabbi Do-brain. A look at some of the famous Jewish comedians of the past and how we can find humor in our own Jewish experiences. Bring a sack lunch. Drinks and dessert will be provided. Noon–1:15 p.m.

Israeli Dancing: JCC. Join your friends for a night of Israeli dancing at the JCC with instructor Tom Starka. 7-9 p.m. $5/person.

Adult Biblical Hebrew #1: TBE. First session of six-week spring term class. 6:30 p.m.

Meditation: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Thursday 19

Prayer, Weekly Torah reading and Jewish Philosophy—for Women: Chabad. 5 a.m. at the JCC. Every Thursday.

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, 10–noon, 84 or 3/310. Current Events with Heather Donbey 11 a.m.–noon; $3 Kosher Lunch, noon. Guest Presentations (varied), 1 p.m. at the JCC.

Civic Life and Community Engagement Series: JCC—Older Adult Program. Guest presenter Elisabeth Solomon will speak on “Making Volunteering Meaningful.” Part of a new series aligned with Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads program and University of Michigan Theme Semester. 1 p.m. at the JCC. For information, contact Laurie Wechter at 971-0990 or Abbie Lawrence Jacobson at 769-0209.

Adult Hebrew #1: TBE. First session of six-week spring term class. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud Study Group—Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Bava Metziah chapter 6. 8 p.m. Every Thursday.

Holocaust Memorial Lecture: Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Harvard Professor Susan Rubin Suleiman, Jewish Studies Program, Michigan State University. For more information, call (517) 432-3493.

Friday 20

Weekly Yiddish-speaking Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at a private home every week except when monthly group meets at JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call 971-0990.

Shabbat Dinner: JCC—Early Childhood Center. Families with young children from birth to age five will welcome in Shabbat with dinner, sing-a-long and special presentation by Giraffe Room children. There will be also an opportunity to participate in popular fundraising event to create a ceramic tile to add to wall of tiles in ECC’s Monkey Room. 6:–7:30 p.m. at the JCC. $10/adults; $5/children 2 years and up. RSVP by 4/16 to the ECC at 971-0990.

Kabbalat Shabbat Service and Yom Ha’Atzmaut Dinner: TBE. 6 p.m.

Friday evening events: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 21

Mystical Insights to the Torah—for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. Chabad. 1 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.
Celebrate 13 years of service with:
• a strolling buffet of international food
• emcee Big Al Muskovito of the Dick Purtan show
• a magic show with Jeff “the magician” Olds
• wine tasting with an editor from Intermezzo Magazine
• indoor pool party for youth, middle school and older

Save Lives - Support JFS
JFS - Your family in the Community
Jewish Family Services provides a safe haven to all in need of shelter, support and a guiding hand
Pledge your support to JFS - Your family in the Community

CALL

Laws of Shabbat/Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

Kal Halev: TBE. Adult choir Cabaret. 6 p.m.
Bowl-A-Rama Dinner Fundraiser: B’Rith: An evening of dinner, bowling and fun at Colonial Lanes. Dinner at 6 p.m. Bowling begins at 7 p.m. No skill necessary. Prizes and silent auction of dinner certificates. For information, contact Barbara Goodsit at 662-6671 or b.goodsit@comcast.net or email Barbara Riemer at briemer@emich.edu.

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Sunday 22
Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—For Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.
Sunday Fun: JCC and HDS. Children ages 2 and up and their parents will join percussionist and Hebrew teacher Aron Kaufman for songs, Hebrew and Israeli Independence Day fun. 10–11 a.m. at the JCC. RSVP to sundayfun@hdaa.org. For more information, call HDS at 971-4633.

Tanya-Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Chaverim B’Shirim Concert: JCC. Chaverim B’Shirim will celebrate the life and work of Irving Berlin, considered to be one of the most famous and important songwriters of the 20th Century. Excerpts from Call Me Madam and Annie Get Your Gun. $5 suggested donation. 2 p.m. at the JCC. RSVP to 971-0990.

Bat Mitzvah Cruise: JFS. Set sail for the JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise, a celebration and commemoration of the 13-year history of providing human services to the community and serving as “Your Family in the Community.” Cruise-inspired activities, food and fun for all ages. 5–8 p.m. Travis Pointe Country Club. Call 769-0209 or contact carol@fsannarbor.org for more information or register online at www.jfsannarbor.org/Bat_Mitzvah_Cruise_reg.htm

Yom Hashoah Service: TBE. 6:30–7:30 p.m.
Concert Outing for Older Adults: JFS. Hear a Faculty Recital featuring Diana Garnett on Bass at Britton Recital Hall. 8 p.m. Travel transportation on JFS CareVan, if needed. Contact Nina Dzmitrieva at nnina@fsannarbor.org or 769-0209 for information.

Jewish Ethics—For Women: Chabad. Learning the deeper meanings to the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Monday 23
Photography exhibit: Moonwinks Cafe. As part of the week-long opening celebration, Moonwinks Cafe will host an exhibit of photos by Nancy Margolis from her trip to China. Proceeds from photo sales will be donated to the JCC Playground Campaign. For info about the opening reception, call 662-5800. 5151 Plymouth Rd.

Grandparent’s Day: HDS. Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Yom HaAtzmaut celebration with Hebrew Day School students, parents, and grandparents. For information, call HDS at 971-4633.

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, 10–noon; $4 or 3/$10. Current Events with Heather Donbey. 11 a.m.–noon; $3 Kosher Lunch, noon; Guest Presentations (vari- ed), 1 p.m. at the JCC.

Guest Presentation: JCC Seniors. Dr. Judith Lakin Elkin will present “Argentine Jews: Jewish Argentines.” Who are the Argentine Jews? How do Jews accommodate to life in the southern hemisphere? How are they similar to North American Jews and how do they differ? This short talk will be followed by audience participation. 1–2:30 p.m. at the JCC.

Family Literacy Night: JCC–ECC and HDS. For families with children pre-school through 2nd grade. Join in a variety of literacy activities and games based on Jewish stories. A pizza dinner will be served and a guest storyteller will be there to share stories. 6–8 p.m. at the JCC. RSVP by 4/23 to the ECC at 769-0209 or b.goodsitt@comcast.net.

Mitzvah Day: TBE. Teen Shabbat and Kids’ Kiddush: BIC. Teens take over the entire service from reading Torah to leading prayers plus delivering D’Var Torah. Kiddush is planned and prepared by 5th and 6th graders. 9:30 a.m.

Mystical Insights to the Torah—For Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. Chabad. 1 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

Laws of Shabbat—Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown at Chabad House. Every Saturday.

Salsa Bar Night: GAP. Salsa with lessons beginning at 9:30 p.m. sharp followed by open dancing. Papi Os, 2275 Ellsworth at Hewitt in Ypsilanti. $8 cover after 10 p.m.

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Tuesday 24
SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Arts and Crafts—being something that you are working on or participate in a group project. Coffee and noshes provided, 10:30–noon. Mah Jongg. Noon–2:30 p.m. Every Tuesday.

“The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” TBE. Talk by Aaron Ahuvia at 7:30 p.m. Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rob Glassower presents different topics each week (except during vacation) using texts from Tanach, Talmud and rabbinic literature. English translations of texts provided. Discussions in areas of law, philosophy and theology. 8 p.m. at UM Hillel. For information, call 662-5803.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. at Chabad House. Every Tuesday.

Wednesday 25
Meditation: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Prayer, Weekly Torah reading and Jewish Philosophy—for Women: Chabad. 9 a.m. at the JCC. Every Thursday.

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Fitness Fun with Maria Farquhar, 10–noon; $4 or 3/$10. Current Events with Heather Donbey. 11 a.m.–noon; $3 Kosher Lunch, noon; Guest Presentations (varied), 1 p.m. at the JCC.

Saturday 28
Mitzvah Day: TBE. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Baba Metziah chapter 6–8 p.m. Every Thursday.

Friday 27
Weekly Yiddish-speaking Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at a private home every week except when monthly group meets at JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call 971-0990.

Friday evening services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 29
State Historic Marker dedication: Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Join the celebration of a new Michigan Historic Marker com-
Calendar

memorating the first Jewish settler in Detroit, fur trader Chapman Abraham, and the participants in Michigan Jews in the Civil War. 2 p.m. at Tri-Centennial Park and Harbor at the Detroit Riverfront. Bus transportation available in Detroit area. For more info, call (288) 432-5517.

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book—for women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Tanya—Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. at Chabad House. Every Sunday.

Celebrate Israel 3: The Jewish community will gather to celebrate the 59th anniversary of the State of Israel. This year’s theme is Kikar Safra: A Celebration of Jewish Music and Art in Honor of Israel Independence Day. Live music from local groups, art displays, and a youth art project. Israeli-inspired food will be available for purchase: 2-6 p.m. at EMU’s Student Center, 980 Oakwood Street in Ypsilanti.

Women’s Rosh Chodesh: TBE 6:30 p.m.

Youth Choir Concert and Reception: TBE 7 p.m.

Jewish Concepts—for Women: Chabad 7 p.m.

Jewish Learning Institute (JLI): Chabad: 7 p.m.

Jewish Concepts—for Women: Chabad 7 p.m.

Fitness Fun with SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors 9:30 a.m.

Generations Nutrition: JCC 11 a.m.

Writing Group; express yourself through personal recollections, poetry and fiction. No previous writing experience required. 1–2:30 p.m. Every Monday.

Jewish Learning Institute (JLI): Chabad 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC. See 4/9.

Weekly Friday night Shabbat services


Shabbat Service: BIC 6 p.m.

Shabbat Service: TBE. Weekly services at 8 p.m. The second week of the month the Friday Services schedule changes to include: 5:30 p.m. Tot Shabbat followed by Tot Dinner at 6 p.m. Shira song session at 6:30 p.m.; Family Service at 7 p.m. and Chapel Minyan at 8 p.m.

Shabbat Service: Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. 6:15 PM at the JCC; the last Friday of each month. Musical Shabbat service followed by vegetarian potluck. Tot Shabbat with optional kid’s pizza dinner at 6:00 PM. All are welcome to attend. For information, call 913-9705, email info@aacon.org or visit www.aacon.org.


Weekly Shabbat services and classes

Shabbat Services: AAOOM. Morning service, 9:30 a.m. Evening service, 35 minutes before sunset. U-M Hillel. Call 662-5805 for information. Mincha/Maariv with SeudahShlishishe and Dvor Torah every week at UM Hillel. Torah topics and a bite to eat. Discussions led by Rabbi Rod Glogower and other local scholars.

Shabbat Services: BIC 9:30 a.m., 6 p.m. Mincha.

Shabbat Services: AA Reconstructionist Havurah. Participatory, lay-led services. For info, email info@aacon.org or call 913-9705 or visit www.aacon.org.

Shabbat Services Chabad. Morning services at 9:45 a.m. Afternoon services 45 minutes before sundown.

Shabbat Services: Pardes Hannah. Genet-
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Baseball making its pitch in Israel

by Jacob Berkman

NEW YORK (JTA)—Modi’in may not be the Mudville of Casey fame, but its Miracles will enter baseball lore when their pitcher unleashes his first fastball against the Petach Tikva Pioneers on June 24. The central Israeli town is hosting the opener of the new Israel Baseball League, which will feature six teams playing a 45-game schedule this summer.

Officially announced Monday at a press conference in New York City, the IBL officials are hoping the league will quickly spur Israeli interest in American baseball—they aim to draw about 1,000 fans per game in the first year—while government officials hope it will help boost Israel’s image abroad.

As the IBL’s early fan base will likely be American expatriates yearning for a baseball fix, the league has enlisted three high-profile Jewish ex-major leaguers as managers: Ken Holtzman, the winningest Jewish pitcher in baseball history with 174 victories, including two no-hitters; New York Yankee Ron Blomberg, pro baseball’s first designated hitter; and Art Shamsky, a member of the New York “Miracle Mets” that won the 1969 World Series.

Shamsky, an outfielder and first baseman, smacked four consecutive home runs while playing for the 1966 Cincinnati Reds.

“My mother’s proudest moment for the past 41 years has been the day in 1966 when I pitched against Sandy Koufax,” Holtzman said. “Now that I have the chance to manage in Israel, he’s also very, very proud.”

Dan Duquette, former general manager of the Boston Red Sox and Montreal Expos, will serve as the IBL’s director of baseball operations. Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig is on the advisory board, as is his daughter, Milwaukee Brewers owner Wendy Selig-Prieb.

On the field, the league will provide opportunities for players like Leon Feingold to continue or revive their baseball dreams. Feingold pitched for the Cleveland Indians in 1944 and 1995 before elbow surgery ended his career. Instead of attempting a comeback he went to law school. But at 33 he will put his law career on hold to resurrect his baseball dreams.

Feingold, who has been playing semi-pro baseball in Westchester, N.Y., also has been ranked as high as 12th in the world by the International Federation of Competitive Eating. He once downed 152 hot dogs in 12 minutes. In Israel he will trade buns for fielding bunts—an opportunity he relishes.

“Getting a chance to play baseball again on the same level is getting a second chance at something that most people don’t get a first chance at,” Feingold said.

The IBL has signed players from eight countries including the Dominican Republic, Australia, Venezuela and the United States, Duquette said. About a dozen players will be Israeli, a dynamic the league hopes to change as interest in baseball spreads and the players improve in a game that now exists in the Jewish state only on the Little League level.

There is no official connection between the Israeli government and the IBL, according to the league’s founder and managing director, Larry Baras. But infusing a deep-seated part of Americana could be a public relations boon for Israel.

Fittingly, the league’s first commissioner is Daniel Kurtzer, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel.

The opportunity to show Israel not only as a country at war but as a country involved in sports—quintessentially American sports at that—could help Americans bond with Israel, the country’s deputy consul in New York, Benjamin Krasna, told JTA.

“Sports is such an important part of America, if you can touch Americans through sports, they can see that Israel is not just a fortress,” Krasna said, adding that exposing new audiences to Israel is an important part of this initiative.

League officials are adamant about getting Israel into the 2009 World Baseball Classic, an international baseball tournament comprised of professional and amateur all-stars.

Krasna said that names such as Blomberg, Shamsky and Holtzman could pique American interest, as could convincing a high-profile Jewish player, such as the New York Mets’ Shawn Green, to play in Israel after his American career ends.

That might be a tough sell, considering that each team will have a salary cap of $45,000 for its entire 20-player roster.

The Jewish National Fund is helping connect potential funders to the IBL, which will have a budget of $2.5 million in its inaugural season. According to CEO Russell Robinson, the JNF may help the league find land for stadiums.

Starting out, the six teams will share three fields.

The IBL will have no official relationship with Major League Baseball, but it is getting a hand from the world’s most profitable baseball league: MLB.com will carry coverage of Israel’s games.

On April 15, after big-league teams have broken camp and started their seasons, Major League Baseball and the IBL will hold a tryout in California for players who did not make major or minor league rosters.

One thing Israel has to work on, Krasna says, is its baseball lexicon: There is no Hebrew word for bat, and pitch and throw are the same word. The IBL features a Hebrew-English baseball dictionary on its Web site.

At the press conference, Shamsky stumbled over a couple of Hebrew phrases he thought would come in handy with umpires during his first season.

“’Ata eever’ means ‘you’re blind,’ and ‘pa’tach eyneyim’ means ‘open your eyes,’” he said jokingly. ■
Mazal Tov

Ari Axelrod on his bar mitzvah, April 21.

Jeffrey and Rachel Urist on the birth of their grandson, Joshua Urist, son of Joseph Urist and Lisa Cohen.

Victor and Sharon Lieberman on the birth of their grandson, Julius Saul Pitt.

Noam Raphael on his bar mitzvah, April 14.

Ellen and Sam Offen on the engagement of their daughter, Stephanie, to Andy Frankel.

Catherine Zudak and Robert Silbergleit on the birth of their daughter, Marina Hope Silbergleit, March 2.

Condolences

Paul Lichter and Allen Lichter on the death of their mother, Buena Lichter.

Jack Scherer on the death of his sister, Libby Sturman.

Ken Kiesler on the death of his mother, Rose Kiesler, on February 26.

Edwin Pear on the death of his mother, Ceil Pear.

Sarajane Winkelman on the death of her husband, Jan.

Correction

Our apologies to Abigail Lawrence-Jacobson and Laurie Wechter. We inadvertently switched their names and photos in the March Washtenaw Jewish News. Here is the correct photos and captions.

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