

JFS to honor Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein

Laurie Barnett and Robin Little, special to the WJN

On Sunday, February 15, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County will honor Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein with the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Leadership Award at "An Afternoon of Heart and Sole." This award is given each year to Ann Arborites who have demonstrated outstanding community service. Past recipients include Ambassador Ronald Weiser and Albert Berriz (McKinley Associates), Ken Fischer, and Phyllis and David Herzig. A dessert reception will be held at 2 p.m. in the Michigan League Ballroom, followed by a performance by the Batsheva Dance Company of Israel at 4 p.m. in the Power Center. Tickets are \$36 per person; combined tickets to both the reception and dance performance are \$72 per person.

From the time Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein met at the University of Michigan Hillel while students, they have built a life together based on the Jewish tenets of family, service, and education. And since they moved to Ann Arbor five years ago, they have made an indelible impact on Jewish and non-Jewish organizations throughout the community and Michigan, as well as Jewish philanthropy nationally.

Rachel is a mediator and attorney who serves on the executive committee of the Jewish Funders Network and the board of the Bendit Foundation, and works closely with the Dispute Resolution Center, a community mediation center in Ann Arbor. She is also involved with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, the



Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein

Women's Health Program at the University of Michigan, and the Corner Health Center. She has close ties to the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, where she is consulting with staff to launch a local Jewish teen philanthropy program, serves on its Personnel Committee and has also served on its Israel and Overseas Committee, Women's Division, and Search Committee.

Mark is an attorney with the Bernstein Law Firm. He served in the White House

during the Clinton Administration as the Director of Press Pool Operations. Mark serves on the executive board of the Michigan Association for Justice and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, for which he also has served as chair. Nationally, he serves on the Jewish Funds for Justice, a public foundation working to achieve social and economic security and opportunity

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Batsheva Dance Company returns to UMS

Sara Billmann, special to the WJN

The University Musical Society (UMS) will present Israeli ensemble Batsheva Dance Company in two different programs on Saturday, February 14 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, February 15 at 4 p.m., in Ann Arbor's Power Center (121 Fletcher Street). Batsheva Dance Company is one of the most influential artistic groups in Israel, internationally renowned for pushing the boundaries of cutting-edge dance with intense energy, rich sensuality, and a culturally diverse dance language. Led by Ohad Naharin since 1990, this contemporary dance company reels with energy, adrenaline, and force. On Saturday, the company presents *Three*, a bewitching work from 2005 that tests the dancers' individual boundaries in a powerful composition of force, speed, and passion (*Three* contains brief nudity). The Sunday performance features *Deca Dance*, a celebration of 10 years of artistic director Naharin's work with Batsheva (first performed in 2000). *Deca Dance* takes sections of existing works

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Lecture and class on Islam hosted by Genesis

Ronnie Simon, special to WJN

Temple Beth Emeth and St. Clare of Assisi Episcopal Church will host a public lecture by University of Michigan Professor Juan Cole, entitled "Shiite International in Global Islam Today," to be held at their common facility, Genesis of Ann Arbor, 2309 Packard Rd., on Sunday, February 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Juan R. I. Cole is the Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan. Cole has sought to put the relationship of the West and the Muslim world in historical context. His most recent book is *Engaging the Muslim World*, and he also recent-



Juan R. L. Cole

Cooper 360, Countdown with Keith Olbermann, Democracy Now!, and many other programs.

ly authored *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*. A regular guest on PBS's *Lehrer News Hour*, Cole has also appeared on *ABC Nightly News*, *Nightline*, the *Today Show*, *Charlie Rose*, *Anderson*

He has written extensively about Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and South Asia. He continues to study and write about contemporary Islamic movements, whether mainstream or radical, Sunni and Salafi or Shiite.

In March Temple Beth Emeth will host a jointly sponsored class on Islam, Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m., March 1-22, taught by Grant Shaefer, a member of St. Clare's who has taught World Religions at Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Community College. To register for the class, email office@st-clares.org. ■

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Community

JFS February programs

Robin Little, special to the WJN

JFS explores intermarriage

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County will present "Family Affairs: Intermarriage and Jewish Parents in Historical Perspective" on Sunday, February 8, from 2-4 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County. Has your adult child married someone who is not Jewish? Join Jewish Family Services for this unique examination of intermarriage throughout the ages and today. Featured speaker Keren R. McGinity, Ph.D., will discuss research findings from her new book *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America*. Keren R. McGinity is the Mandell L. Berman Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Contemporary American Jewish Life at the University of Michigan Frankel Center for Judaic Studies.

Following her presentation, a panel of Jewish parents of intermarried children will discuss their experiences with intermarriage today. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Abbie Lawrence-Jacobson, 769-0209, or abbie@jfsannarbor.org

JFS explores driving safety and the elderly

Are you concerned about the driving capability of an aging loved one? On Wednesday, February 18, Jewish Family Services will host a discussion of this topic from 6:30-8 p.m., "The Driving Dilemma: Is Your Loved One Safe on the Road?" Learn how to initiate this difficult discussion with a parent, and how to create positive solutions. Extensive resources, including conversation scripts and safety worksheets, will be provided. A guest expert will present, followed by open discussion. For more information contact, Abbie Lawrence-Jacobson, 769-0209, or abbie@jfsannarbor.org ■

Bernstein, continued from page 1

by investing in healthy neighborhoods, vibrant Jewish communities, and skillful leaders. He also serves on the board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and is a past board member of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County and University of Michigan Hillel.

The Claire and Isadore Bernstein Leadership Award honors the founding members of Jewish Family Services. In 1977, Claire and Iz organized a resettlement committee to assist Russian Jews who came to Washtenaw County, and these activities led to the establishment of JFS in 1993. JFS remains the primary county resource for resettlement of immigrants and refugees. JFS assisted with the temporary resettlement of families displaced by Hurricane Katrina, and is currently helping to resettle Iraqi families. English as a Second Language classes are an important component of this process.

The agency also provides crucial social services for older adults and their caregivers, the unemployed, families in crisis, and people in need of transportation. Proceeds from "An Afternoon of Heart and Sole" will support JFS's ongoing work. In addition, a matching gift from Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein will establish an Emergency Aid Fund to assist individuals and families impacted by the current economic crisis.

This gift demonstrates Bendit and Bernstein's service to community and social justice—to improving the lives of all people—in order to create a better place for their children, our children and all of us. They demonstrate what it means to care, to serve, and to make a difference.

The event chairs for "An Afternoon of Heart and Sole" are: Stefanie and Herb Aronow, Catherine and Jeff Hauptman, Helen and Noah Kaplan, and Beth and Jeff Wilensky.

For more information about the event, visit the JFS website at www.jfsannarbor.org or contact Robin Little at 769-0209. ■

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Special thanks

To Ethel Ellis and Betty Hammond

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Community

Tzedek/social justice alive at EMU

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

The Greater Ann Arbor Jewish community is enriched by the community-service efforts of the Jewish students from Hillel at Eastern Michigan University. Jewish students at Eastern form a diverse Jewish community, from students with little Jewish knowledge to students raised in observant households. Some of these students participated in Jewish life while growing up and some did not, but these young Jews are active participants in Hillel, seeking out their traditions and contributing to the local community.

Despite the current financial pressures making continuing their college education difficult, EMU's Jewish students have chosen to prioritize Tzedek, which means Social Justice, bringing Jewish values alive. A group of 14 Hillel at EMU students will be travelling to the Gulf Coast region late in February to participate in a life-changing community service project, Alternative Spring Break. While in Mississippi and Louisiana, students will assist with clean up and rebuilding efforts from Hurricanes Katrina and Ike, and explore how Jewish values help combat poverty and build community. The participants commit to raising funds to cover the trip costs, planning and executing a campus-wide social justice initiative when they return, as well as seeking out opportunities to help their local communities.

EMU's Jewish students participate in multiple social justice/community service projects led by Hillel at EMU's Tzedek (Social Justice) intern, Stacie Rosemun, throughout the year. This fall, about a dozen students picked several bushels of apples from a local orchard, Wasem's Fruit

Farm, and donated them to Food Gatherers, the primary distributor of food in Washtenaw County. About two dozen students assembled no-sew fleece blankets and pumpkin pie "kits" to be distributed through Jewish Family Service-



The completed pumpkin pie kits with blankets.

es of Washtenaw County to local families for Thanksgiving. About one hundred students celebrating an early Hanukkah prepared dozens of Hanukkah cards, which were included in the Hanukkah care packages distributed by Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County with the help of local volunteers. Hillel at EMU is committed to providing EMU's Jewish students with opportunities such as these so that these students can build a path to life long Jewish expression and contribution. For more information on how you can help support Hillel at EMU and EMU's Jewish students, contact Clara Silver, executive director, at 482-0456 or clara@emuhillel.org ■

U-M Association of Jewish Alumni

WJN staff writers

Remember singing *Hail to the Victors* while watching Michigan dominate on the football field? How about the feeling of being overwhelmed with Michigan pride (and students) while walking through the Diag? Love feeling the joy of knowing you were at the school with the best combination of athletics, academics, and fun?" asks Eric Glyck, a current student at the University of Michigan.

A new program has been created at the University of Michigan for proud Wolverines alumni. Dubbed the University of Michigan Association of Jewish Alumni (UMAJA), this program is designed to give Jewish alumni the chance to get more involved with Jewish life at Michigan. Although it only launched a couple months ago, the group already has over 700 members and momentum doesn't seem to be slowing.

When Allison Sheren, program director at the Michigan Hillel and Michigan alumna, realized how much she loved being able to stay involved on campus, she decided that she needed to give her fellow alums this same opportunity. Working with the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan, UMAJA received official affiliate status and the group was born.

There are a lot of benefits to being a member of this organization. Every month

UMAJA sends out its e-newsletter, *E-JewBlue*, with information on events at the University that Jewish alums might attend, spotlights on interesting alumni, and tips on getting personally involved. One way that UMAJA helps to get alumni more involved is through its mentorship program. Glyck can attest to students' need for guidance. In October, UMAJA had its first mentoring event, a brunch where Glyck and others were able to meet several Jewish alumni. The advice he received on professions, locations, and overall life goals was more helpful than he ever would have guessed, he reports, and Glyck knows that there are another 6000 Jewish students here who could benefit just as greatly.

As UMAJA expands, there are a lot of goals they hope to achieve, including launching regional UMAJA groups, so that members can get in contact with other Jewish alumni in their area and receive periodic updates on events they might be interested in. In addition, with the growth of the mentorship program, UMAJA is hoping to pair Jewish students with alumni in the specific fields they are interested in, so as to share much-needed advice. ■

UMAJA membership is free. To learn more or join, visit www.umaja.org.

University of Michigan professor wins 2008 National Jewish Book Award

Kim Reick Kunoff, special to the WJN

The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies congratulates Julian Levinson for being named recipient of the 2008 National Jewish Book Award. His book, *Exiles on Main Street: Jewish American Writers and American Literary Culture* (Indiana University Press), has won the American Jewish Studies: Celebrate 350 Award.

Levinson, the Samuel Shetzer Professor of Jewish American Literature and associate professor of English, remarked, "This is really a terrific honor. The book comes out of a very personal need to think through the paradoxes of Jewish American identity. I adapted the title from the classic Rolling Stones album, which I suppose reflects the very same pattern that I discuss in the

Exiles on Main Street

Jewish American Writers and American Literary Culture



JULIAN LEVINSON

book. Jewish culture and Jewish books have always been created in dialogue with surrounding cultural forms. This award also recognizes that American Jewish literature isn't just written in English. One of the central chapters explores the ways Yiddish poets absorbed the powerful influence of the American bard Walt Whitman and created their own Yiddish American literary idiom."

"This is a tribute to Julian Levinson's pioneering work in expanding our understanding of American Jewish literature. The award speaks to the intellectual excitement of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, especially its interdisciplinary character," said Deborah Dash Moore, Frankel Center director and Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History.

The winners of the 2008 National Jewish Book Awards will be honored on March 5, at a gala awards ceremony at the Center for Jewish History in Manhattan, New York.

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Community

Mussar workshop offered in March

Roann Altman, special to the WJN

Dr. Alan Morinis, one of the foremost advocates today for Mussar, is coming to Ann Arbor the weekend of March 20–22. But what exactly is Mussar? And what does one get from “practicing” it?

“I have become more patient and have more compassion for others,” reports one member of the local Season of Mussar study group. “The simple practice of repeating short sayings to remind me how to be a better person brings into focus what is important and helps me let go of things that are not,” reports another.

Mussar is a centuries-old Jewish spiritual practice that provides insights into holiness and human behavior and is startlingly relevant even today. Focusing on behavior—what are often referred to as “soul traits”—allows people to become more of who they would like to be. Examples of soul traits include patience, generosity, gratitude, humility, and trust.

Group members have acknowledged that practicing gratitude has helped them solve problems and given them a better understanding of difficult situations. “Studying with partners and in small groups and doing individual journaling and reflection gives me insights about what I could be doing better and how I can become the person I want to be,” says another member of the group.

The practice of Mussar, which was popularized by Rabbi Israel Salanter during the Mussar Movement in 19th-century Lithuania, is experiencing a revival thanks in part to the

work of Dr. Alan Morinis, founding director of The Mussar Institute (TMI).

Morinis was born and raised in a culturally Jewish, but non-observant, home. A Rhodes Scholar with a doctorate from Oxford University, he is an anthropologist, filmmaker, writer, and student of spiritual traditions.

With the publication of his own introduction to Mussar practice, *Climbing Jacob’s Ladder*, Morinis began receiving requests for material from others wishing to pursue Mussar work. TMI offerings have grown from emailed lessons to online courses and now to local courses offered in communities across the United States and around the world.

Morinis has devoted the past eleven years of his life to this nearly lost spiritual discipline, recently publishing a guide to Mussar practice, *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. The key to the success of the TMI offerings is the interactive component, where partners and small groups discuss readings, ponder questions about a text, and share their own experiences of Mussar practice.

The Mussar weekend with Dr. Morinis—Mussar: Change Yourself, Change the World—will feature talks, text study, and experiential sessions. For a complete schedule or to register, go to jewishannarbor.org and click on the link for the Mussar weekend. For questions, email AnnArborMussarWeekend@gmail.com, or call Steve at 274-5185.

Have a heart—give blood

The Temple Beth Emeth Brotherhood is sponsoring a Red Cross blood drive in the social hall at TBE on Saturday, February 14. The theme is “Have a Heart—Give Blood.” The drive will run from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. and replaces the annual blood drive usually held on Mitzvah Day. The Brotherhood exceeded its goal in 2008 and would like to do the same this year.

Anyone who is age 17 or older, is in good health, weighs at least 110 pounds, and has not donated within 8 weeks of the drive is urged to donate. Sign up for an appointment at www.givelife.org: In the “Find a Blood Drive” box, type “tbe,” then, click on the link for “Temple Beth Emeth Genesis of Ann Arbor,” select an available time, and continue to the registration page.

February’s Kabbalat Shabbat discussion: Israel looking forward

Aura Ahuvia, special to the WJN

Post-Zionism (as distinct from anti-Zionism) is a buzzword in left-wing political circles in Israel and elsewhere. University of Michigan Professor Todd Endelman will explore the different meanings assigned to the term and how the very success of Zionism—in establishing a Jewish state and in creating a modern Hebrew culture—gave birth to the idea that Israel had entered a new stage in its history in which classical Zionism was no longer relevant.

Endelman, the William Haber Professor of Modern Jewish History, will be the featured speaker at the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah’s Kabbalat Shabbat Discussion Friday, February 13, from 6:15–7:45 p.m., at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County.

The Reconstructionist Havurah’s Kabbalat Shabbat Discussion is preceded by candle-lighting and a brief kiddush. It concludes with a song and sometimes a prayer. All are welcome to attend; no RSVP to the discussion is necessary. For more information, contact Aura Ahuvia, 975-9045 or auraahuvia@comcast.net.

Save the date for the JCC gala auction

Leslie Bash, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County will hold its bi-annual Goods and Services Auction on Saturday evening, March 28 at 7 p.m. Funds raised will be used to replace and insulate the JCC building’s roof. The theme of the evening will be “Raise the Roof” and will include live and silent auctions, a new “auction item raffle,” live music, and dinner catered by Simply Scrumptious Catering. The event will be held at the JCC and will be \$36 per person, which includes two auction item raffle tickets. The planning committee includes auction chairs Fran Martin and Pam Landau and committee members Sue Adler, Pat Binder, Eeta Gershow, Laurel Hern, Liz Kirschner, Elaine Margolis, Lisa Molnar, Ruth Petit, Swanna Saltiel, and Lisa Weiss. The committee is seeking donations of goods and services to be auctioned and volunteers to work on the effort. To volunteer, call Rachel Ricca at 971-0990 or email rachelricca@jccfed.org.

Seniors

February SPICE* of Life

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Merrill Poliner, special to the WJN

Mondays

9:30–11:30 a.m.: Music Appreciation and Exploration. Laura Dunbar, education and outreach director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra (and accomplished musician), teaches this eight-week class, which began January 12. To register or for more information, call Merrill at 971-0990.

Tuesdays

10 a.m.: The Bible in its Time with Dr. Liz Fried. February 3–March 24, Dr. Fried returns to the JCC to teach another semester of this popular class.

11 a.m.: Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar. \$4 per session, or 3 sessions for \$10

Noon: Dairy Lunch Buffet. \$3 per person

1 p.m.: Games and Activities. Join in for a variety of games and activities including mahjong, quilting, art projects, and other card games.

1 p.m.: Special Tuesday events (see below for details)

1:30 p.m.: Yiddish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group). Open to the public as well as University of Michigan faculty, staff, and students, all ages and levels welcome. Beanster’s Café, ground floor, Michigan League. Free. For more information, call 936-2367.

Thursdays

10 a.m.: Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar. \$4 per session, or 3 sessions for \$10

11 a.m.: Current Events with Heather Dombey. A Jewish perspective on this week’s news. Bring items of interest for group discussion.

Noon: Dairy Lunch Buffet. \$3 per person

1 p.m.: Thursday Special Events and Presentations (see below for details).

2:15 p.m.: Literary Group is not meeting in February. The group, lead by Sidney Warschausky, will resume on Thursday, March 5 with a discussion of *Cousin Bette* by Honoré de Balzac.

Fridays

1:30 p.m.: Yiddish Reading Group at the Jewish Community Center. February 6, 13, 20, and 27. Call Ray Juni for additional information at 761-2765.

Tuesday special events

February 3

Blood Pressure Clinic, 1 p.m.: A registered nurse from Care Response will take blood pressures, record them, and address any questions. Free. (This event will be repeated on the first Tuesday of each month.)

Thursday special events and presentations

February 5

12:30 p.m.: Birthday celebration for all with February birthdays! Bring your family and friends for lunch and birthday cake.

1 p.m.: Tomer Zur, Jewish Federation Shaliach (emissary) will present a program about Sderot, a western Negev city in the Southern District of Israel, currently under siege.

February 12

1 p.m.: Arie Lipsky, Maestro of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra and Laura Dunbar, Education and Outreach Director of the Ann Arbor Symphony, will present on music history, music appreciation and music in Ann Arbor.

February 19

12:30 p.m.: Allison Pollock, MSW, Jewish Family Services geriatric social worker will be available for discussion, questions, and assistance.

1 p.m.: Rabbi Kim Blumenthal of Beth Israel Congregation will present on a topic to be announced.

February 26

1 p.m.: Join in for on a walk down memory lane as the group watches excerpts from several *Seniors on Stage* performances.

Hadassah to host theater party

Judy Cohen, staff writer

Hadassah’s Annual Theater Party fundraising event will be held at Performance Network in downtown Ann Arbor, 120 East Huron, on Thursday evening, March 12. The 7 p.m. gathering will include appetizers and desserts. Men are also encouraged to attend. Since this is the last evening of the official previews, attendees will be able to join other theater goers in a critique of the play following the performance. The play is *A Feminine Ending*, by HBO writer Sarah Treem.

Quoting from the Performance Network promotional materials, the author “brings us this quirky and comic look at feminine choices in the new millennium. Recently graduated from a major conservatory, and with a rock-star boyfriend on the brink of mega-stardom, Amanda Blue’s ‘extraordinary life’ seems to be all mapped out. But when her mother calls her home for help with a marital crisis, Amanda’s grand plans unravel to make way for something

a bit more... original.”

Tickets for the play are \$25, with a portion of the price benefiting Hadassah. To reserve seats, mail your check to Judy Cohen at 2855 Heather Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Reservations must be received no later than March 1. All tickets will be distributed at the play. The theater is handicap accessible (indicate special seating requests when making your reservation). For more information, email judyrealty@aol.com or call 677-3426.



Inga Wilson as Amanda

Women

Jewish Women's Day of Learning

Laura Berger, special to the WJN

Spring is not too far off, and women across the community can look forward to a special event offered by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

During the summer months, a group of volunteers began to plan a day where women come together for learning and exploring the connections among their various backgrounds, cultures, and religious practices. The gathering will be held on Sunday, March 8, and is based on the model of the Jewish Women's Day of Learning, which was an institution in the Ann Arbor community for several years in the 1990s.

The theme of the day is "The Invisible Thread: Exploring the Connections Between Jewish Women." Those present will consider the intangible ties and collective consciousness that connect Jewish women despite, or perhaps due to, their diversity of experiences. Happy Feigelson, planning committee chair, explains that this event will be a chance "for women from all segments of the Jewish community of greater Ann Arbor to get together for a day of meaningful conversation about Jewish life. It is an opportunity to experience those 'invisible threads' that bind us to one another and to our Jewish heritage."

The day will begin with a buffet breakfast and time for attendees to meet and converse. The opening presentation will feature Danielle Abrams, performance artist and professor in the University of Michigan School of Art and Design, who will share a performance created especially for this audience. Participants will have a chance to attend the breakout session of their choice. Topics will include child-birth rituals across Jewish cultures, the increase in the

intermarriage rate and women's related efforts to strengthen their Jewish identities, a look at the book of Psalms as a means to express our emotions and desires, and re-examining the stereotype of the Jewish American Princess. Several session facilitators are fellows and faculty members from the University's Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, including the director of the Frankel Center, Deborah Dash Moore. The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor works with the Frankel Center to access the wealth of resources available in our local community.

Following the breakout sessions, all participants will reconvene for lunch catered by Chef Cari Herskovitz. The close of the event will also feature Cantor Annie Rose of Temple Beth Emeth, who will engage the attendees in music and song that reflect the day's theme.

Feigelson says she and the planning committee members will count the day as a success if "everyone has a chance to learn something new related to Jewish life, gain a new perspective on an old topic, meet and connect with some really interesting people, and have good conversation. At the end of the day, it is all about learning from each other and feeling good about being part of this Jewish community." ■

"The Invisible Thread: Exploring the Connections Between Jewish Women" will be held Sunday, March 8 from 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County (2935 Birch Hollow Dr.). Tickets are \$36 each, and include breakfast, lunch, and all of the day's activities. For more information or to reserve your place, visit www.jewishannarbor.org or contact Laura Berger at 677-0100, laura@jewishannarbor.org

TBE Sisterhood celebrates Shabbat with national speaker, Sharon Benoff

Andrea Ludwig, special to the WJN

On Friday, February 6, Sharon Benoff, vice-president of marketing and communications for the Women of Reform Judaism, will speak at Temple Beth Emeth's 7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service on the Torah portion, *B'shallach*. In an annual tradition, the members of the TBE sisterhood create and lead a Shabbat service on Shabbat Shira. This service will include music from Kol Halev, TBE's adult choir. Shabbat Dinner is offered at 6 p.m. at the cost of \$12.50 per person, and can be reserved on the TBE website, www.templebethemeth.org, during the week before the dinner.

Sharon Benoff will be leading Torah study and a workshop on leadership and marketing for area sisterhood members on Saturday, February 7, from 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Her visit to Michigan is part of a program of outreach and education to help strengthen local sisterhoods.

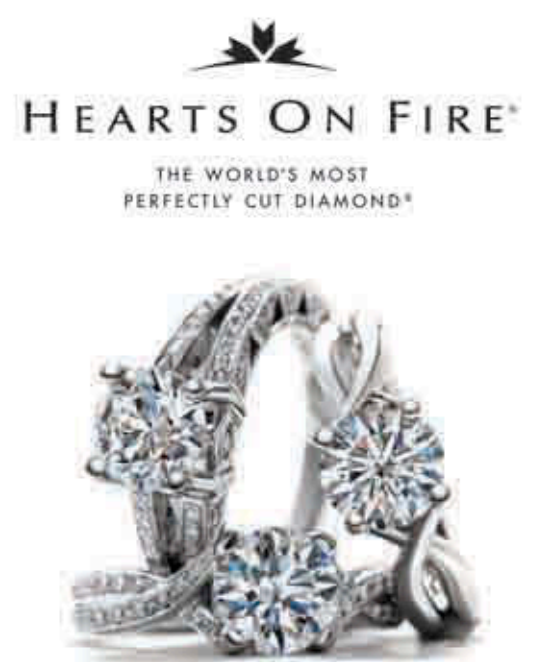
Sharon Benoff is from Newtown, Pennsylvania, and is an active member of Congregation Shir Ami. She has served on the executive committee of her synagogue as secretary, treasurer, and presently as a vice-president. Since 2003 Benoff has been serving on the board of directors of Women of Reform Judaism, which is the women's arm the Union for Reform Judaism (the central body of Reform Judaism in North America). She chaired the Biennial in 2003 and became



Sharon Benoff

a vice-president in 2004, serving local sisterhoods in the Atlantic District. She chaired the fundraising committee and, in 2006 and 2007, she chaired the Leadership Conference that was held in Atlanta, Georgia and Washington, DC. Presently, Benoff is a vice president of WRJ responsible for the Department of Marketing and Communication.

Benoff is also a member of Women's American ORT, ARZA, the Holocaust Museum, the Philadelphia Art Museum, and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia.



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These are extraordinary days of economic uncertainty, challenge and anxiety. But these are also days of extraordinary community unity and caring for one another.

As our Jewish Federation annual campaign comes to a close, it's clear that our community will not neglect the vulnerable who depend on our support now more than ever. Our traditions teach us no less – we are responsible for each other. We are committed to repairing the world.

Here in greater Ann Arbor, commitment conquers adversity. Generosity generates hope for the future, whatever challenges may come our way.

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NO GIFT TOUCHES MORE LIVES

Adult Education

Florence Melton Adult Mini-School—Ann Arbor's newest Jewish adult ed option

Julie Gales, special to the WJN

More adults than ever are hitting the books and heading back to the classroom. Adult learning programs are popping up across North America, in proportion to a growing demand. With this growing demographic, Leslie Bash, executive director of the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County, wanted to enhance the community's adult education offerings and she looked to the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School for help. The Melton Mini-School is dedicated to providing busy adults with a university-quality curriculum designed by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The unique, interactive, text-based format relates ancient wisdom to modern life. It only requires two hours a week and there are no prerequisites, no homework, and no exams! With 65 sites internationally, Melton is the largest pluralistic adult Jewish education network in the world.

Major support for the development of the Melton Mini-School came from a Humanitarian Award Dinner Grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and the a Small Communities Grant from the Covenant Foundation, a national Jewish philanthropic foundation whose mission is to support creative programming to strengthen educational endeavors that perpetuate Jewish heritage and identity. The Small Communities Grant was awarded to the Melton Adult Mini-School to introduce the Melton



program to small Jewish communities in North America. Bash knew that a community partnership was needed to ensure a successful venture. She sought out broad support and financial assistance of the Jewish community organizations in Washtenaw County. The response was overwhelming. Most of the Jewish congregations and educational or communal organizations in Ann Arbor have provided financial support to bring the Melton Mini-School here.

Melton is now an extremely successful part of Ann Arbor's Jewish adult education options. The first Melton class began in September 2008 with 29 students representing Ann Arbor's diverse Jewish community.

"Knowledge is empowering," said Julie Gales, Ann Arbor Melton Adult Mini-School director. "With it, you can learn who you are and how you fit into Jewish history and the spectrum of Jewish life. Ann Arbor alone has so many different kinds of Jewish communities. Melton's text-based format is a wonderful forum for all of us to wrestle with complex interpretations of Jewish practice."

The Melton curriculum is split into two concurrent, year-long courses during each of the two years. First-year students spend 30 classes each in "Rhythms of Jewish Living," which examines ideas and text central to the recurring Jewish rituals, and "Purposes of Jewish Living," which probes essential Jew-

ish theological concepts in the Bible, Talmud, and other sacred texts.

The second year is split between "Ethics of Jewish Living," in which students explore topics such as community, life, death, justice, and sexuality from a variety of Jewish perspectives, and "Dramas of Jewish Living Throughout the Ages," a historical look at the Jewish experience that features primary source texts.

"The mini-school has been a pioneer in adult Jewish learning," said Judy Kupchan, associate director of the Melton North American Division that is based in Chicago. "The two years at Melton gives students time to understand some of the things they have only absorbed small pieces of over time," according to Kupchan. Brad Axelrod, a current Melton student added, "It is a great experience to learn about the Jewish holidays, the calendar, and important texts, and concepts as an adult Jew. Melton is a great opportunity to go beyond the introductions I have had to all of these topics in the past. This program has allowed my Jewish education to both deepen and broaden at the same time."

To learn more about the Melton Mini-School program or to audit one of the classes, contact Julie Gales, Melton Mini-School director and JCC Jewish Cultural Arts and Education director, at 971-0990 or julie-gales@jccfed.org ■

JLI offers You Be the Judge, part two

Rabbi Altar Goldstein, special to the WJN

Other peoples have told their stories through music or monuments, or have expressed themselves in poetry and philosophy. But for over a thousand years, many believe that the most important cultural activity of the Jewish people has been the study of the Talmud, elevated to an art form, the pinnacle of their intellectual achievement.

"Perhaps you have been curious about the Talmud, but thought it was complex and inaccessible to anyone but scholars of the law," says Rabbi Aharon Goldstein of Ann Arbor Chabad House, "Perhaps you thought you needed to understand Aramaic or Hebrew to take part in the discussion. Not any more. Participants need no prior knowledge of the Talmud and no formal legal training. There are no prerequisites other than an open mind."

In response to the incredibly successful turnout in 2006 for You Be The Judge, an interactive course allowing students to explore the Talmud's thinking about civil law, the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute will launch You Be the Judge II.

"Even students who did not attend You Be the Judge will enjoy this course," says Rabbi Goldstein. "It includes six brand-new case studies that allow participants to pit their wits against some of the best minds in history."

You Be the Judge II presents students with real cases brought before *beit din*, the court system of Jewish law, and compares Talmudic analysis with the contemporary approach taken in US courts. Topics include business ethics, property rights, and employment practices, and each lesson provides an opportunity to question, discuss, and argue, based on principle and precedent. You Be The Judge II allows attendees

to challenge conventional notions of right and wrong, and experience firsthand the exhilarating mental exploration that characterizes traditional Talmud study.

Says local JLI coordinator Dr. Paul Shapiro, "If your mother always said you should have been a lawyer, this course is for you. If you have a reputation for thinking differently and creatively, this course is for you. If the only thing you like more than a clever line is an even wittier comeback, than this course is for you."

The course will be offered at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County and the Chabad House for six Wednesdays, starting February 18. "The course costs \$75," says Rabbi Goldstein, "but we are so sure that you will enjoy it that we invite you to attend the first lesson free, with no obligation."

"What will you gain by taking this course?" asks Rabbi Goldstein. "A chance to discover why the Talmud has been so cherished by our people,

a chance to observe the most brilliant minds of our history in heated debate, a chance to experience the traditional Jewish training ground for mental acuity, and a chance to add your voice to the voices that span the millennia." ■

The Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) is the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch. JLI's classes and programs are offered at over 300 locations in more than 250 cities nationwide and internationally. JLI classes have been attended by over 100,000 people since its creation in 1998. Every course offered by JLI is synchronized so that lessons are offered concurrently in all locations. This unique feature has helped to create a true global learning community.

Visit www.myJLI.com for up-to-date information about You Be The Judge II.

JLI courses are presented in Ann Arbor under the auspices of Ann Arbor Chabad House



Some of the attendees gather at the JCC during the JLI fall course titled "Soul Maps"

Course syllabus

Lesson 1: Inheriting the Fruits of Sin

Can murderers inherit from their victims? This act of chutzpah is recorded in the Bible, and still crops up in court today. This lesson compares the approaches of Jewish and secular law to this audacious claim.

Lesson 2: The Accidental Treasure

Your contractor demolishes a bathroom wall and discovers a rusting lockbox containing cash. You had no idea there was money stashed in the wall of your hundred-year-old house, and your home has passed through many hands, making it impossible to determine the original owner. Who gets to enjoy this unexpected windfall?

Lesson 3: Will the Real Owner Please Rise?

You bought and paid for a car, but when you come to pick it up, it is already gone from the showroom. The absent-minded salesman sold the same car to two people and is unable to remember to whom he sold it first. Is there any way out of this quagmire?

Lesson 4: The Neighbor Advantage

Jewish law dictates that when a property is sold, the neighbors must be given the first option of purchase. Must one sell to their neighbor if there is a higher bidder? And just who is considered a neighbor in this context?

Lesson 5: You're Fired!

Under what circumstances can one legally fire an employee? When one terminates employment, is there any ethical obligation to provide severance or compensation?

Lesson 6: The Arm-Twister

An old business partner, who wants to buy your house, threatens to reveal information that could lead to your arrest if you do not sell it to him. If you agree to a sale under duress, is the sale valid and binding?

Report from the Ann Arbor-Israel mission

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

This past November, nine Ann Arbor community leaders spent a week in Israel participating in the United Jewish Community's General Assembly and conducting site visits to programs and agencies funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

Participants included Susan Fisher (Federation president) and her husband, John Waidley; Joan Lowenstein (Federation past-president) and Jonathan Trobe (past campaign co-chair); Herb Aronow (2009 campaign co-chair) and Stefanie Aronow (past Young Adult Division co-chair); Ron Perry (executive director of the Michigan Israel Business Bridge); and David Shtulman (Federation executive director). Eileen Freed, director of Israel/Overseas & Community Relations, coordinated and staffed the trip.

General Assembly

The General Assembly, also known as the GA, is an annual event during which participants from Federations across North America and Jewish leaders from Israel and around the world gather as a Jewish community for a common purpose. Featured speakers included:

- Shimon Peres, who spoke of the potential Israel has to develop and share its expertise in the areas of alternative energy, water conservation, medicine, and home security in order to ensure its economic and political success
- Nir Barkat, newly elected mayor of Jerusalem, who spoke of the challenges in making Jerusalem the world-class city it should and can be
- Stanley Fisher, governor of the Bank of Israel, who spoke about the factors contributing to the relative strength of Israel's economy and the longer-term challenges of poverty and education that are essential to address to continue Israel's recent successes
- Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and candidates for Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and Tzipi Livni.

In addition to the plenary sessions, participants had the opportunity to participate in a variety of smaller programs and informative meetings with representatives from the Federation's primary overseas funding recipients, the Jewish Agency (JAFI) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Susan Fisher "found the sessions interesting and worthwhile, especially the JAFI and JDC meetings." A highlight of the GA was the day-long field trips exploring all aspects of Israel society. Members of the group participated in programs with a range of goals, including Israel Advocacy, which entailed a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Israel's Cultural Melting Pot, in which participants were exposed to Bukharan, Yemenite, and Ethiopian cultures.

Making new friends: Shabbat at Moshav Nahal

Since last fall, the Ann Arbor Jewish community, in conjunction with the Michigan Partnership 2000 project, has been developing a cooperative relationship with Moshav Nahal, an agricultural community near Nazareth. One of the most successful aspects of the partnership has been the warm hospitality the members of Nahal have shown members of the Ann Arbor community who have visited over the past year. Mission participants received the

same warm welcome.

The Nahal Shabbat experience began with a beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat service with Nigun Ha'Lev, a community congregation based in Nahalal that aims at "renewing Jewish traditions with a unique Israeli style." The members of the congregation are secular Israelis, and the service and singing were unusually spirited and spiritual. "The service at Nigun Ha'Lev was one of the most uplifting, beautiful spiritual services I have experienced anywhere" said David Shtulman. Shabbat meals were spent with host families who made their guests feel as though they were family. Stefanie and Herb Aronow found the experience particularly meaningful. "I didn't know what to expect, but I found I had so much in common with my host family. Even though we live in different countries, we struggle with the same issues of Jewish identity and how to transmit our values to the next generation. We left the evening as dear friends."

On Saturday, the group spent the day touring the village. They were astounded by how much there is to do in such a small community. Rain did little to dampen spirits as they visited sheep and chickens; enjoyed a picnic (under the roof of an unused chicken shed);



Stefanie Aronow, Joan Lowenstein, and Susan Fisher in the Strauss family sheep shed.

sampled organic cosmetics developed, manufactured, and sold at Nahalal; planted an olive tree in Nahalal's Ann "Arbor"; and enjoyed a home cooked meal with members of Nahalal's Community-to-Community committee.

Covenant of Partnership

In order to provide formality to the Ann Arbor-Nahalal relationship, the Nahalal com-



Stefanie and Herb Aronow plant an olive tree in the Ann Arbor arbor at Moshav Nahal.

mittee performed a beautiful ceremony during which members of Nahalal, the Ann Arbor mission group, and a representative from the Jewish Agency signed a "Covenant of Partnership."

The program, attended by over 50 people and including remarks from Nahalal's general secretary and the mayor of the Jezreel Valley, demonstrated the community's commitment to strengthening the warm relationship between the two communities with the goal of strengthening "Jewish identity and Zionism among youths, adults, individuals, families, women, and men of both Nahalal and Ann Arbor." Susan Fisher summed up the feelings of all those who participated: "Marvelous—the people were so friendly and the ceremony was just lovely. It was really one of the most special times of the entire trip."

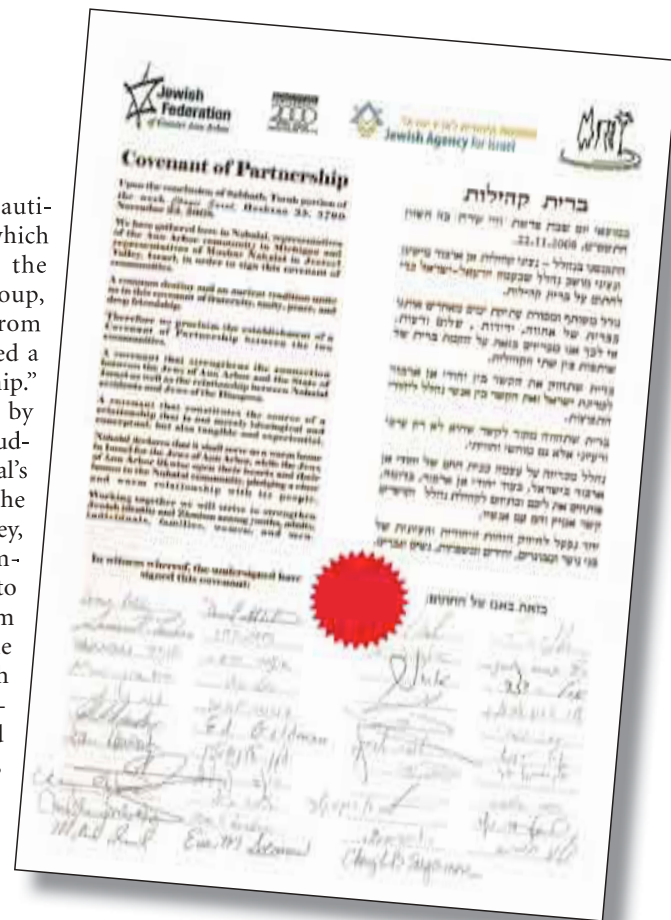
Site visits: A first-hand look at the Ann Arbor community's efforts in Israel

The third leg of the mission was devoted to visiting agencies and programs funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Annual Campaign. Joan Lowenstein felt "these were really important" because of the opportunity to see first-hand the work being done with our contributions.

The group visited a support group for Ethiopian women of Christian origin who have been abused by their spouses. This group, coordinated and funded by SELAH: Israel Crisis Management Center, has provided these women who have no relatives or community in Israel, a sense of family and belonging.

At Kibbutz Sarid, near Nazareth, members of the mission participated with Arab and Jewish fourth graders who were experiencing their first encounter of the year under the auspices and guidance of A New Way. These encounters will continue throughout the year and provide a safe environment to learn about and befriend one another. A visit to the Galil School, part of the Hand-in-Hand educational network, demonstrated a different model of co-existence in which students are fully integrated throughout the school day and year. Because of the daily interaction, these young Arab and Jewish Israelis are able to develop closer and more natural relationships that extend beyond the classroom.

Most missions do not visit Arab communities, but this group had the unique opportunity to visit Sakhnin, an Arab town near Karmiel, and home to many Arab students at the Galil School. In addition to a brief tour of the town, the group visited the local environmental center and learned about a leadership-development program for Arab



Covenant signed by representatives of Moshav Nahalal and the Ann Arbor Jewish community.

and Jewish leaders initiated by the Pittsburgh Federation's Partnership 2000 program.

This year, Federation provided matching funds for the construction of a solar energy system at LOTEM: Integrated Nature Studies. This organization provides people with all abilities to experience nature and learn about agriculture and the environment. The visit included a short walk on a fully accessible trail and time at the educational farm where the solar energy project will allow more extensive programming.

Mission participants saw first-hand how the JDC's PACT program (Parents and Children Together) provides resources and programming aimed at closing the education gap between Ethiopian children and native Israelis. They visited an optional pre-school for two and three year-olds, where Ethiopian children receive early exposure to organized education, and a Gan (mandatory pre-school for four and five year-olds), where PACT offers specialized enrichment to the Gan program in the areas of literacy and math, and supplements teaching staff to allow for small-group learning.

The group visited the Jaffa Institute, where the Welfare-to-Work program gives women receiving food aid job training, including telemarketing, computer skills, and workplace etiquette. Upon completion of the

continued on next page



Two young Arab students who spoke with the group at the Galil School

A community joins together

David Shtulman, special to the WJN

On December 11, 2008, 600 members of the Jewish community came together for the Jewish Federation's Main Event. Gathering this many people from a Jewish community the size of Washtenaw County's for any purpose other than the memorial of a national catastrophe, is virtually unknown. The fact that this number is only a few percentage points higher than the average annual attendance for this event speaks to the enormous pride and solidarity of the Ann Arbor Jewish Community.

I may have been one of the few people in the room who was attending the Main Event for the first time. While I knew in advance what the numbers would be, I was unable to understand the feelings it would engender until I actually experienced it. To stand at the front of the room and look out at a crowd that size and know that every facet of the community was represented, every congregation, Jewish organization and agency, community leaders and those who are only marginally active in the community, teens to seniors. Everyone wanted to be included in this celebration of Jewish solidarity.

The evening really was a celebration. It began with streaming quotations from attendees expressing what Jewish community means to them on two 12-foot screens while a klezmer band played in the background. After singing the American and Israeli national anthems, there were welcome statements from event co-chairs, Judie and Jerry Lax, and Federation



Noah Tobes, Noah Trobe, Alex Perlman, Michelle Silver, Rebecca Friedman, and Carly Weiss

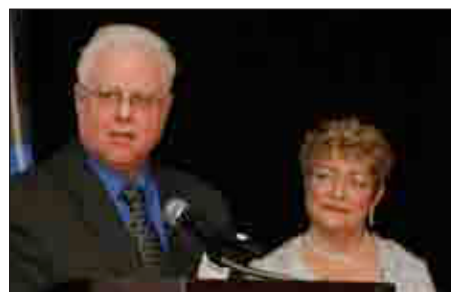
President Susan Fisher. Next Jim Graham, representing the Ford Motor Company Fund, (which generously sponsors the Main Event each year) spoke about how it is one of the most meaningful events he attends each year and pledged continuing support.

We remembered the victims of terror in Mumbai and showed a brief video of children reading a story about the hope for peace and reconciliation between Arabs and Jews, written by Gilad Shalit when he was only 11 years old. It was the 900th day of captivity for Gilad, who is being held by Hamas. We spoke to the global nature of the Jewish community, our global responsibility, and of the special rela-

tionship that is growing each day between our Jewish community and Moshav Nahalal through the Partnership 2000 program.

Steven and Joyce Gerber received the Spirit of the Federation Award in recognition of their extraordinary commitment to volunteerism in the community. In their acceptance speech, Steve Gerber urged the audience to volunteer their time as well as their dollars, "Don't give until it hurts, give until it feels good." They received a standing ovation.

Federation Campaign Director Jeff Lazor said that while the people present at the Main Event were neither hungry nor cold, we all have friends, neighbors, and fellow Jews around the world who face that situation due to the global recession, and those people



Steven and Joyce Gerber receiving their Spirit of the Federation Award

count on the services provided by our Annual Campaign. He asked, "When we look back years from now at how we responded to to-



Randy Friedman (Main Event Pre-Glow dinner chair), David Shtulman, and Judie Lax (Main Event co-chair)

day's needs, will we be proud of what we did? Will we wish we had done more?"

Then the other set of event co-chairs, Robin and Brad Axelrod, introduced Mara Liasson, whose informative and delightful presentation, which included a Q&A moderated by Campaign Co-chair Herb Aronow, went on for nearly an hour. It could have easily gone longer, but she had agreed to do a special closed session for the teens in the audience.

When Campaign Co-chair Gary Freed closed the meeting by announcing that the total dollars contributed by the attendees at the Main Event was \$650,000, it was the final proof that Ann Arbor's is truly a special Jewish community. ■

David Shtulman is the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.



The mission group spent a Shabbat meal in Jerusalem at the home of former U-M Hillel Assistant Director, Rabbi Rich Kirschen and family.

continued from previous page

course, participants work for the Jaffa Institute as fundraising telemarketers, and have raised over \$20,000, most of which goes to pay for their own salaries. Major companies have made arrangements with the Jaffa Institute to hire women who have completed the training program.

The group ended their site visits at the Ramla Mediation Center. Ramla is a dramatically heterogeneous community comprised of 70,000 inhabitants (23% Arab and 27% new immigrants). The immigrant population includes Bukharans, Ethiopians, and South Americans. At the Mediation Center, the group met volunteers from all backgrounds who mediate a range of disputes including those referred from the courts and child welfare agencies. A focus of the center is to incorporate the traditional mediation mechanisms

from various ethnic groups with new mediation techniques to increase the effectiveness and authority of the decisions.

Impressions

There are many ways to see Israel, but those who participated in the mission came away from the experience with insights and opportunities not always available to tourists. When asked if she would participate in another mission or recommend it to her friends, Susan Fisher said, "Absolutely; I have already told various friends that this is the way to 'see' Israel. I can't imagine going on another trip to Israel if it doesn't offer a 'mission component.' It was a truly outstanding and memorable experience." ■

Eileen Freed is director of Israel/Overseas and Community Relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

YAD Singles

Tina Gargotta, special to the WJN

More than 20 local Jewish Singles came out to YAD's first event of the 2009 year, Mixology and Mingle, on January 6. Attendees gathered at the Firefly Club, a popular jazz spot and bar, to learn how to mix martini drinks with a licensed bartender, participate in a fun mixer game, and spend time mingling over drinks and appetizers. Most of the group stayed for the bar's monthly comedy night, Firefly Funnies. Mixology and Mingle was co-sponsored by the Beth Israel Congregation and Temple Beth Emeth.

Join YAD once again at the Firefly Club on January 31 for a special performance by Israeli



Jewish Singles mingling over cosmopolitans

musician Anat Cohen (www.anatcohen.com). For more information about YAD events, contact Tina Gargotta, YAD coordinator, at 677-0100 or tina@jewishannarbor.org

ATID Leadership Program launched in January

Tina Gargotta, special to the WJN

On January 8, The ATID (Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions) Leadership Program, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, launched with guest speaker Deborah Grayson Reigel, of Elevated Training and MyJewishCoach.com fame. Reigel is a national trainer both for Jewish organizations and Fortune 500 companies, assisting boards and individuals to reach their leadership potential.

This initial workshop, "Profile of a Jewish Leader," took the 26 participants on a journey through their personal Jewish experiences and highlighted potential for Jewish leadership. In addition, attendees were given a chance to ex-



Deborah Grayson Reigel

plore the individual characteristics and values that make them good leaders.

Co-chaired by Hillary Murt and Joan Lowenstein, the ATID Program brings together leaders from several local Jewish groups for a series of eight leadership-development workshops designed to augment the special skills needed to be an effective Jewish organizational leader. Each session will be lead by an expert in the field and be interactive in nature. In the hope of facilitating further connections within the community, the Jewish Federation is willing to continue to accept enrollees to the program, and to accept Jewish communal staff as well as lay leaders.

For more information about the ATID Leadership Program, contact Tina Gargotta, YAD Coordinator for the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, at 677-0100 or tina@jewishannarbor.org

Over 250 gather to show support for peace for Israel

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

Over 250 people gathered at Ann Arbor's Jewish Community Center on Sunday, January 11 to express support for Israel and for peace for Israelis and Palestinians. The Community Gathering for Peace for Israel was coordinated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and was supported by all of Ann Arbor's Jewish congregations and organizations. The program included remarks from David Shtulman, the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and prayers from the rabbis of Ann Arbor's largest congregations and the pastor of St. Clare's Episcopal Church.

It "was a really nice event... It was wonderful how so many different parts of the community spoke, sang, and led prayers," said Audrey Newell, board chair of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah.

The gathering was an opportunity for those who support Israel's right to defend her citizens from terrorist rocket attacks targeted at civilians to call for peace for all the residents of the area and to send a message that peace will come when Hamas halts its attacks. Shtulman stated "the battle that is taking place today is one that Hamas insisted upon. As usual, when Israel finally responds in defence of its citizens, the

world suddenly finds its voice. The Community Gathering for Peace for Israel gives our community a platform to have our voice heard. Silence on this issue will otherwise be seen as agreement with those who condemn us."

Speakers at the event expressed concern for both Israelis and innocent Palestinians who have found themselves on the front lines. In his remarks, Shtulman said "I bring to my remarks regrets for every human being, Palestinian or Israeli, killed or injured..." but that the blame lays squarely with Hamas for refusing to cease attacks and for using civilians as human shields.

Program participants had the opportunity



to write greetings and messages of support to Israelis under fire in southern Israel. Following the program, local peace organization Brit Tzedek v'Shalom offered a listening session for those who wished to express their feelings about the current situation and share ideas for bringing peace to the region. ■

Remarks by David Shtulman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, at Gathering for Peace for Israel

It is difficult to stand here today and speak to you about solidarity with Israel and about Israel's desire for peace following two weeks of bombing and ground invasion that has wrought the deaths of hundreds of people and the wounding of thousands more. I know that for many people, to even try to do so would be proof that I am either a fascist or divorced from reality.

And yet, to paraphrase a recent article by David Breakstone, I do just that with many regrets but not a single apology. I bring to my remarks regrets for every human being, Palestinian or Israeli, killed or injured in this battle, but not one apology for the battle itself, or for how it is being fought. I argue that the only country in the world that was helpless to prevent this battle was Israel.

Israel has acted to bring to a halt a rocket barrage of many years on its civilian population. I will not ask Israel to apologize for that. I would rather demand apologies of Israel for not doing so. Because a government that deliberately exposes its civilian population to danger is no better than Hamas. That is exactly what Hamas does. It offers its citizens martyrdom by Israel.

Perhaps Israel could have acted differently. Perhaps, it could have sought accommodation with the Palestinians more aggressively. What if Israel would have accepted the Oslo Accords and allowed a PLO terror infrastructure isolated in Tunisia to establish a pre-state government in the West Bank and Gaza, called the Palestinian Authority, and armed it so that it could itself prevent terror and establish a Palestinian state living in peace alongside Israel?

But Israel did do that. And when the opportunity to create that Palestinian state came to pass, instead there came a second intifada. As Yossi Klein Halevi pointed out, while the first intifada pit stone-throwing Palestinian civilians against armed Israeli soldiers, the second intifada pit armed and explosive laden Palestinian soldiers against Israeli civilians.

I suppose that several years ago, when Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and those other Iranian proxies started firing those crude homemade Kassam rockets that could fly only a couple miles and could hardly hurt you unless they actually landed on your head and knocked you unconscious, that Israel could have gotten the message that occupying Gaza was not a good idea and left.

But they did that back in 2005 didn't they? Every last soldier and every last settlement and every last civilian and every last synagogue and every last house. The only things they left behind were the operating greenhouses that had provided a living for hundreds of Palestinians as

well as Israelis, but most of those were gone in a short time too. And by 2007, so was the Palestinian Authority. First, due to a Hamas victory at the polls, and then on the battlefield.

Israel had been gone for nearly two years by then, but somehow it was still Israel's fault. Critics said it wasn't enough that Israel had left Gaza, they had failed to do so in a way that would meet Palestinian needs.

Now, those crude homemade Kassams, while still very inaccurate, could carry much larger charges for much longer distances and were joined by their more powerful cousins, the Katyushas and Grads, which had immigrated through the tunnels because there was no longer an Israeli presence to hinder such developments, and the international observers who were supposed to guard against just such an eventuality had disappeared within days of Hamas defeating the Palestinian Authority. Instead of falling on only the people of Sderot, just outside of Gaza, they could now also reach Ashkelon and other communities totaling more than 200,000 civilians. And they fell by the thousands.

The nations of the world didn't pay very much attention to those "crude homemade rockets" because few Israelis died and the wounded don't count for the foreign media. But they count for Israelis. And the Israelis counted 227 people wounded by Kassams in 2006, and 464 wounded by Kassams in 2007, and 948 wounded by Kassams in 2008 with eight killed, to be exact.

Also, the nations of the world may not have believed it was serious to have only 15 seconds to respond to a Red Alert Rocket Warning, which can come at any time of day or night, but Israelis did. They thought it was serious indeed when it became illegal to wear a seatbelt or use your car radio in Sderot because it might delay you a couple seconds from fleeing your car for a shelter; or when people became afraid to sleep or to shower when home alone because they might not hear the siren right away; or when every home had to add a concrete reinforced room to shelter in. Israelis took that quite seriously indeed.

But even so, did Israel really have to launch these deadly air strikes? Couldn't they have tried economic pressures like closing the border crossings or more limited attacks on rocket launching crews or even holding back oil deliveries or cutting off electricity? Yes, they could and they did.

But instead of acting to pressure Hamas to end the rocket attacks, the United Nations accused Israel of collective punishment and war crimes. Would we be at the point we are at to-

day if the United Nations had acted to stop the actual war crimes being carried out by Hamas instead of characterizing Israeli defensive steps as war crimes?

And finally, when Israel was desperate to stop the shelling of her civilians, she agreed to a six-month *tahadiya*, a lull in the fighting, to be exact. That is the term that Hamas uses because a Jihadi organization whose very existence is predicated on resistance to the very last Palestinian can never enter into anything as substantial as a true cease-fire without betraying its core beliefs. And, to be honest, the *tahadiya* enjoyed moderate success for about four and a half months, until the rockets began to fly again in early November.

By December it was clear that quiet needed to be re-imposed or the Israeli strike that had been threatened off and on for years was going to come. The Israelis asked Hamas to renew the *tahadiya* for another six months. The Saudis urged them to do so. The Egyptians and the Palestinian Authority warned them. Hamas would not listen and on December 19 they unilaterally declared an end to the *tahadiya* and increased their launches to a peak of 90 on Christmas Day alone. And we learned that the rockets they acquired during the *tahadiya* now have a range of nearly 30 miles and place more than 800,000 Israelis within range.

It seems self-evident to me that every time Israel has made a concession for peace, peace has moved further into the distance. The actions of Hamas since the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza have made it impossible for Israel to consider any further territorial concessions so long as Hamas continues to exist as a force in Palestinian society. We all know that there will never be a two-state solution unless Israel makes further territorial concessions in the West Bank and therefore, there will never be peace or a Palestinian state as long as Hamas remains in power.

The Palestinian people are not occupied by Israel. They are occupied by Hamas, and the only people on Earth who can change that are the Palestinians.

Israel cannot control the corruption in the Palestinian Authority that led to the popular election of Hamas. And Israel cannot destroy Hamas because you cannot destroy an ideology. And Israel cannot completely stop the firing of rockets in the future. So what then is the purpose of all this carnage?

The purpose is to put an end to delusions and to assign responsibility. To end the delusions of Hamas that they have been able to shell Israeli cities with impunity for so long due to Israeli fear

and weakness rather than Israeli restraint; and to end the delusions of the Palestinians that Hamas' agenda of Jihad offers them a path to a better future. The Palestinians should have no doubt that the only future continuing to support Hamas' agenda of rejecting Israel's existence holds for them is repeated episodes of the same.

If Hamas deserves any credit, it is for being absolutely forthright in its agenda to destroy the State of Israel. As critics of Israel are so quick to point out, Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinian people in Gaza. But democratic elections do not justify the platform of the winning party. Did the Palestinians in Gaza truly believe that resistance was a one-way street, and that rockets could fly forever in only one direction? The Palestinians are one of the very few Arab people who enjoy free elections today. They are learning that they must take responsibility for their electoral choices and there can be consequences for choosing poorly.

Do I have regrets for the dead and wounded and suffering of the last two weeks? Yes, I certainly do. Do I have any apologies? Not a one.

But I do demand apologies. I demand an apology from the United Nations, created to promote peace and security among the nations of the world, and which itself created the State of Israel by a vote of the community of nations, for not standing up against those who openly profess to destroy Israel.

I demand an apology from those nations of the world who, for years, could have been pressuring Hamas to end its rocket fire and instead censored Israel for every attempt to stop it.

I demand an apology from those Europeans who, in their cynical pandering to their Arab communities, excuse every Hamas aggression and interpret every Israeli defense as genocide.

I demand an apology from the media, who either outright lie, like France 2 TV, which on January 1 aired a 2005 videotape of a Hamas missile truck exploding with voiceover commentary describing a current Israeli air strike (for which they had to publicly apologize), or who distort the news by always blaming Israel for Palestinian actions in an attempt to be "balanced" in their coverage.

And I demand an apology from the Arab world for refusing to accept the legitimate right of Jews to live alongside them in peace in the Middle East as friends and neighbors and Semitic cousins. For that is all that Jews ever wanted from the beginning of the Zionist movement.

I want to thank all of you for being here today in a showing of support for Israel and understanding that peace can only arrive when all sides to the conflict hold it as a goal. ■

First Baptist Church Middle East peace conference, an interfaith event

Tamar Weaver, special to the WJN

The theme of the 2008 Morikawa Conference held November 8–10, 2008, in Ann Arbor was: “In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, how can Jews, Christians, and Muslims make religion part of the solution, instead of part of the problem?” The annual conference is named for Jitsuo Morikawa, an Ann Arbor-based American Baptist theologian. The First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor maintains an endowment fund to support events in his name.

The event was co-sponsored by 36 Christian, Jewish, Islamic and interfaith organizations. The Jewish congregations involved were Temple Beth Emeth, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom Ann Arbor, and Beth Israel Congregation (the full list of event sponsors is available online: www.morikawaconference.org/about/).

Opening statements were delivered by three rabbis, three imams, and three ministers, who then led separate break-out groups, on how to advance the support of peace in our community.

Rabbi Robert Levy, of Temple Beth Emeth, told the story of Jacob and Esau's reconciliation. Jacob felt fear toward his brother and prepared for a possible battle when meeting him, but Esau hugged him. Esau's actions are to be noted and appreciated for his ability to forgive and embrace a foe. The audience appreciated the story and the analogy to the Palestinians situation. Rabbi Nathan Martin (Hillel Foun-

dation), talked about the issue of religious Jewish extremism. He said that Jews should ally themselves with Jewish streams that believe in treating human beings with decency.

Finally, Rabbi Robert Dobrusin (Beth Israel Congregation) started by saying that he cannot represent the thoughts of all of the members, “but I am going to try to speak not only for myself, but for many people in our Jewish community.” Dobrusin went on to remind participants of Yitzhak Rabin, who took a stand in favor of a compromise with the Palestinians. He said that those who believe in compromise, in the two-state solution, in peace, and believe that the occupation should end, should speak up. Jews are reluctant to criticize Israel, but there are many Israelis that want the same. Dobrusin continued, “We want others to hear the stories of Jews who fled to Israel and of Israeli victims of terrorism, but we need to listen to the stories of the other side, people who fled from their homes and families, who live in fear of dehumanizing checkpoints.” He concluded, “We want peace because we love the State of Israel, and we know that her security and existence depends upon reaching a settlement.”

The participating imams were Sayed Hassan Al-Qaswini (Islamic Center of America), Achmat Salie (Oakland University), and Dawud Walid (Chairman of the Michigan Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations). Walid said that Muslims have legitimate grievances, but cannot resolve them through ille-

gitimate means, such as harming civilians. The response should be through education about the true nature of Islam. He said that zealous extreme terrorists are criminals antithetical to the spiritual values of Islam. He added, “Jihad terror is a false jihad.” Imam Salie said that the religions seems strong from the outside, but inside they are vulnerable and feel like victims.

The participating ministers—Douglas Brouwer (First Presbyterian Church), Lori Carey (Trinity Lutheran Church), Joe Summers (Episcopal Church of the Incarnation)—stressed the need for community discussions for better understanding each other.

The following day was the main event, featuring three speakers: Rabbi Marc Gopin, Msgr. Elias Chacour, and Dr. Ingrid Mattson. In his speech, Rabbi Gopin—a professor of world religions and the director of the Center on Religion, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University—said that for too long international relations have been pursued largely by distributing weaponry and lobbying exclusively for one side or the other in Middle East conflicts. That approach to the conflict has thus far failed. He suggested that people-to-people relations are more efficient. People can overcome entrenched enmity by working together to improve education and health care. He added that building relationships between people can foster serious social change. Peacemaking, he said, is about personal relationships with honor, equality, ethics, integrity, and love.

Gopin was followed by Msgr. Elias Chacour, a Christian Palestinian who lives in Israel and is the Archbishop of Galilee for the Melkite Church. Chacour called for nations to stop sending bombs and money to fund the war. According to Chacour, people can do more good by encouraging grassroots dialogue than by zealous activism on behalf of only one side in the conflict. Most important, in his opinion, is working to meet and understand Jewish, Christian, and Muslim people, building a growing global community of people who understand the human issues on a more personal level.

The final speaker was Dr. Ingrid Mattson, a professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. In 2006, she became the first woman elected president of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Dr. Mattson spoke about the need of the American Muslim community to shout to be heard, and their lack of self-awareness. It is a group with divergent interests, land, citizenship, rights, and spiritual interests. She said that people should be able to interpret their own scriptures and the religious leadership needs to change their vision of the future to include peaceful coexistence. ■

“Three international voices describe peacemaking in an era of global change” (posted at Read the Spirit, <http://www.readthespirit.com/explore/2008/11/296-three-inter.html>) contributed to this article.

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SUN, FEB 15 | 4 PM [NOTE TIME]

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The company presents two different full-length programs. *Three* (Saturday, contains nudity) is an expansive work of astounding physical exploits and unexpected humor that lays bare its dancers' unique kinetic abilities, performed to music ranging from Bach's Goldberg Variations to Brian Eno and the Beach Boys. *Deca Dance* (Sunday) celebrates 10 years of Naharin's work with Batsheva, with sections of existing dances reorganized into a new experience, providing the opportunity to look at the choreographer's repertoire over time, from its most extravagant to its most intimate and heartrending.



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The Saturday performance is co-sponsored by Gloria and Jerry Abrams and Prue and Ami Rosenthal.

The Sunday performance is sponsored by The Herbert and Junia Doan Foundation.

Funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts.

Media Sponsors Metro Times, Between the Lines, Michigan Radio 91.7 FM, and Detroit Jewish News.

Congregations

February at Beth Israel Congregation

Elliot Sorkin, special to the WJN

Bet Midrash

Beginning February 10 and continuing on Tuesday evenings (8 p.m.) through March 31, Rabbi Dobrusin and Rabbi Blumenthal will offer an innovative learning opportunity to study Contemporary Issues in *Halakha* (Jewish law). Study will be done in *havrutot* (pairs), and conclude with a larger group discussion. The study topics include: “Musical Instruments in the Synagogue,” the last couple decades have seen significant growth in musical accompaniment to services on Shabbat and holidays in a many synagogues that consider themselves to be bound by *halakha*. Often there are a wide array of instruments, and sometimes even “rock bands” performing. Can these developments be justified by Jewish law? “Hekhshe Tzedek,” should a *kashrut* certificate attest only to the technical aspects of how an animal was slaughtered? To what extent are business practices a religious issue? Before issuing the seal of approval, should *kashrut* agencies also investigate the corporate integrity, working conditions, product development, and environmental impact of the business at hand? “Intellectual Property,” can you steal it if you can’t touch it? Is it stealing to copy or download music, videos, software, or other forms of intellectual property without paying for it?

All texts will be available in English. There is no prior knowledge required to join this class. Register for this free learning opportunity by contacting Mary at rabbisoffice@bethisrael-aa.org or 665-9897.

Monday Evening Text Study

This free drop-in class on “Jewish Perspectives on the Beginning and End of Time” examines speculative and subjective *midrashic* and *aggadic* texts (non-legal rabbinic exposition of the Torah) concerning the Story of Creation and the coming of the Messiah, the end of days, and the “world to come,” as well as contemporary authors who have based themselves on these texts. The texts are studied in

both English and Hebrew, but no knowledge of Hebrew is required. These classes will take place on February 2, 9, and 23.

Tot Shabbat

Tot Shabbat is a Saturday morning service for parents and their children two through five years-old, held on February 14 and 28 at 11:15 a.m. The service includes songs, stories, and prayers. This program is run by Peretz Hirshbein on the second Saturday of each month and Jessica Kander on the fourth Saturday of each month. Preschool-sized tables are set up for the regular kiddush, so that families may easily attend with their children.

Kehilat Shabbat: “Big Ten”

This is part of a new series of themed programs for K–fifth-graders, which takes place this month on February 14 at 11 a.m. Children are encouraged to wear their favorite “Big Ten” team colors while learning about the famous “Big Ten” from the Torah. Next month, on March 14, the theme is “Dancing with the Prayers.”

Childcare, Junior Congregation

Childcare is provide for preschool children starting at 10 a.m. *Moadon*, a gathering place for elementary school aged children, starts at 10 a.m. and provides a Junior Congregation experience at 11 a.m.

Beth Israel’s annual blood drive

Beth Israel’s annual Red Cross blood drive will run on Sunday, March 1 from 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. in the Beth Israel Social Hall. Giving blood is an easy way to save a life or two, and perform an important mitzvah. There is an online sign-up with the Red Cross. Donors should go to www.givelife.org, click Donate Blood Now, and fill in their email address and birth date where indicated, plus the sponsor code (which is “bic13”). For more information or to volunteer for recruitment efforts, contact Julius Cohen, the blood drive coordinator, at 429-4855.

Havurah adds dancing to monthly Musical Shabbat

Aura Ahuvia, special to the WJN

Israeli and other folk dancing to a live musical ensemble is the newest component to be added to the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah’s monthly “Musical Kabbalat Shabbat” service, on the fourth Friday of every month. The new offering will follow the Havurah’s usual musical Shabbat service at 6:15 p.m., and community potluck at approximately 7:30 p.m.

“I’m delighted to have been asked to lead dancing at the Havurah,” said Drake Meadow, a local dance caller. “While I value dancing on its own, traditional dance has historically been practiced in a community context,” and community is one of the Havurah’s core unifying principles. Meadow also helps lead the Ann Arbor circle for dances of Universal Peace.

The dancing at the Havurah is likely to be a mix of Israeli and international pieces, along with a few danceable songs. Meadow and fellow musicians and dancers Neil and Elisabeth Ashman Epstein will also lead dances with their accordion, flute, and

sometimes keyboard.

Until now, services have featured at least one instrument—usually a guitar—and sometimes also a fiddle, flute, even the odd trombone on occasion. But now, with enough members of the local Contra and English Country dance communities attending, the Havurah will benefit from their talent, as they offer both dance instruction as well as musical accompaniment, with help from two accordions. Dances will be taught and tailored to the various levels of the attendees.

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah welcomes new and prospective members. It meets for musical Kabbalat Shabbat services on the fourth Friday of every month, at 6:15 p.m. A vegetarian or dairy potluck follows the hour-plus service. Dancing will be added after dinner, and is open to all levels. For more information, contact Aura Ahuvia at 975-9045 or auraa-huvia@comcast.net ■

Temple Beth Emeth activities this month

Cantor Annie Rose, special to the WJN

Navigating Your Child through adolescence workshop offered

“Safely Navigating Your Child through Adolescence in a Jewish Context, Part II.” On Sunday, February 15, 6–7:30 p.m., Jerry Miller, Ph.D., Temple Beth Emeth member and director of the University of Michigan Center for the Child and Family, will share research on the connection between teen behavior and a family’s religious values, as well lead discussion on the challenges facing the parents of adolescents. The workshop will be valuable to new or returning participants. RSVP to Terri, tginsburg@templebethemeth.org.

Torah study with Rabbi Levy

Rabbi Levy offers an ongoing modern exploration of the weekly Torah portion, drawing on tradition commentaries and today’s scholarship. This class relies on group participation and draws wisdom and history from our deepest sources. Torah Study is held in the Temple Beth Emeth chapel. The class meets Saturday mornings, 8:50–9:30 a.m.

Thought of the Day

Begin each day with a good word. Open your email with a “Thought of the Day” chosen by Cantor Rose and Rabbi Levy. In troubled times the “Thought of the Day” email can give you a positive, soulful moment of reflection. To subscribe, send an email to Jan Davis, jdavis@templebethemeth.org, or call the TBE office (665-4744) to be added to the list.

Lunch and Learn with Cantor Rose, Haftarah Cantillation

Learn the melodies of Haftarah with Cantor Annie Rose on Mondays in the TBE Adult Lounge. Class meets from noon–1 p.m. on February 2, 9, and 16. All materials are provided: texts, CDs, study materials. All are welcome, free of charge. Registration is preferred, through the temple office, at 665-4744.

Sisterhood Torah Study

On two Monday evenings in February, TBE’s Sisterhood will offer Torah study with Cantor Annie Rose, using the new *Women’s Torah Commentary*. This Torah Study includes reading of the text, commentary, poems inspired by the text, and lively discussion. Torah study begins at 7 p.m. on February 2 (*Parashat B’shallach*) and February 16 (*Parashat Mishpatim*). At 8:30 p.m., following the study session, a

meditation session in the chapel is available for all who wish to stay. Torah study is open to all women, free of charge, and Torah commentaries are available for use during study. For further information contact Sisterhood President Hillary Handwerger, at 665-4744.

Sisterhood Tu B’shevat seder and dinner to celebrate D.A.M.E.S.

This year Temple Beth Emeth Sisterhood’s D.A.M.E.S. dinner (Dinner in Appreciation of the Members of our Extraordinary Sisterhood) will be celebrated as a Tu B’shevat seder at 6 p.m. in the TBE Social Hall on Tuesday, February 10. Cantor Annie Rose will lead the special seder, featuring delicious special foods. The seder will have much of the feeling of the Pesach seder, with group readings, singing, and discussion. Tu B’shevat seders include four cups of wine with varying percentages of red wine and white wine, as well as dried fruits and nuts of Israel: figs, dates, carob, raisins, and almonds. A full dinner will be included.

The dinner and seder are free to all TBE Sisterhood members; for non-members, the cost is \$45. RSVP February 3 to Jenny Hackel, 213-1610 or jennyhackel@gmail.com

Kol Halev Cabaret

Broadway favorites, beloved ballads, operatic gems, and lighthearted comic songs will be highlights of the annual Kol Halev Cabaret on Saturday, February 14 at 6 p.m. in the Temple Beth Emeth Social Hall (2309 Packard St.) Kol Halev members will provide a buffet of warming winter fare. The evening is open to the public, free of charge.

Mini-Shabbaton on redemption

On Saturday, February 14, from 1–3:30 p.m., Temple Beth Emeth will offer the third mini-Shabbaton of the year. This month’s Shabbaton will focus on Redemption. The afternoon includes guided meditation with Sandra Berman, writing with Debbie Merion, Torah study with Rabbi Levy, and prayer study with Cantor Rose. A mid-afternoon tea affords the opportunity for in-depth group discussion.

The mini-Shabbaton afternoons are designed to offer varied study methods of a single theme. Each session in this month’s program is inspired by our journey from slavery to freedom. The Shabbaton is open to the whole community free of charge. Reserve a spot by calling the temple office at 665-4744.



At this year’s annual JCC Intergenerational Hanukkah party, Solomon Bernstein, Rachel Lewis, Jillian Bradin, Eli Levy, and Samantha Goldstein (back to camera) share their pictures with seniors Ben Muchnik and Polina Motova.

Jewish Family Services Invites You

Sunday, February 15, 2009



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 Dessert reception

4 PM
JFS @ UMS
Batsheva Dance Company
 Power Center
Reception tickets \$36/person
Combined reception/dance tickets \$72/person

This event is JFS's 2009 Campaign Kickoff – and our only fundraiser this year! A gift will support JFS's ongoing work with families in crisis, at-risk children and teens, isolated and low-income older adults, career services for unemployed individuals, and services for refugees and emigres. A matching gift from Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein will establish an Emergency Aid fund to assist individuals and families impacted by the current economic crisis.

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Ruby & Richard Shapiro
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Anne & Ned Staebler
Wendy Wagenheim

UPCOMING JFS EVENTS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 2-4 pm at the JCC **Jewish Parents' Perspectives on Intermarriage**

Has your adult child married someone who is not Jewish? Join us for this unique examination of intermarriage throughout the ages and today. Featured speaker Keren R. McGinity, Ph.D., will discuss research findings from her new book *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America*. Co-sponsored by the JCC. Free. Contact Abbie at 734-769-0209 or abbie@jfsannarbor.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 • 6:30-8 pm at the JCC **The Driving Dilemma: Is Your Loved One Safe on the Road?**

Are you concerned about the driving capability of an aging loved one? Join us in this Caregivers Conversation to learn how to initiate this difficult discussion with your parent and how to create positive solutions. Free. Contact Abbie at 734-769-0209 or abbie@jfsannarbor.org.



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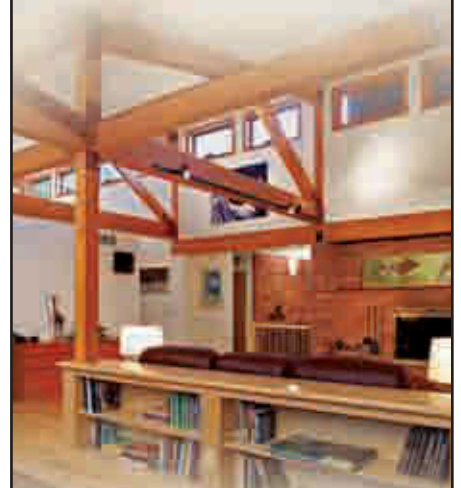
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Congregations

JCS hosts community-wide Tu B'Shevat celebration hosted by JCS

Erika Hauff, special to the WJN

What could be better than a taste of spring in the middle of winter?" asked Jewish Cultural Society member Eric Straka when describing the Tu B'Shevat celebration that the Jewish Cultural Society sponsors every other year at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. This year the event, co-sponsored by the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah and generously funded by the Jewish Federation of Washtenaw County, will take place on February 8 from 10 a.m.–noon and is free to all.

Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar, is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

The Jewish Cultural Society's Tu B'Shevat celebration focuses on the historical, cultural, and ecological aspects of the holiday, and includes activities for both children and adults. The wide breadth of activities, workshops, and displays offered each year ensures that the event is always well attended. Lori Moizio, the Jewish Cultural School's principal, said, "We are particularly excited this year about the children's music group, Gemini, playing two half-hour shows in celebration of the holiday." There will also be storytelling by Judy Schmidt, founding member of the Ann Arbor Storytellers' Guild. Retired school librarian Lisa Vogel, an Advanced Master Gardener, will speak on sustainable gardening and Seth Penchansky, a local architect, will talk about green architecture. Recycle Ann Arbor also plans to do a presentation on recycling, with an emphasis on trees. Representatives from Natural Area Preservation and Global ReLeaf will be in attendance as well.

Always a big hit, according to Moizio, is the plant scavenger hunt in the conservatory, where participants follow clues to locate certain plants. Other activities will include crafts and seed planting. Guests can also taste some of the traditional holiday fruits and nuts that will be part of the walking Tu B'Shevat Seder. Check the Jewish Cultural Society's website at www.jewishculturalsociety.org for more information, or contact Lori Moizio at 975-9872. ■

Celebrate Tu B'Shevat, Michigan-style

Terri Ginsburg, special to the WJN

Take a winter nature walk, study Jewish texts about nature, play games, and sing Tu B'shevat songs to celebrate the holiday honoring trees, nature, and the environment. Community members are invited to join Temple Beth Emeth and the Jewish Hikers of Michigan for the annual Tu B'shevat Family Nature Program at Leslie Science Center, Sunday, February 8 from 10 a.m.–noon. Moshe Kornfeld will lead this program. Kornfeld is a Ph.D. student in anthropology and Judaic studies at the University of Michigan, and a former wilderness program coordinator at the Teva Learning Center, a Jewish environmental education institution. RSVP to Terri, tginsburg@templebethemeth.org, or 665-4744



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From the house of study, in the ancient city of Tzippori

Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, special to the WJN

The job of a pulpit rabbi in 21st-century America is certainly multi-faceted. But, without any doubt, the most important role is that of teacher of Torah. Rabbis teach Torah formally from the *bima* and in classrooms, and less formally during consultations with congregants, in committee meetings and countless other settings.

One of the reasons that I love taking groups to Israel is to take advantage of the opportunity to teach Torah in many different settings. Among those, my favorite is to stand at the front of a tour bus as it winds on a curving road up or down a mountain or starting and stopping in rush hour Jerusalem traffic. Somehow, this experience seems to be a metaphor for the role Torah has in our lives: being our anchor and our stability through rapidly changing, unpredictable times.

As much as I love swinging and swaying on the bus while I teach, I have also taught Torah in Israel in quieter, more stable situations. One of these was at the archeological remains of what appears to have been the *bet midrash*, the house of study, in the ancient city of Tzippori in the Galilee.

We in Ann Arbor have strong connections with Tzippori. It is located in our partnership region of the Central Galilee, and many of us have visited there in conjunction with a visit to Nahallal, which is not far away.

But the larger connection that Tzippori

has for a rabbi is that it served as one of the centers of rabbinic teaching during Mishnaic times. The *Mishna*, the first post Biblical code of Jewish law, was compiled by the descendants and disciples of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, who left Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.; it was edited by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi in Tzippori around the year 200.

On my last visit to Tzippori, on a very hot late June day, I gathered our group together in the cooling shade of the *bet midrash* and taught from the *Mishna*. I taught what is undoubtedly the most recognizable *Mishna* text. We sat together and read the words of the rabbis about the first night of Pesach: "*Mah Nishtana...*" How different this night is from all of the other nights!

To the rabbis of the *Mishna*, there were either three or four questions, depending on whether an individual accepted the need to continue to ask a question about the Pesach

sacrifice which, of course, was no longer being offered. They asked the same questions that we do about *matzah*, *maror* (bitter

herbs), and dipping, although in a slightly different way. They did not ask the question about reclining, and that is most likely because in those days there was nothing unusual about reclining that would have prompted a young child to notice it and ask.

They lived in a world influenced by Greek and Roman traditions, and thus reclining reflected the customs of the times rather than a symbolic gesture of freedom as we explain it today.

And this is what is so meaningful to me about a visit to Tzippori. Each time I visit, I am reminded of the fine line between being influenced by the surrounding culture on the one hand and completely assimilating and losing the distinct character of Judaism on the other. When you visit Tzippori, you see mosaics, a theatre, and other evidence of in-

fluence by the surrounding peoples; and you can feel the tension that must have existed as the rabbis taught Torah while Jews learned from people around them as well.

I'll leave it to the historians and archeologists to debate when these different phenomena flourished as the city did go through many different cultural periods. But the question of how much foreign influence found its way into the hearts and minds of the Jews of Tzippori, and how much the Rabbis fought against it, is a fascinating one. If you read rabbinic literature, you see the clear evidence of influence of language and culture, and you see as well the rabbis' attempts to keep away from it. One way or the other, though, it is particularly meaningful to me as an American rabbi, who is fond of making cultural references in my sermons and classes (about baseball, music, situation comedies, or whatever else strikes me), that Tzippori, the site of the compilation of the *Mishna*, is not a world of its own. Rather, it is part of a real world with twists and turns, starts and stops, and many, many influences.

Make sure when you visit Israel that you include a visit to this fascinating ancient city, and consider how it reflects our lives as Jews in America today. We constantly struggle with this question of assimilation, and it is fascinating to see that the same issues affected our ancestors as well. ■



"Mona Lisa of the Galilee," a mosaic in Tzippori



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A lesson to be learned from Madoff's greed

Rabbi Robert D. Levy, special to the WJN

Originally, I intended to write this essay on a question remaining from an article I wrote for the December issue of the *Washtenaw Jewish News*. That article covered the University of Michigan's Wallenberg Medal, awarded to Bishop Desmond Tutu. Ernest Fontheim, in a letter-to-the-editor, asked if such an honor, given in memory of a savior of Jews during our darkest hour, should properly be given to someone Fontheim, and surely many others, consider a radical opponent of the State of Israel.

But the subject of honor and dishonor can no longer be easily approached within the Jewish community. In the wreckage of the global economy, we discovered that the single worst offender, the thief without peer, was not only one of our own, but one who traded on his exemplary Jewish good name. The sin of honoring Bishop Desmond Tutu,

if such a sin was committed, is a feather in the breeze compared to the sadly wasted admiration many a Jew and many a Jewish institution lavished on a man whose destructive cyclone smashed a boulder through the window of our good name.

Sure, there are thieves the world over; many who falsely profess belief in their various ancestral faiths. Obviously, we are repelled by the destructiveness of Bernie Madoff's cyclonic greed. His ill wind may have smashed our window, but reputations mean nothing compared to the financial ruin he visited on many, many lives. Nevertheless, one of our community, an honored member, betrayed humanity and brought real shame upon us.

I am asking: Rather than being offended that a Desmond Tutu is honored, perhaps we need to rethink our community's blind pride in its economic success. Perhaps we need to

go beyond the lip service we pay to Jewish values and ethics, and raise our children to believe that success in morality is to be valued over financial success.

Ok, so I sound pathetically like a rabbi, but perhaps this is the time for reassessment based on values. Madoff is a thief. But the culture out of which his banality arose, our culture, seems to exalt material success over righteousness. Or rather, we separate the two. Make money in one realm, and do good with the proceeds through the Jewish community in another. Almost all of us earn our bread ethically, unlike Madoff, but ethics is not the point of capital acquisition. Earning is. And then we support our community, both Jewish and not, with our well gotten gains. Acquisition here and righteousness there.

Maybe we Jews need to reassess our ethics and where they need to be taught and

applied. Our Jewish educational systems are long on history, Hebrew, and ritual, and short on living with Jewish decency. Continuity from generation to generation, not how we live in this generation, is our primary concern. The religion of intended spouses of our children concerns us more than the character of the individuals our children choose as life partners. Our priorities seem misplaced. Inter-marriage, continuity, and survival should not be our deepest concern; rather decency should be at the heart of a Jewish identity.

Our concern, our teaching, our message to each other, to our children and to the world needs to be righteousness. Is that not the message Abraham, our father, taught at Sodom and Gomorrah? He chastised God saying, "Can the Judge of the universe act without justice?" Who are we as a people, if not passionately dedicated to righteous? ■

Federal government must act to help the most vulnerable

By William C. Daroff and Hadar Susskind

WASHINGTON (JTA)—Officials at the National Bureau of Economic Research announced last month what economists and most people had known for quite some time—our nation is suffering through one of the worst economic recessions since the Great Depression.

The need for *chesed* (kindness) and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) has never been stronger than it is today. Despite numerous signs of a worsening economy and pleas for assistance, the lines of those seeking help have grown longer, the demand for food pantries and soup kitchens has risen precipitously, and volunteers and service providers have been stretched to the limit.

Local Jewish federation agencies are reporting a profoundly disturbing nationwide trend whereby a whole new group of workers—bus drivers, teachers, and trash collectors, who once made a steady and sufficient living—are now joining the long lines of those seeking assistance. Jewish communities across the nation are finding that increased levels of poverty, hunger, and economic insecurity are growing concerns of social service agencies and other partners that do not have the financial resources to meet the increased need.

It is becoming quite apparent that without

federal intervention, it is only a matter of time before our nation's safety net for the most vulnerable will be in severe risk of collapsing.

It is no coincidence that *tzedakah*, the word we commonly translate to mean the Jewish obligation to give charity, literally means "justice." As Jews, we are commanded to act so that there will be "no needy among you," not only because it is moral but because it benefits the whole. Now is the time to raise our voices in support of federal aid for those who are most affected by the recession—to advocate to our elected representatives that they institute comprehensive legislation to protect our nation's most vulnerable.

Our country worked its way out of the last economic recession in 2004 by implementing a series of tax reforms and direct aid to states. Most notable was a multibillion-dollar infusion by the federal government to increase the federal medical assistance percentage rate, or FMAP. Simply put, FMAP provides funds for Medicaid that help make health coverage affordable to low- and moderate-income families, whose members are generally the first to be laid off and lose company health benefits when the economy goes into a downturn.

The FMAP increase was credited as one of

the most effective and immediate measures taken to reverse the previous recession. Since then, despite repeated calls from our nation's governors and others, Congress has not used this tool to ward off or reverse today's current economic decline. It is time to dust off this option and take serious steps toward ending the recession.

Some will argue that it is the responsibility of the states and not the federal government to provide food, health care, and shelter to those most in need. But no state is immune from the economy's collapse. Nearly every state is now experiencing severe budget shortfalls and deficits that are paralyzing their efforts to provide needed services for the most vulnerable among us. Unlike the federal government, the vast majority of states are required by law to have a balanced budget. This means that when a state revenue declines, the legislature has two options to fill the void: cut spending or raise taxes, both of which have dire ramifications for an ailing economy.

The federal government has more flexibility in setting its budgets. Increasing aid to FMAP would allow states to avert further budget cuts and enable governors to allocate limited resources to other programs. It also

would allow the most vulnerable to continue to access affordable health care when they need it the most. Congress can immediately implement this action without having to raise taxes or cut services elsewhere.

President Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and other congressional decision makers from both sides of the aisle already have pledged their support for a temporary, timely and targeted increase for FMAP. Additionally they have promised that an economic recovery bill would be among the first pieces of legislation considered in the 111th Congress. As economic conditions across the United States and specifically within 43 states grows worse, we must ensure that any economic recovery legislation includes an FMAP increase.

History will judge our nation by the quality of life it provides for its most vulnerable citizens. We as a community must advocate in favor of these proposals if they are to become reality. ■

William C. Daroff is the vice president for public policy and director of the United Jewish Communities' Washington office. Hadar Susskind is the director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs' Washington office.

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Holocaust survivor Larry Hiss talks with JCS eighth grade class

Jesse E. Gordon, special to the WJN

Last month, the eighth-grade Sunday School class at the Jewish Cultural School (JCS) of Ann Arbor was privileged to have a special guest speaker. Larry Hiss, a Holocaust survivor and local resident, visited the class and shared his memories of what it was like to live through the Holocaust.

The class's teacher, Larry Kuperman, said about the session, "When I invited Larry Hiss to come and speak with the class, my goal was to make the history of this period real to the kids, not just something that they read about in books or watched movies about. I wanted the class to understand that the tragic events of this period happened to real people, some not much older than the kids themselves. The presentation succeeded beyond my hopes."

Larry Hiss was born in 1928, in Poland. His father was an engineer at an oil refinery. On September 1, 1939, when Hiss was 11, Nazi Germany invaded and conquered Poland. On September 17, 1939, Soviet Russia invaded the eastern part of Poland, where Hiss lived. As he said, "that bought us two years." As bad as the Russians were, life for

Jews in Russian-controlled Poland was better than in the German-occupied section. In 1941, Germany went to war with Russia and the Russian-held section was annexed.

Hiss and his family were forced to live in a ghetto. When he was 13, he was among a group of boys that were rounded up and taken to the police station. A friend of the family who was in the *Judenrat*, the Jewish council that served as a liaison with the Germans, had Hiss and one other boy pulled out to do work. All the other boys were taken away by truck and executed by machine gun.

Hiss would eventually be sent to a series of concentration camps, including the infamous Mauthausen-Gusen Camp. Hiss' father and mother were killed, while he himself was saved from death again by the intervention of a family friend.

Hiss survived in this way until liberated by the allies. He spoke of how many of the liberating soldiers were African-Americans, which seemed amazing to many. He spoke of how many people who survived the camps couldn't survive the rations fed to them by the

allies. The years of starvation had left their bodies unprepared for the rich food.

In 1947, Hiss came to America. In 1948, just one year after coming to America, he joined the US Army. After his discharge, he found work as a home salesman, alongside two fellow Holocaust survivors. He later married, and his life could easily be considered an American success story. In 1965, his business took him to Ann Arbor, MI, where he still makes his home.

"Because Larry Hiss was so young during the Holocaust, the same age as students in the class, the kids could really relate to his experiences," added Larry Kuperman. "Despite all that he endured, Larry maintains a positive attitude towards life, an important value that he shared with the class."

The students really enjoyed the presentation. Jess More said, "It was interesting. I learned more about history than I knew before. I didn't know about the dividing of Poland and the relationship between Russia and Germany at the beginning of the war." Max More, Jess' brother and also a student

in the class, added, "Listening to a first-hand account made me think about the Holocaust differently."

The presentation fit into the eighth-grade curriculum, which focuses on social activism, a core value of Secular Humanism. Much of the learning takes place outside of the classroom. The class has already visited with the Muslim Community Association to learn firsthand about Islam. Other trips include volunteer service at Ann Arbor's Alpha House, and a visit to Chabad House for a Sabbath observance. Larry Kuperman has been a teacher at the JCS for seven years. In addition to teaching the eighth-grade Sunday school, he also teaches Adult Education, a lecture and discussion series that explores the full range of the Jewish experience. Recent Adult Education classes include the African Jewish Experience; Belief in the Afterlife, a lecture by noted author Stephen Segall; and an upcoming discussion based on the film *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*. All Adult Education offerings are free of charge and are open to the public. ■

Soon to be in Israel

Noa Gutterman, special to the WJN

I have no memories of the first time I went to Israel. From pictures and stories, I've gathered that it was hot, dirty, and smelled strongly of falafel. I wore the same dress for three months and my stroller broke many times on the cobble stoned streets of Jerusalem. On January 25, I will return to Israel as a participant on NFTY-EIE High School in Israel, I hope with better fashion sense. I have been looking forward to my trip since my sister went on the program in 2004 and returned home with rave reviews. That's a 1825-day countdown! And believe me, I've been counting. NFTY-EIE High School in Israel is a four-month program in which participants take general studies classes in addition to intensive Hebrew and Jewish Studies. The program includes trips all over Israel and a week-long trip to Poland.

From the time I began telling my friends and classmates that I would be living in Israel in the upcoming year, many of the questions I got were concerning my safety. Both Jews and non-Jews expressed concerns for my personal health and security while in a country ravaged with war since its inception. Until last week, these questions were easy to dismiss. While I knew that there had been constant violence in Israel, it seemed to have been subdued to a low roar, easily dismissed to a far part of my mind. I was much more concerned with fitting my belongings into two 50 pound suitcases, or fulfilling my schoolwork before leaving. Yet, when I heard about the violence in Gaza, all concerns of packing and planning immediately vanished. While I could tell you that I instantly thought about the safety of those living in Gaza, that would be a lie. I spent multiple days in panic speculating about the fate of my trip. EIE has been cancelled before, and with a possible war, it could be cancelled again.

In an attempt to make some speculation about the situation, I sat down at my computer and read everything I could find about the current situation. Finally, I realized that this situation is much bigger than my trip. If the trip gets cancelled, or significantly modified, because of

violence, it will not change the world. While I may be upset that I may not be able to partake in this adventure, the situation is bigger than my trip. Instead of worrying that my experience may not be the perfect dream I imagined, I should be worrying about the lives of those living in and around Gaza. The situation is complicated. I cannot sit here and blame Hamas for bombing innocent citizens. Israel is also at fault. Even though the situation is complicated and far beyond my comprehension, my teenage mind knows that I must find fault in both sides. Killing innocent people is never okay. And yet, I know that looking past all of that is the most important part. We all must focus our attention on helping the people who are being directly affected by the violence. We must give support to those living in our community who have friends and family living in and around Gaza. We must think of the hundreds of young Israelis who may be called upon to fight. We must transform our anger and pain into support and love.

My countdown may not be completed in 23 days. It may take some time before I can return to Israel. I am in no rush. My first priority is a cease-fire, so that the least possible number of innocent people are killed. And while I cannot do much to help, I believe that support and love for Israel will help alleviate pain and suffering. We must put aside all of our countdowns and packing lists and focus on doing everything we can to save innocent lives. We must act now to fulfill the promise we make every time we sing *Hatikvah*. We must send our prayers. We must send our support. We must send our hope. ■

Noa, the daughter of Rabbi Robert Levy and Jo Ellen Gutterman, is a junior at Huron High School. This article was written the beginning of January.



Noa Gutterman

Teen athletes for 2009 Maccabi Games sought

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

Each summer the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County sends a team of athletes ages 13-16 to the JCC Maccabi Games, an Olympic-style sporting competition that incorporates community service and social activities to combine for an unforgettable experience for Jewish teens. This past year Ann Arbor's team attended the JCC Maccabi Games, hosted by the JCC of Metropolitan Detroit, from August 17-22.

This summer Ann Arbor's team will be attending the JCC Maccabi Games in San Antonio, Texas, from Sunday, August 9-Friday, August 14. Teens may compete in bowling, dance, golf, swimming, tennis, table tennis, boys and girls soccer, girls volleyball, girls softball, or girls basketball. Teens of all athletic abilities are welcome to participate. The JCC is also excited to announce that this year's Ann Arbor team will also include two athletes from Nahalal, Ann Arbor's partnership region in Israel.

Participants must be JCC members and

must be 13-16 years old as of July 31, 2009 to compete in the JCC Maccabi Games. The fee to participate is \$850, which includes registration



Eitan Spivak, Gabe Solomon, Gil Eisbruch

fees, plane tickets, and team uniforms. Some scholarship assistance will be offered.

A limited number of spots are available, so families with interested teens are encouraged to contact Deborah Huerta as soon as possible at 971-0990, or deborahhuerta@jccfed.org. To learn more about the JCC Maccabi Games, visit www.jccmaccabigames.org.

Federation offers subsidies for teen trips to Israel

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor believes in the value of Israel experiences for teenagers, and offers subsidies to those participating in approved, organized peer trips to Israel. Subsidies are provided for summer-, semester-, and year-long programs, including gap-year programs.

Eligible programs must be at least four weeks in length and be organized by an approved provider, such as MASA gap-year programs and summer programs sponsored by National Youth Movements. Other eligible summer programs include those sponsored by educational institutions (e.g. Frankel Academy, Israeli universities) and those programs listed on the Jewish Agency's Israel Experiences web site. Subsidies are not available for college programs beyond the gap-year.

Subsidy recipients will be asked to par-

ticipate in one pre-trip and one post-trip meeting, and will be asked to share their experiences during or after their trip.

Applications for subsidies must be received in the Federation office by March 1. Students considering second semester programs, such as EIE, Alexander Muss, or Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim, are encouraged to apply in March, as funds may not be available after the funding cycle.

Visit the www.jewishannarbor.org to obtain a subsidy application. For more information, contact Eileen Freed at eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org. Freed and Ramah may be reached at 677-0100.

Eileen Freed is director of Israel/Overseas and Community Relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

JCC to offer summer camping programs at 2008 rates

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

Camp Raanana is the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County's outdoor summer day camp for children entering grades K-8. Located on a beautiful private beach front at Independence Lake, the camp offers nine one-week sessions each summer and provides swim lessons, arts, crafts, Judaica, nature exploration, music, sports, free swim, weekly special events or field trips, and Shabbat celebrations. Camp Raanana had a tremendously successful summer in 2008 and is busy preparing for another incredible camp season this year.

Camp Raanana is committed to providing dynamic Jewish camping experiences to Ann Arbor's youth, particularly in these challenging economic times. For summer 2009, Camp Raanana is pleased to be able to offer camp at the same rates as last year. There will be no increases in camp fees, and rates for extended morning and afternoon care will be reduced slightly. In addition, Camp Raanana is happy to provide scholarships to families who need financial assistance.

The camp dates for summer 2009 are June 22-August 14. Camp registration will begin in February and brochures will be available at the JCC and at www.CampRaanana.com. The registration deadline is June 1, but families are encouraged to register in advance to

reserve their space and take advantage of savings opportunities. Families that register by April 1 will be eligible for early-bird rates, and those that register by May 1 will be entered in a raffle for a free week of camp and other prizes.

For more information about Camp Raanana, visit www.CampRaanana.com or contact camp director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990. ■



▲ Camper Quinton Clark, Junior Counselor Jack McWhinnie, and Camper Liam Knafli participating in the boating specialty

◀ Pioneer campers Sofia Eisenbeiser, Alexa Pinsky, and Hanna Clark



Camper Clara Rosenblum having fun in the sand

Camp Raanana seeks staff members for 2009

Camp Raanana, the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County's outdoor summer day camp, has several staff openings for this summer. Counselor in Training positions are available for teens who have completed eighth or ninth grade, Junior Counselor positions are available for teens who have completed tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade, and Head Counselor and Specialist positions are available for college students.

The Counselor in Training program is designed for young people who have completed eighth or ninth grade and are making the transition from camper to counselor. Camp Raanana is seeking enthusiastic and responsible teens who can commit to a four-week program and are looking for a challenging, fun, and rewarding summer experience. Families pay a fee for teens to participate in the leadership training program and then the teens receive an honorarium for their work upon successful completion of the training. A limited number of CIT positions are available;

teens must fill out an application and meet with the camp director to receive approval to enter the program. Accepted applicants must attend training on June 15 and 16.

Camp Raanana's Junior Counselors work directly with a group head counselor who acts as a mentor and involves the Junior Counselor in planning and implementing all camp activities. Junior Counselors must have completed 10th, 11th, or 12th grade and have previous experience in a day camp setting. This is a paid position which requires a four-week minimum commitment. All Junior Counselors will be required to attend Staff Training week from June 15-19.

Camp Raanana is also seeking mature and talented individuals to fill several eight-week head counselor and specialist positions. Applicants for these positions

must have completed at least one year of college, or equivalent, and have previous



2008 Camp Raanana Staff Members

experience in a day camp setting. All staff members will be required to attend Staff Training week from June 15-19.

For more information about working at Camp Raanana or to request an application and set up an interview, contact camp director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990.

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At HDS, all roads lead to science

Dina Shtull, special to the WJN

Which microwave popcorn pops the most kernels? Does listening to loud music change the rate of your heartbeat? Does the power of suggestion influence what you see, think, and do? When mending clothes by hand, which stitch will hold the rip the longest? Which brand of trash bag is the strongest?



Daniel Zacks, Unit on Geology



Jane Mintz, Unit on Simple Machines



Tal Sasson, Rachel Siegel, Abigail Chervin, Unit on Wolves

Hebrew Day School students are observing the world around them and asking questions. They are making observations, formulating hy-

potheses, and designing experiments to find the answers to their questions. The displays showing their explorations and discoveries will be open to the public on February 19, at 7 p.m. at the HDS academic science fair. Students will be on hand to explain selected topics. Kindergartners will encourage visitors to make their own predictions at discovery stations about color, water, mirrors, and ramps. Serving as resident experts on the wolf, first graders will lead a scavenger hunt called "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" Clues will lead to information about the animal's family structure, behavior, habitat, and food. The final destination will be the "Wolf's Den," to view a student-prepared PowerPoint presentation on the animal.

"Go Green!" will be another theme of the evening. Visitors will learn from the second graders all about eco-friendly projects that make HDS an environmentally-friendly school—such as reusing paper, recycling printer cartridges, conserving energy, adopting an endangered species, and building a birdhouse habitat. From third and fourth graders, they will learn about the solar system, water conservation, weather, and simple machines. Check out the student-created weather-testing instruments, such as a rain gauge and a barometer.

Students will display results of individual research in self-selected areas of interest. For example, Leah Weingarten created an electric circuit-board game. Asaf Pollock will demonstrate a "shocking surprise" (static electricity). Yotam Fisher-Pinsker has a "hairy demonstration" (animal adaptation), and Eva Rosenfeld, a water shooter (water pressure). There will also be studies and results of research on how gills function, on conductors and insulators, magnetic fields, the pH of water and its effect on conductivity, and properties of liquid nitrogen.

HDS student scientists have not only learned from their own explorations. They have also been studying the work of famous scientists. Members of the community are invited to read their research papers, test out their hypotheses, and discover with them why "all roads lead to science." For more information, contact HDS at 971-4633 or info@hdsaa.org. ■

ECC rolls out parenting programs

Peretz Hirshbein, special to the WJN

This Winter the JCC Early Childhood Center (ECC) is presenting several parenting programs that seek to help parents support the ECC's approach to adult-child interactions. Adult-child interactions at the ECC are based on the High/Scope approach, which emphasizes partnerships between adults and children, autonomy development, and a non-judgmental way to solve problems.

One of the parenting programs is new, but one has returned to help mothers connect their Jewishness and their parenting. The "Jewish Mama's" book group explores parenting using Wendy Mogel's book *Blessings of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*. Mogel, a clinical psychologist, uses lessons from Jewish sources and tradition to help parents raise confident, gracious children when family lives have become busy, stressful, and uncertain. Yael Zoldan facilitates the group, and it meets one Thursday night each month at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County.

The ECC's second parenting program is newly developed, and seeks to provide parents with the tools to guide them through difficult child situations while nurturing positive relationships with their children. The "Early Childhood Parenting Workshop," a series of six Sunday sessions, links the methods that ECC teachers use in the classroom to create productive and peaceful classroom environments to strategies that parents can use with their children to create a more harmonious home life. As families are busier, pressed for time, and stressed, it often seems that power struggles with children, outbursts at exactly the wrong time, and feelings of frustration (for both the parents and the children) must simply be endured. This set of workshops seeks to eliminate these struggles through new interaction strategies. Noreen De Young and Peretz Hirshbein facilitate this program. ■

For more information on these programs, call Noreen DeYoung or Peretz Hirshbein in the JCC Early Childhood Center at 971-0990.

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Registration for Chabad's Camp Gan Israel now open

Esther Goldstein, special to the WJN

When Ann Arbor resident Shternie Zweibel decided to open a day camp serving the Jewish community, she knew the most important ingredient would be finding staff that could make a personal connection with each family that enrolled their children in the program, and make both children and parents feel welcome. Eleven years later her program, Camp Gan Israel of Ann Arbor, is still growing and both parents and Zweibel attribute the camp's outstanding success to the staff.

"The program is well thought out with activities and field trips, and the values that are taught—charity, and justice, and doing good in the world—are things that are close to our heart and our home. My highest praise, however, goes to the incredible counselors," wrote local resident Liora Rosen in a letter to the Zweibels after her son's first summer at Camp Gan Israel, "I truly cannot say enough about the amazing staff who, every day, greeted the campers with such joy. It's a great feeling to know that my son is in such a wonderful, creative, fun environment."



Campers at a field trip to botanical garden

Zweibel says that she learned the importance of staff interaction through experiencing summer camp as both a child and as a counselor prior to opening her own summer program. While many camps offer high quality crafts programs and recreation, and Eastern Michigan offers a large supply of interesting and educational spots for field trips, without the added ingredient of a warm, caring staff kids just won't connect to what they are doing and will get little out of it. Zweibel hand picks the counselors, instructors, and everyone else who will be involved with the summer camp, and makes sure they are fully

trained, not only in what they are teaching, but in interacting with kids and creating an inclusive environment. Many of the staff members return year after year, adding experience and their strong rapport with the community.

Still, a summer camp does need plenty of good programming to hold kids' interest, and Zweibel and staff have worked together with parents and community members in putting together a program that includes professionally taught creative arts and sports programs, as well as more standard activities, such as recreational swimming, crafts, woodworking, and sports. Three times per week campers will be able to choose from a special roster of activities that include yoga, dance, art, music, and martial arts. And of course there are field trips to a miniature golf course, an indoor ice skating rink, and local museums, to name a few.

Camp Gan Israel is specifically aimed at serving the Jewish community, and towards that end they have always complemented their other activities and classes with programming specifically related to Jewish history and tradition, and by incorporating Jewish themes in the art, music, and cooking classes. Families involved in Camp Gan Israel appreciate the non-judgmental approach, which allows children with varying degrees of Jewish education and observance to take pride in their common heritage.

Camp Gan Israel is part of the largest and fastest growing network of Jewish day camps in the world, one which has a strong reputation as a trendsetter with innovative ideas and a creative approach to integrating Jewish values across the curriculum. They also have built a solid reputation for their approach to teaching the arts. As part of a global network, Zweibel and her staff enjoy the advantage of being able to introduce new ideas to their program which have been "road-tested" in summer programs from Australia, Europe, or less-exotic US locations.

This year, Camp Gan Israel is hoping to enlarge enrollment with an intensive sports camp. Participants in the sports camp will have special athletic training all morning three times per week.

Looking ahead to this summer's program, Zweibel said, "Plans are well underway now, and I am looking forward to another great summer. I enjoy what I do, and I can't wait to see all the happy faces of our campers when they find out what is store for them." ■

Those interested in registering or finding out more about the summer program can visit the Camp Gan Israel webpage, www.mycampgan-israel.com, or call 995-3276 (ext. 15). Registration begins February 1, 2009.

JCC youth programs

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

Kids Night Out, Valentine's Day

Each month the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County offers a Kids' Night Out event featuring games, crafts, dinner, and a movie to give elementary age kids a chance to have fun with their friends and parents a chance to have a night on their own. This month's event will be held at the JCC from 6:30–10 p.m. on Saturday, February 14.

While parents enjoy a romantic evening, kids will have a blast at this extra sweet Kids' Night Out event. The program will feature the timeless movie *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, which tells the story of a poor boy who wins a chance to visit the most amazing chocolate factory in the world. Dinner, activities, and a variety of health and not-quite-so-healthy treats will complete the evening.

Kids' Night Out events are open to JCC members and non-members in grades K–5. The cost for JCC members is \$20 (additional siblings: \$18). The cost for non-members is \$25 (additional siblings: \$23). Registrations are due by Thursday, February 12.

Programs on snow days for grades K–8

The Youth Department of the JCC will once again offer Snow Day programs this winter. On days when the JCC is able to open but Ann Arbor Public Schools are cancelled due to winter weather conditions, the Youth Department will run a Snow Day program from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. for JCC members in kindergarten–eighth grades. During JCC Snow Days, students will enjoy games, gym activities, and fun in the snow under the supervision of youth director Deborah Huerta and other available staff. Students should bring a nut free, dairy lunch and appropriate clothes for playing outside.

The Snow Days program is for JCC mem-

bers only and the program fee is \$50 per student (Kids' Konnection and Kids' Club participants are eligible for discounts). Registration in advance is not required, but parents will be asked to fill out a registration form and submit payment when they arrive.

School's Out Program on February 16

School's Out/JCC's In will take place on February 16 from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Participants will enjoy a variety of activities to celebrate President's Day, including a special presentation. Students should bring a nut free, dairy lunch and appropriate clothing for playing outside.

The JCC's School's Out programs are for JCC members ONLY in grades K–5; middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers. The cost is \$34 for care from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. (\$32 for additional siblings) and \$8 for Extended Care from 4–6 p.m. Registration is due by Thursday, February 12.

JCC to offer February Break Programs

This year the JCC will offer February Break Fun Day programs from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. on February 23–27. Each February Break Fun Day will feature a fun field trip or special activity, plus crafts, games, and gym time or outdoor recess. Programming details for each day will be available in early February. Students should bring a nut free, dairy lunch and appropriate clothing for playing outside.

The February Break Fun Day programs are for JCC members ONLY in grades K–5; middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers. The cost for each day is \$34 for care from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. (\$32 for additional siblings) and \$8 for Extended Care from 4–6 p.m. Registration and payment are due by Thursday, February 19. ■

For more information or registration for all JCC youth programs, contact Deborah Huerta at 971-0990 or deborahhuerta@jccfed.org

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Obama pushes ahead with plan to rejuvenate black-Jewish alliance

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA)—Barack Obama's pledged to use his presidency to revive the black-Jewish alliance starts on Day (minus) One—the day before he became president.

The president-elect's inaugural committee asked Jewish groups to make black-Jewish dialogue and joint outreach to the poor a focus of Martin Luther King Day this year's commemorations. Renewing the classic civil rights alliance is part of the inauguration's "big picture," a senior inauguration official told JTA.

The emphasis came after a bruising campaign in which Jewish voters were targeted by anonymous campaigns attempting to depict Obama as a secret Muslim, as well as conservatives who questioned the candidate's pro-Israel bona fides. It also came after decades of mistrust fueled by disagreements over affirmative action, Israel's relationship with South Africa and outright expressions of hostility from prominent black figures such as the Rev. Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan.

Obama, who has strong ties with influential members of the Chicago Jewish community, made it clear during the campaign that the alliance which helped bring about civil-rights change in the 1960s was a central focus of his Jewish outreach.

Invoking this alliance was a linchpin of his speech in May to thousands of members of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, where references to domestic policy often

fall flat. Not so with Obama: The Washington convention center filled with cheers when he invoked the memories of the three civil-rights volunteers—two Jews and an African American—who were murdered in Mississippi in 1964.

"In the great social movements in our country's history, Jewish and African Americans have stood shoulder to shoulder," Obama said. "They took buses down south together. They marched together. They bled together. And Jewish Americans like Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were willing to die alongside a black man—James Chaney—on behalf of freedom and equality."

A few months earlier, during a speech at last year's commemoration of the King holiday at the slain civil-rights leader's church in Atlanta, Obama criticized anti-immigrant and anti-gay sentiment in some corners of the black community. He also lamented that the "scourge of anti-Semitism has, at times, revealed itself in our community."

Throughout his campaign, Obama made his desire to bridge the divide a focus of his

talks with Jewish leaders, said Deborah Lauter, the Anti-Defamation League's national civil-rights director.

"When Abe met with Obama, Obama conveyed to him he would like to see the historic black-Jewish roots renewed," Lauter said, referring to Abraham Foxman, ADL's national director.

President Barack Obama

Lauter said Obama's commitment might help spur an alliance that has faltered in recent years. Charged with reviewing what ADL chapters had planned for Martin Luther King Day, she noticed that plans for events bringing blacks and Jews together had decreased.

"There are some pockets of activity, but they're not what they used to be," Lauter said. "The ones that exist work well, but it hasn't been a priority."

In recent weeks, however, Lauter said she noticed an enthusiasm for re-establishing the alliance. Obama's 78 percent support among Jewish voters—higher than expected—was pivotal.

"The numbers were so strong in terms of the Jewish vote for Obama," she said. "There's a spirit of renewal, looking for opportunities to

renew old ties and look forward generally."

Rumors of the demise of the alliance are overstated, said Rabbi Marc Schneier, who co-founded the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding with hip-hop impresario Russell Simmons. The tensions stoked by the radical inclinations of an older generation had been replaced by the outreach favored by younger blacks, including Obama.

"Crown Heights was the lowest point," he said, referring to the lethal 1991 riots in Brooklyn, "but since those difficult and trying days there has been a cadre of African-American and Jewish leaders dedicated to repairing and restoring the relationship."

Schneier says he likes to tease Eleanor Tatum, the publisher of the *Amsterdam News*, an African-American weekly, that he sees more ads in Jewish papers for Martin Luther King Day activities than he does in hers.

Rabbi David Saperstein, who as the director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center is a leader of national Jewish outreach to other civil rights and minority groups, says the relationship is thriving—in the leadership.

"The reality is day in, day out, blacks and Jews are working together for education, to help the poor," he said. In the U.S. Congress, "the black caucus is overwhelmingly pro-Israel, the Jewish caucus has been overwhelmingly been

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Germany's Muslims take a Holocaust lesson

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA)—Onur looks intently at the photomontage. From all the famous news images, he picks one: New York's World Trade Center aflame. "Did you know that the Jews were warned before to get out?" he whispers. "I read it on the Internet."

Onur, 15, and his classmates are taking part in a weeklong educational program at the Wannsee House Memorial and Educational Centre, the site where in 1942 Nazi leaders worked out their genocidal plan for the Jews.

The Wannsee House is one of many institutions in Germany today trying to counter anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, particularly among Muslim youths.

Teachers across Germany say they face a special challenge from those of immigrant backgrounds, most of whom are Muslims. Disenfranchised from the mainstream, many of these students echo anti-Semitic attitudes heard at home, trade schoolyard insults about Jews or express Holocaust denial, testing German taboos.

"There is a problem, but you cannot quantify it," says Micha Brumlik, a professor of pedagogy at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt. "I have heard so many teachers say that when they have eyewitnesses of the Holocaust at their schools, parents excuse their children and say they are sick. And the same happens when classes are going to visit the information center at Berlin's Holocaust memorial or Jewish museums."

To be sure, Germany's problems with far-right groups are bigger than those with Muslim youths, and few Muslim students are criminals or extremists. But in this history-steeped country with a growing Muslim population—3.2 million out of 82 million, most of them of Turkish background—Germany is keen on combating anti-Semitic tendencies among the young Muslims. Recent years have seen a proliferation

of programs, many financed by the federal or local government, to confront such tendencies.

Teachers sometimes take the initiative. Ulrike Boehnke, who teaches in Berlin public schools, has instituted her own zero-tolerance policy. "One of my kids was not allowed by his parents to go on a trip to Sachsenhausen," the memorial at the former concentration camp outside Berlin, she recalls. "But I took the kid anyway."

"I have pushed, despite the rejection by Turkish parents," she says. "And most kids are really affected by the visit."

Berlin artist Thomas Schliesser recently took a group of preteens from the Hans Fallada School to a street in their neighborhood as part of a program with the Trialogue interfaith project of the Herbert Quandt Foundation and the Neukölln Artists Association.

Placing a large sheet of white paper on the cobblestone sidewalk, he taught the kids how to make a charcoal rubbing. When they were finished, they saw not only the impressions of stones but a small square plaque, one of Berlin's so-called "stumbling block" memorials: It bore the name of Jewish resistance fighter Olga Benario, and her dates of birth and deportation to the Ravensbrueck concentration camp.

"This was put here on what would have been her 100th birthday," Schliesser explained.

"I've walked here many times and never noticed it," exclaimed one girl, Ezgi, 11.

In the background, two boys snickered "Jude" and "This is boring" until their teacher, Sabine Schonherr, reprimanded them.

"This is not boring; it's very, very important," she said. "Show some respect. These people were murdered in a gruesome way."

At a recent program for educators hosted by the American Jewish Committee in Berlin, teachers said they need help countering pervasive conspiracy theories about Jews among Muslim youth.

"It's hard to fight such theories with facts," one teacher said. "Everything we say can be part of the conspiracy theory."

Sometimes the programs lead young Muslims to identify with the Holocaust narrative a bit too closely, as they see themselves as victims and modern-day Israelis as Nazis. In this narrative, Israel's creation—the *Nakba*, or "catastrophe," in Arabic—becomes the Muslim Holocaust.

Aycan Demirel, founder of the Kreuzberg Initiative Against Anti-Semitism in Berlin, says he often encounters "competition for the victim status" among Muslim youth.

"They ask, 'Why can't we focus on my history?' But that does not necessarily turn into anti-Semitism," he said.

Demirel, who is Turkish-born, says young Muslims find him credible because of his immigrant background. His program aims to help youths recognize and reject conspiracy theories about Jews.

Some say more contact between Jewish and non-Jewish students would help curb anti-Semitic tendencies among Muslims in Germany.

For Staav Meier it didn't. When classmates in her ethnically diverse Berlin school asked about her unusual first name, she told them it was Hebrew. "Suddenly I had no more friends," recalls Meier, sitting in the library of Berlin's Jewish high school, where she transferred two years ago.

Muslim boys and girls "waited after school for me and called me a s**t Jew," she said. "Every time something happened in the Middle East, it got worse. One girl had lost someone in her family in the Lebanon war and she punched me."

Such problems are familiar to Barbara Witting, the Jewish high school's principal. She recalls students returning from a Kristallnacht commemoration being harassed by a group of Muslim students from another school calling them "dirty Jews." "We don't have any projects together with Muslim children because our se-

curity officials warn us against doing things like that," Witting said.

There are some Muslim-Jewish encounter programs, however. Last summer, the Wannsee House brought a group of Muslim youth from Berlin to Israel and the West Bank.

During their weeklong visit to the Wannsee House, the teens from Onur's school fidgeted and whispered while educator Elke Gryglewski asked them to pick a photo of a historical event that impressed them. Gryglewski finally told them what had happened in the very building where they were sitting.

"Was Hitler ever here?" one student asked.

"No," Gryglewski answered. "It was in this house that Nazi leaders decided how to kill millions of people."

Gradually the yawning and fidgeting stopped. Gryglewski introduced the teens to Nazi racial pseudo-science, asking them if they could tell who was Jewish in a series of old photos. The students seemed surprised to discover they could not.

The Jews "were just like you, children with their own families and identity," Gryglewski told them. "And then came the Nazis."

Eventually Jews could not go to the movies, she went on. They could not have pets. They could not go for a walk in the park. They could not use public transport.

"*Verboten, verboten, verboten*," she said.

Some Jews managed to leave Germany, but many did not, Gryglewski explained. In the end, "this is all that was left of many of them," she said, showing them a large photo of victims' shoes from Auschwitz. The students leaned in for a better look.

"I used to curse the Jews, and I won't do it anymore," said one student, Yasemin, 15, during a break. "I used to say Jews are s**t because they hate Muslims, but now I understand better. And now I hate the Nazis." ■

Engaging young Hungarian Jews

By Eszter Margit

BUDAPEST (JTA)—When hundreds of young Hungarian Jews gathered last month for the latest *Limmud* offering around the world, they were partaking in yet another cutting-edge Jewish activity offered in this city.

In some ways, young Hungarian Jews have been spoiled by the increasing number of initiatives aimed at providing positive Jewish experiences. But the third *Limmud-Keset* festival, as it is known here, offered something of a twist—a combination of learning, volunteerism and grass-roots activism.

The idea that anyone can offer a class on any given subject—the Limmud model used internationally—is a radically new concept in Hungary. "The Jewish community is so used to being bombarded with numerous top-down programs that at first there was surprise, then an outstanding excitement toward a real grass-roots, independent program where people are actually empowered to make a difference," said Agnes Peresztegi, an attorney and the main organizer of the festival.

This year's festival, centered on the unusual theme "Blood and Taboos," offered lectures and workshops about werewolves, laws of family purity, *brit milah*, anti-Semitic blood libels, self-defense techniques, and approaching your inner hero.

For many young Hungarians, Limmud is among the many programs that offer a way into Jewish life. Popular communal Internet sites such as the Jewish Meeting Point or Judapest also are gaining momentum by creating a dialogue and information exchange within the community. The new initiatives are trying to establish their credibility through transparency, freedom, and independence from the Hungarian Jewish establishment.

Csaba Kurti, the director of Jewish Meeting Point, founded the Web site along with his brother six years ago because they lived in the countryside and did not have much opportunity to meet Jewish women or make Jewish friends.

Kurti says the site now boasts 2,000 visitors a week and offers forums, matchmaking, cultural reviews, and job postings. He says he is most proud of reaching unaffiliated Jews.

"There are still numerous people in Hungary who only find out that they are Jewish in their 20s or 30s, when a grandparent dies and gets buried in a Jewish cemetery," he said.

Kurti says it can take several years before they feel comfortable enough to participate in a Web chat. Responding to a large demand for Jewish learning, JMPoint has set up an online academy to teach about Judaism.

He believes the situation changes for those in

their 20s and 30s when they learn more about their family's history, much of it rooted in the Holocaust, and realize that being Jewish is about more than partying or lighting some candles.

For the younger set, local branches of international youth organizations play a significant role in shaping Jewish identity. For many, the Limmud was a way to connect with friends from the Szarvas International Youth Camp.

Many youngsters define *Limmud-Keset* as the grown-up version of their beloved camp, which each summer hosts thousands of students aged seven to eighteen from more than 24 countries. The camp, founded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, has shaped the Jewish identity of many Hungarian Jews over the past 18 years.

David Klopfer, 21 a college student and leader of Hashomer, is active in *Limmud-Keset* and the Szarvas camp.

"While most Hungarian youth are becoming more and more anti-social, just sit in front of their Playstation or TV all day long, later do drugs or drink at parties, we are trying to offer more meaningful personal connections, a real community," he said.

Cultural activities are also proving an important draw among younger Jews.

Siraly, a trendy cultural pub located on the edge of the former Jewish ghetto, sees alternative Jewish culture as a solution to engaging Jews. Siraly unofficially presents itself as a Jewish cultural center with upscale ads, a barely visible mezuzah on its front door and artsy decorations on its walls around the Jewish holidays. It hosts non-Jewish environmental talks and literary readings along with Jewish theater productions and the office of the Conservative movement's Marom youth organization.

Communal organizers have established a Jewish Youth Forum in order to inspire organizations to map out a plan for bringing Jewish values and experiences to the broader society, and at the same time provide a deeper meaning to Jewish identity. While learning at the Limmud-Keset festival or the Szarvas camp are significant steps in the right direction, some say it's not enough.

"Hungarian Jewish life has really changed since the political transition," said Zsuzsa Fritz, the director of the Szarvas camp. "It is not a question any longer for the younger generation whether they are Jewish or not. There are many different, cool ways to experience a positive identity."

"The main issue is the meaning of their Jewishness: Is there any depth to it, is there anything at stake?" ■

Jewish life flourishes where Kazakh gulag once stood

by Michael J. Jordan

KARAGANDA, Kazakhstan (JTA)—Liza Luchanskiy was born to a poor, Yiddish-speaking family in Berdichev, the historic, heavily Jewish city deep in the Pale of Settlement. Lured by Soviet promises of equality, she became a communist true believer, working her way up to serve on a committee in Siberia that targeted so-called enemies of the revolution. But her zeal wasn't enough to save her or her similarly devoted husband, Josef.

They were swept up during the frenzy of Stalin's Great Terror, from 1937 to 1939. Josef was shot by a firing squad in 1938, and Liza was exiled by cattle car to Karaganda.

Luchanskiy was sentenced to eight years in the vast network of forced-labor camps here, on the southern edge of Stalin's fearsome gulag. Enduring extreme cold, hunger and exhaustion, which afflicted her health ever after, Luchanskiy never let go of her faith in communism, her grandson says.

"She never blamed the system, only Stalin," says Vilen Molotov-Luchanskiy, an internist who today heads the Jewish Cultural Center in Karaganda.

As many as 1.2 million Soviet citizens—spanning practically all the myriad ethnic groups nationwide—were worked to death or near death in the 75 camps that comprised Karaganda. Among them were many Jews, including many rabbis.

"There is no separate story of Jews here in Stalin's gulag," offers Mikhail Kreichman, who teaches Jewish history and tradition in Astana. "Many, many other nations suffered in there."

The heart of the Karaganda slave labor machine was the railroad hub of Karaganda city, in central Kazakhstan. Once the camps were closed and emptied, it became a virtual "city of ex-convicts."

Visiting the city today, remnants of that era can be felt still in the collective psyche and in the identity of the Jews that remain, making the Karagandan community among the more unique in the Diaspora. It may be the least assimilated Jewish community in Kazakhstan, which has some 15,000 to 20,000 Jews, because so many of the Jews here are children or grandchildren of rabbis and other traditional Jews sent to the Karaganda labor camps.

The purges of the late 1930s injected large numbers of Jews to Kazakhstan. Before that, the few Jews here either were descendants of Russian Jewish soldiers who settled in the area in the 19th century or fragments of Silk Road Bukharan Jews.

Jewish life pulsates today in Karaganda, which has 1,500 registered Jews. Chabad-Lubavitch opened its second day school in Kazakhstan here. There is a rabbi in town. The community hosts an annual festival for Jewish youth that draws some 200 participants from around the region. Last Purim, some Jews from Karaganda took a four-hour bus ride to the Kazakh capital Astana to celebrate the holiday at a synagogue there.

But the Jews here are best known for the painful history of Karaganda. When local Jews travel to other ex-Soviet republics, the mere mention of their hometown—now Kazakhstan's third-largest city—typically elicits the same reaction.

"Your family was in this camp? That's what they know about Karaganda," says Bela Kamenetskaya, the head of the local Hesed welfare office. "If they come here, they expect it to look like Auschwitz. They're surprised to see we have streets, city squares and an airport."

Jews here say they share a special bond with their Karaganda neighbors because they all suffered together.

"The pain that every family suffered unites us even today," says David Bitsadze, a taxi driver.

Karaganda has a lone monument to its victims nestled within a modest park. Among the trees is a striking wooden memorial, part of it carved with a cross, an Islamic crescent, and a Star of David. Another part reveals tormented faces covered in barbed wire. A marble slab reads, "This soil is soaked with blood, covered by bones of the dead."

The gulag kicked into high gear after World War II, as Moscow exploited its bottomless slave labor to rebuild a ravaged country. The region was home to four special camps renowned for brutality, as highlighted in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's landmark expose *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Stalin's prisoners, convicted as "enemies of the people," were shipped to the hinterlands, typically for eight to 10 years, to toil in mines, factories or farming. In Karaganda, they extracted coal and copper, with some agriculture. Most died of starvation, disease, or the cold.

One camp here was designated for the Wives of Traitors of the Motherland, housing women and their children after the husbands were shot. Still others were deported here as "internal exiles," restricted to living in certain villages.

In a rare sign of resistance, rebellions erupted in late 1952, and again shortly after Stalin's death in 1953. The next year the camps were shuttered.

Free to go, those who had family waiting for them back home left. Those who didn't stayed. In some cases their laid-off jailers lived nearby.

Meanwhile, with the camps abolished, Karaganda turned boomtown. The 1960s saw a new wave of Jews: young professionals or recent graduates either ordered to the Soviet empire's outer reaches to fill a need, or seeking work opportunities in the "virgin soil" of Kazakhstan.

Jewish professors were instrumental in creating Karaganda's medical school, which became one of the Soviet Union's finest, says local Jewish activist Alexander Abramovich.

"They knew they wouldn't be deported from here," Abramovich says with a smile.

Today, little commemorates Karaganda's notorious past beyond the sleepy village of Dolinka, the administrative center of the camp network, 30 miles southwest of the city.

On one side of the road to Dolinka is a former labor camp, recognizable by its watchtower—conveniently it's been converted into a prison for garden-variety criminals. On the other side is a village of yellow sandstone homes built exclusively for officers who ruled the gulag.

In Dolinka itself, abandoned barracks that once housed women are crumbling from age and neglect. The commander's villa is inhabited, though, with two satellite dishes planted in the front yard. A memorial museum sees a trickle of somber visitors, many of whom have come to learn about the fate of loved ones.

Moscow continues to withhold many files, says museum director Marina Klyshnikova, perhaps because of sensitivity over the perpetrators.

"Some of them are still alive," she says.

Molotov-Luchanskiy says his grandmother spoke daily about her earlier life until she died in 1980 at age 81. Speaking Yiddish, she would tell him tales of the camp and of his grandfather.

"She wanted me to know that life wasn't so simple, or so easy," Molotov-Luchanskiy says.

"Hers was actually a story of a happy woman," he adds. "In life she had a great purpose, a great love, and great suffering. She thought it was everything an ordinary Jewish girl could want." ■



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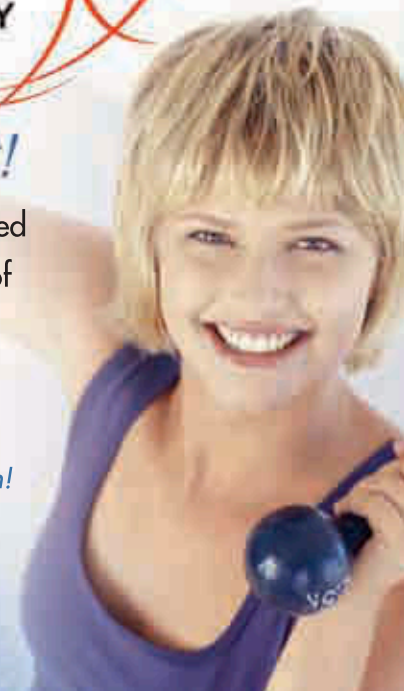
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New prayer books revive forgotten women's liturgy

By Ben Harris

NEW YORK (JTA) —On the evening of May 27, 2002, a Palestinian terrorist walked into an ice cream parlor in the central Israeli city of Petach Tikvah and detonated the explosives strapped to his chest. More than 30 Israelis were wounded in the attack. Two lives were claimed: 18-month-old Sinai Keinan and her 56-year-old grandmother, Ruti Peled.

Even in a country numbered to the brutality of terrorist violence, Israelis were captivated by the story of how one woman, Hen Keinan, had been rendered both childless and an orphan by the attack. Months later she was still a figure of public interest. On the eve of Yom Kippur, a newspaper interview with Keinan and her husband described their decision to move to the United States in the aftermath of the attack.

In synagogue that evening Aliza Lavie, a professor of communications and political science at Bar-Ilan University, found herself unable to banish thoughts of Keinan from her mind and draw comfort from the liturgy of Judaism's holiest day. She wished she could tell Keinan of the long tradition of brave Jewish women who had faced down adversity—among them her own grandmother, a Bukharian immigrant who lost three of her nine children, and yet remained steadfast in her faith.

"I stood there in the synagogue," Lavie has written, "grappling with Hen's questions and sensing that the prayer book in front of me could not provide the answers. I resolved to seek out the secret of my grandmother's legacy; to explore the eternal, powerful faith of Jewish women."

The fruit of that resolution was *Tefillat Nashim* published in Israel in 2005 and which became, by the country's standards, a runaway best-seller.

Fervently Orthodox women, unable to find the prayer book in religious shops, found it elsewhere and photocopied it for their friends, Lavie said. Secular women brought it to the hospital when they gave birth. Arab women soon followed suit. Musicians set the verses to music. And it resurrected an array of prayers of which few Jews, even among the scholarly and devout, were aware.

"Aliza opened the gate, the gates of prayer," said Yisrael Lau, the former chief rabbi of Israel, upon the prayer book's release in Israel.

To the extent that a prayer book provides the stage direction for a choreographed synagogue service, Lavie's book—released in English this month by Spiegel & Grau under the title *A Jewish Women's Prayer Book*—is improperly named. Rather, Lavie has unearthed prayers from an expanse of Jewish history and geography that give liturgical expression to moments in a woman's life often overlooked by the traditional synagogue service: a prayer for a first period, for childbirth, for a sick husband, and for a son going off to war.

"We're correcting history," said Shulamit Reinharz, a sociology professor and the director of the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. "We're correcting a misperception that women did not write prayers. And I think when you correct a misperception like that, you change history."

Lavie's book also has helped resurrect a tradition known as *tekhines*, or supplications, a genre of devotional prayers recited principally by women who were either uneducated in Hebrew or barred from participating in public worship.

Such private prayers reflect the personal longings of women throughout the ages and, Lavie believes, explain a large part of their appeal to contemporary Israelis.

"It's a kind of window on the lives of Jewish women," Lavie told JTA. "It brings back to the Israeli society the personal prayers. The fact that you can pray without being part of the synagogue, because in Israel many people belong to no community—suddenly people felt that they can pray, that they can touch without any fear."

The prayers in *A Jewish Women's Prayer Book* cover a broad historical and geographic territory, incorporating contemporary authors responding to modern concerns—such as the discomfort many feel with the traditional blessing thanking God for making women in his image, an alternative to the blessing for men that thanks God for not making them women. Others are ancient prayers and of unknown origin.

A number of the prayers were written by Fanny Neuda, a 19th century Moravian Jew who authored a popular book of *tekhines* in 1855. Lavie's discovery of Neuda in the national library in Jerusalem prompted a flurry of questions.

"Who was she? And why I didn't know about her? How come she got permission to write such an amazing book like this?" Lavie recalled asking. "I had a lot of imaginary conversations with her."

Lavie is not the first contemporary writer to be amazed by the discovery of Neuda, nor is she the first to try to revive her work for a contemporary audience. Last year, the Los Angeles poet Dinah Berland published *Hours of Devotion*, the first English edition of Neuda's landmark work in more than a century.

Like Lavie, Berland's discovery of Neuda was prompted by a deep emotional disturbance. After her divorce, Berland writes in the introduction, her son Adam "disappeared from my life for more than eleven years." A client encouraged her to pray, but she was at a loss until happening upon an old version of Neuda's book and its prayer for a mother whose child is abroad.

"They're very personal and they're very concrete," Berland said of Neuda's compositions. "And they're very emotional and direct. Rather than talking about God, they're talking in an intimate voice to God as a friend or as a parent."

According to Berland, *Hours of Devotion* was once enormously popular, published in 28 editions between 1855 and 1918. The first English edition came out in 1866 and the book was still in print in Switzerland as late as 1968. But over the years Neuda and, more generally, the tradition of *tekhines* have fallen into obscurity.

"I've been told that just about every Jewish woman who read German had a copy of this book," Berland said.

Berland's and Lavie's recent books, and other similar volumes, including the recently published *A Women's Torah Commentary*, may augur a revival of prayers for women, particularly as a growing number of women assume leadership roles, even in the Orthodox community. A conference on Jewish Women's Prayer, sponsored by women's organizations from across the denominational spectrum, is scheduled for March in New York City.

"They are not new for people," Lavie says of the prayers in her book. "Even though the people didn't hear them, they had them in the back of their memory. They have them in their blood." ■

Waltz with Bashir backstory revealed

By Kelly Hartog

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The day before Ari Folman accepted the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film for his animated documentary *Waltz with Bashir*, he was talking to a packed house at Hollywood's Arclight Theatre following a screening of the movie.

The 45-year-old filmmaker appeared somewhat bemused by all the hoopla, after eight months of traveling the world with the film and attending dozens of festivals.

"When Sony bought the film they told me, 'You have to come over for awards season,'" Folman recalled. "I didn't know what that meant. But now I see that there is an NBA season, an NFL season, and an awards season. It's like every two days there's a game. You're competing with the same films and the same directors. Some days they win, some days I win. It's like you're all really obsessed with prizes."

Folman called *Waltz with Bashir* his anti-war movie.

"This film was complicated because on the one hand I wanted to show war in a very non-glorifying way," he said. "Unlike those American anti-war movies where they tell their kids: 'War sucks but the guys in the movie are really cool.' And the kids take it the wrong way. They say, 'Yes, war sucks, but I want to go to Iraq and die for my country.' On the other hand, it was essential that the Israeli soldiers weren't shown as victims."

Folman was only 19 when he served in Lebanon during the time of the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. But he didn't return yearning to make a film about his experiences. In fact, he could barely remember them, which is what forms the basis of the movie.

I all started a little more than four years ago, when he was looking to get out of his annual military reserve duty.

"I was not a big fighter," he confessed. "I was a screenwriter, and my job in the army was to write short instruction movies, like 'How to defend yourself from an Iranian nuclear attack in 60 seconds.' I had an agreement with the army: I didn't have to wear a uniform, I didn't have to get out of bed, and [in return] they could call me whenever they wanted."

Folman said the army was always calling him at inopportune times, including in the delivery room when his wife was giving birth, so he told them he wanted out. He ended up being released early—the Israeli army doesn't release its soldiers until they are 50—but only after agreeing to meet with an army therapist and discuss his experiences.

"It was the first time I heard myself speak about what I went through, and although I had the main storyline there were definitely black holes," he recalled. "I started talking to my close friends about it. We were all the same age and had been in the army at the same time and I realized I knew nothing about their experiences either."

After hearing the recollections of a soldier named Boaz who had to shoot 26 dogs in Lebanese villages to silence barking that would have warned the villages' residents of IDF intruders, the idea for the film was born. A dream sequence involving Boaz and the 26 dogs he killed became the film's opening sequence.

Folman waded through more than 100 recordings of soldiers after placing an ad online asking those who served in Lebanon in the first three months of the war to come forward and tell their stories. Nine of those made it into the film, and only two of the stories are voiced by actors, rather than the original protagonists.

Folman says he always intended to make *Waltz with Bashir* as an animated film.

"When you look at everything that there is in this film—lost memory, memories of war, which are probably the most surreal things on earth, dreams, subconscious, drugs, hallucination—it was the only way to combine one fluid storyline," he said. "If it was a classic documentary, it would have shown middle-aged men telling their war experiences and it would have to be covered with footage that you could never find and wouldn't come close to resembling what they went through. It would be a boring film. And if you made a big action movie with the budget of an Israeli movie, that would just be sad."

The film was first screened in Israel in June 2008. While it generated enormous discussion, Folman says, it wasn't of the political nature he expected.

"I thought people would call it a left-wing anti-Zionist film and that didn't happen," he said. "And more than that, the film became the darling of the establishment."

The Israeli response, according to Folman, was positive for two reasons: It made Israel look like a tolerant country, allowing soldiers to talk openly about their experiences in the war, and when it was screened in Europe it made many people there realize for the first time that it wasn't the Israeli troops that committed the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres.

"They didn't pull the trigger; it was the Christian regime," Folman said. "And this is the type of propaganda the Israeli government couldn't buy for money. So they kept sending the movie out."

The refugee camps were in Lebanese territory under Israeli control, but the attacks were carried out by Lebanese Christian fighters allied with Israel. An Israeli investigative commission following the massacres found that though Israeli officials did not have a hand in organizing the massacres, which left at least hundreds dead, they bore indirect responsibility for failing to anticipate the violence and allowing the Christian fighters into the camps.

Then-defense minister Ariel Sharon resigned his post as a result.

"The only place where the film did not do well was in Germany, where the public was obsessed with the comparison of the Sabra and Shatilla massacres to the Holocaust," Folman said.

"It's no coincidence that there are two strong references to the Holocaust in the film," said Folman, himself the son of survivors. "The Holocaust is in every Israeli's DNA. That's why the biggest demonstrations in Israel happened after Sabra and Shatilla, because it sparked memories of our past. People realized something was terribly wrong because that massacre took place with the support and collaboration of the Israeli government."

Fielding questions from the audience about how the film might be able to inform the current war in Gaza, Folman said he doesn't believe that films can change the world.

"I do think they can build small bridges, but I don't think they can change public opinion. Israelis love this film because it shows what war really is, but," he said, talking about the current war in Gaza, "they say 'Sometimes you have to do what you have to do.' That's very Israeli."

"So unfortunately, my film did not change anything." ■

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Music

Yiddishe Cup: Where Klezmer meets corn

Bert Stratton, special to the WJN

Gigs in the sticks intrigue me. You know, the ones where the pick-up trucks outnumber the Jews. My klezmer band, Yiddishe Cup, calls these jobs “playing Siberia.”

We’ve played Catholic colleges, Methodist retreats and towns so small they don’t even have traffic lights. Take Richland Center, Wisconsin. No traffic light, but a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed warehouse. (Wright was born in Richland Center.)

Our Siberia gigs, no matter how remote, always have at least one Jew in the audience. Even if we play in Lancaster, Ohio, a Jew will show up. And for this sole Jew, we are the equivalent of secular Lubavitchers.

And another thing that always happens at our Siberia gigs... the local Jew apologizes to us for his town’s lack of sophistication and *rugelach* (rolled dough pastries). The Lancaster Jew called his town “Lackluster.” (This sort of thing happens all the way up the Jewish “food chain”; Cleveland and Detroit Jews continually beg forgiveness from New Yorkers and Chicagoans.)

Ann Arbor Jews wonder if Zingerman’s is in the same league as Cleveland’s old-school deli Corky & Lenny’s. No comparison... apples and oranges, basic rye versus eight-grain. Ann Arbor is the antithesis of our “Siberia” gigs; The Ark is the way-coolest place we play. The crowd is all ages and dances like crazy, and we typically have amazing local musicians sit in.

When Yiddishe Cup played Richland Center, we outdid ourselves; we had six Jews—none of whom was about to make it into the Jewish federation’s database. Each one announced he, or she, was intermarried and unaffiliated.

At Lakeside Association, a Christian Chautauqua-style retreat on Lake Erie in Ohio, we had one actual Jew and a Methodist minister who said she had been a Jew, named “Rachel,” in a previous lifetime.

Philo-semites—like the Methodist minister—are just a small part of our audience. The majority is Middle Americans out for an evening of “multiculturalism.” Typically, Yiddishe Cup is part of a subscription concert series—one week an Irish band; the next, an African dance troupe, then us. Alan Douglass, our keyboard player, said our van should have a bumper sticker, “We Brake for Ethnicity!”

In El Paso, Texas, we went on stage the week after the Irish band. The real multiculturalism—for us—was the audience, which was 75 percent Mexican-Americans. The concert was a free city-sponsored picnic/barbecue/party in a grassy field by the Rio Grande. We played a mix of Yiddish theater tunes, Borscht Belt comedy, klezmer instrumentals, and one Ladino song. For an encore we played “La Bamba.” The Latinos danced to everything, even “Rozhinkes mit mandlin,” a slow Yiddish lullaby, which was supposed to be a listening tune. Our dance leader, Daniel Ducoff, described it as a Jewish-Mexican Woodstock.

On the Texas bandstand I complimented “the small but mighty El Paso Jewish community.” The concert planner had told me she had hired us specifically because of the local Jewish community’s leverage. El Paso is a town of 5,000 Jews with a kosher deli, Corned Beef College. That’s not “kosher-style,” that’s kosher, period.

In Rockford, Illinois, after a concert, the organizing committee sponsored a reception for the band. We had cheese, crackers, wine, and fruit. This, for a klezmer band that eats grilled salmon weekly? Our incredulous drummer, Don Friedman, said, “You serious? No desserts? What, no diet pop?”

Musically, our stage show differs at Siberia gigs than at, say, JCC venues. Yiddish theater medleys don’t make it in Siberia. “Tumbalalaika,” too, is

meaningless. Quotes from “Hava Nagila” and “Tsenena, Tsenena” work well. And because it’s a small-world-after-all, everybody understands it when I introduce Steve Ostrow, our trombone player, as a “guy who often plays in symphony orchestras, but now gets great satisfaction playing ‘Dreydl, Dreydl, Dreydl!’”

To hedge our bets, we usually add a “country” tune—“16 Tons,” which I explain “was written by that great klezmer composer Merle Travis.” Then we break into Mickey Katz’s parody, the one about “16 tons of hard salami.” It ends with “I owe my *neshoma* (soul) to the delicatessen.”

At college towns, like Ann Arbor, we do our rock version of Sophie Tucker’s “My Yiddishe Mama.” Back home, this tune, played straight, makes the old folks cry. But on the road, our lead singer, Irwin Weinberger, takes the microphone off the stand and struts around, a la Mick Jagger. At Cottey College—an all-women’s school in Nevada, Missouri—the crowd intuitively understood the joke, and shrieked and howled like they were at a Beatles concert. At that show, the lone Jew was from Joplin—about 50 miles south of Nevada. And by the way, that’s Nuh-vey-da (YIVO pronunciation), gateway to the Ozarks.

“The Jew from Joplin” is an apt metaphor for our band. We are Midwestern Jews—except for the two non-Jews in our band—and we generally feel quite at home among large numbers of large non-Jews.

The peculiar thing, actually, is when we play for Jews who can “out Jew” us ethnically. We’ve been to America’s Jerusalem—Boca Raton, Florida. In fact, we’re going to be there again February 11. Everybody in Boca Raton understands our jokes—most, better than we do.

Once, in Florida, we did a totally obscure comedy skit, “Essen,” which is about eating too much food at a Catskill resort, and the crowd roared. In Ohio we had considered dropping the sketch because nobody, including our own Cleveland *yidn*, could relate to eating too much herring and matzo brai at a hotel. In Florida I asked the audience, “Anybody ever heard of Billy Hodes, the Catskills comedian who wrote ‘Essen?’” Sure enough, an elderly man told me all about Hodes at the break.

Maybe this could be a full-time thing for us: klezmer, condos, and coinage. Miami Beach to Boynton Beach, rewind, and do it over again.

Nah. We like the Midwest. We like being part of the close-knit Cleveland Jewish community. And after 20 years on the local bar mitzvah/wedding scene, we’re big *machers* in the Midwest. We do all right in Michigan; this is our fifth annual appearance at The Ark.

As for the Siberia trips, they serve as an interesting change of pace from the weekly grilled salmon gigs.

A concert organizer from Celina, Ohio called. “You sure this music will go over here?” he said. “We’re a bunch of German farmers.” No problem, I said. Then I looked up Celina (YIVO pronunciation Ceh-lay-na) on a map. It was nowhere I’d ever heard of, and I’ve lived in Ohio my whole life.

Our most Siberian gig? We were booked into the opera house in Calumet, Michigan. That’s an old copper mining town, a four-hour drive north-north after you cross the Mackinac Bridge to the Upper Peninsula.

We found a Jew there. In fact a Jewish mechanic with two sets of dishes (meat and milk). He said he drove to Green Bay for his kosher meat. ■

Bert Stratton, Yiddishe Cup’s bandleader and clarinetist, graduated from University of Michigan in 1973, and is a two-time Hopwood Award winner.

Yiddishe Cup will perform at the Ark, 316 South Main St., on Saturday, February 7, at 8 p.m. Tickets are available by calling 761-8587.

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On Another Note

Cellist Richard Aaron

Sandor Slomovits, staff writer

Richard Aaron is professor of cello at the University of Michigan. His bio reads a bit like a national and international travelogue. His travels include giving master classes in Madrid, Spain; Manheim, Germany; Seoul, Korea; Matsumoto, Japan; and Paris, France. In the United States he's given master classes at a number of leading music schools, including Rice, Eastman, University of Michigan, and Oberlin. During summers he has taught at the Aspen Music Festival, Indiana University String Academy, Calgary Music Bridge, Aria, Innsbruck, the Chautauqua Festival, and Idyllwild. Aaron's students have won many national and international competitions and have performed as soloists with prestigious orchestras. One of his current students, David Requiro, recently won the 2008 Naumburg International Violoncello Competition, perhaps the most prominent competition in the country.

You've probably heard his students play, without even realizing it. There is a version of the theme of NPR's *All Things Considered* performed by a cello choir—they were all Richard Aaron's students, when he was teaching at the Cleveland Institute of Music before moving to Ann Arbor.

WJN: Do you come from a musical family?

Richard Aaron: It really starts with my grandfather, Hugo Chaim Adler. He was a *chazzan*. My mother was born in Manheim and her father was one of the five cantors in the synagogue in Manheim. He was the first musician in my family, my grandfather, who I never met. He died several years before I was born. My uncle, my mother's brother, is Samuel Adler, who taught composition for many years at the Eastman School of Music. He was just here yesterday for Chanukah. I now teach with him in New York at Juilliard.

My mother sings, used to play French horn. My father turns the radio on. He loves the radio. He listens to music a lot. My older brother is a rabbi at HUC in Cincinnati, and my younger brother is a rabbi in Los Angeles at Emmanuel Synagogue. My older brother plays viola, violin, and piano, and my younger brother plays guitar. He's an incredible guitarist, incredible memory. He knows every Hebrew song in the world. He just hears it once and he can do it.

There's a lot of music in the family.

I've played cello all my life. Matter of fact, the first job I ever got ... I was visiting my brother, who was studying in Jerusalem. I was in a laundromat, the third from the last day I was going to be there. I'm doing my laundry and a guy is sitting there, his name is Richard Wolf, he's a violinist in Amsterdam now. We're talking, and I ask him, "You're an American, what do you do?" He says, "I'm in the orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphony." I say, "I play cello." He says, "Oh, tomorrow there is a cello audition." So, I went to the cello audition the next day and won the job. Then I called home and I said, "Ma, can I stay?" [laughter] They said, "Fine!" So, that was my college education. I stayed there for four years, playing. Then I went to Switzerland for several years, then I moved to

London for almost three years and then I came back to this country.

WJN: Where were you born?

Aaron: In Connecticut. I'm a Yankee. But, really that isn't home any more. I haven't been there since I'm seventeen. My parents moved to Boston, and when I took the job at the Cleveland Institute of Music I said to my parents, "Why don't you come to Cleveland? There are no grandchildren in Boston."

They said, "OK." Then, when I took the position here, I said to them, "You know, I'd only move if you move with us." And they said, "OK." So they moved here two-and-a-half years ago, when we moved. We're really happy that they are here, and they've been very happy here.

WJN: What brought you to Ann Arbor? Not the weather! [Our conversation took place during early Hanukkah, and it was 15 degrees out.]

Aaron: No, it was the music school here. The University is wonderful. No, not the weather. Matter of fact, they all said, when I lived in Cleveland "Oh, the weather is much better in Ann Arbor." I see no difference. [Laughter]

I said to my wife once when we were still in Cleveland, "You know, if we ever leave here, I promise you we're going to go to a beautiful, warm climate." And we end up in Ann Arbor.

But we really do like it here. The schools are wonderful. Our kids love being there. My daughter, Sofie, is in fifth grade at Angel and Noah is at Tappan, in seventh grade.

We've really enjoyed moving here. It's a great city for families. The reason why I came here is Christopher Kendall [Dean of the School of Music]. We met each other in Seattle twenty-two years ago. I taught his niece at a summer program called Encore. She was a wonderful cellist. So, when he called me, I thought it would be a great place to be a part of with Christopher. I think Christopher is a fantastic director. And this is a wonderful musical community. Terrific town. We were really pleasantly surprised how nice it is to live here. It's been a very comfortable move.

WJN: I first heard your name through some of your students. Then, the other day, when I mentioned to Gabe Bolkosky [prominent violinist and teacher, here in Ann Arbor] that I'd be talking with you, he said many complimentary things about you, but in particular he said that you're that rare breed of teacher who can teach young children as well as adults, that you're a terrific teacher with all age levels.



Aaron: When I was living in Israel there was a woman who donated instruments so children who could not afford lessons could use them. Amazing woman. I was only 18 when I was in the orchestra there and she thought I should teach young children. She said, "We have ten cellos, would you teach these ten children?" I said, "I'd love to."

She didn't realize that to teach young children you need a lot of experience. You don't have a young person teaching young children.

[Aaron's voice drops to a whisper] They played better at their first lesson than they did after a year of lessons! [Laughter] I had great enthusiasm, but they really played better when they started. So, after one year I said, "I really don't know what I'm doing. They were better before. You should find a real teacher." And she said, "OK, fine." So, I didn't teach again for ten years. I just thought I was a terrible teacher.

And then, when I came back to this country, I said, "You know, I really like young kids and I like working with them. I have to learn how to teach." So I took some teacher training courses with a woman named Gilda Barston in Chicago, who really inspired me to teach. I took a Suzuki teacher-training course with her and that really inspired me. She's a fabulous teacher, still a friend, a really great cellist and a terrific cello teacher. I took this one seminar, four days long, and it totally inspired me and I said, "I'm going to teach kids." After that I went and read a lot about teaching children.

So, when I moved to Seattle, I went to a Suzuki school and I said, "Here I am, and I'm ready to teach." And they said, "Coincidentally, our cello teacher of twenty years, yesterday told us she's retiring." And she had thirty cellists there and they needed to find a cello teacher. They said to me, "These are your students." So, overnight, the first week I was in Seattle, I had thirty cello students. And over a period of two, three years, I ended up with over fifty students, their ages ranged from five to eighteen, and I just loved it. I was working 50, 60, 70 hours a week teaching,

and it was a fabulous group of kids. One of them is now the principal cellist of the St. Louis Symphony. I had just oodles of fantastic talent in Seattle and I loved it. So, when the Cleveland Institute of Music called me, I wasn't sure. I was so happy in Seattle. I met my wife in Seattle. Yuni was an architect and we met just when Cleveland called me. I really wasn't going to go because I was so happy. But then my uncle, Sam Adler, said, "You really have to go, because getting your foot in the door at a conservatory is very important." And so I said, "All right, I'll go." And then Cleveland turned out to be a fantastic experience also. Over the years it really built up. At first I started with only kids and a few high school students, but then it worked into my teaching almost only university students.

Now I only teach university, but I think when my kids go off to college, I'll teach many more young kids. I'll start a whole class of younger kids. But the issue with starting young kids is that the hours are very different. You have to teach when the kids are out of school. I teach now from eight in the morning till three-thirty, four every day, and then, when my kids are home, I want to be home. It's a different life when you teach children. Your afternoons and evenings are shot. So, it was perfect timing for me that when I had kids I started teaching only college kids.

My teaching has really evolved from very young, then it went to very old, and I hope when my kids go off to college in eight years, I'll revert back to the very young again.

My main goal [in teaching] is so my students can have a life in music. I only want to take students who I think can make a living in music. Whether I think they have qualities in teaching, or performing. All the kids I teach, hopefully they learn to play very well. I won't teach someone who I don't think can make it as a musician. I think that's very important. A lot of places, you know, they take students so they have the numbers, but I feel if someone can't make it as a living, they should just do it for fun, and not be as serious about it. Because it's hard to make a living in music.

WJN: The way you talk about your life, it seems like you've often been in the right place at the right time.

Aaron: Circumstance really does matter in life. If I wasn't in that laundromat ...

WJN: Exactly.

Aaron: I would have had a very different... [laughter] And if I hadn't called those people in Seattle at that exact moment when their thirty-student teacher retired. It's just absolutely total luck. And I think everything in our lives is timing. Look, everybody meets their wives, or their husbands, out of timing and luck. Some people have better luck than others. [Laughter] I feel lucky that I'm in Ann Arbor. I think it's a wonderful place to be. ■

Kosher Cuisine

Celebrate Tu B'Shevat with Israeli dishes

Judy Cohen, food editor

Tu B'Shvat, celebrated on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shvat, was originally designated as the last date on which to tax the ripened produce of the trees for tithing. As a holiday, it was first observed by a community of Kabbalists in 16th century Safed. It has since come to symbolize the birthday of the trees, our concerns for the environment, and humanity's connection to nature and the earth.

Tu B'Shvat is more than just another harvest festival. It is closely linked to our love for the physical land of Israel and a time to express that solidarity. Some customs began before the exile of the Hebrews, but have continued in the traditions ever since. Others, like the Tu B'Shevat seder (ceremonial meal) first described in the 18th century work, *Peri Etz Hader* (Goodly Tree), are still evolving and are continually being re-interpreted. Certain crops associated with Israel, in particular grapes, nuts, figs, dates, olives, pomegranates, and grains (barley and wheat in particular) came to be called the "seven species" and should be included in the festivities.

Tu B'Shvat in my childhood is associated with bringing coins to Sunday school to fill the small blue and white JNF (Jewish National Fund) boxes, so our class could plant trees in Israel. For donations over a specified amount, a child received a certificate with a picture of his/her "very own tree". Planting a tree in Israel for a special occasion was then, and still is, considered an honor and a mitzvah. For my granddaughter's bat mitzvah a few years ago, every guest got a tree certificate.

On our first trip to Israel many years ago we visited one of many forests where the trees are planted. A short old man, slightly stooped, handed each of us a very small sapling, a trowel, and a small piece of paper with a prayer written on it. In a strong Yiddish accent he informed us "You can say the prayer or not, but I have been here many years, and those that have the prayer grow better." We never wrote down the exact location of our trees, so in subsequent visits have not been able to verify whether he was correct.

This seems an especially appropriate holiday to celebrate in Ann Arbor, which is affectionately known as "tree city" and was originally called Anns' Arbour, after the two women who, with their husbands, founded the city. If you are looking for inexpensive trees to plant, each spring you can buy conifer or hardwood seedlings in multiples of 25 for only \$18 from the Washtenaw County Conservation District. Call Dennis Rice at 761-6721 or go to www.washtenawcd.org

In addition to planting trees, Tu B'Shvat is usually celebrated with a seder based on and similar to Passover. It is customary to set the table with fine linens, your best dishes, and flowers. Drink four cups of wine with the meal, and be sure that the menu includes a variety of fruits, especially those from the seven species. There are many Tu B'Shvat *hagaddot* (books to describe the seder) with a variety of blessings and interpretations as to what each fruit and each cup of wine may symbolize, or you are free to create your own. ■

Chicken with pomegranates, also known as Chicken Rimonim

Serves 4-6

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 chicken, cut into eighths | 2 T. flour |
| juice of 2 pomegranates | ½ tsp. salt |
| seeds of 1 pomegranate | ¼ tsp. pepper |
| 1 onion, diced | 1 tsp. caraway seeds (optional) |
| 2 T. of margarine | 2 c. chicken soup |

1. Soak the chicken pieces in the pomegranate juice for half an hour.
2. Mix the flour, salt, pepper, and caraway seeds together. Dredge the chicken pieces in the mixture. Reserve the pomegranate juice.
3. Fry the coated chicken pieces in margarine. Add the diced onion and continue to fry.
4. When the chicken has been well-browned, add the pomegranate juice and cook on low flame for 20 minutes. Add the pomegranate seeds before serving.

from www.cyber-kitchen.com

Sephardic bulgur pudding or prehito

6-8 servings

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 c. medium bulgur | 1 c. coarsely chopped walnuts or almonds |
| 3 c. water | ½ c. dried currants or raisins |
| pinch of salt | ¼ c. chopped dates (optional) |
| ½ c. sugar or honey | 1 tsp. ground cinnamon |

1. Combine the bulgur, water, and salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until liquid is absorbed and the bulgur is tender, about 30 minutes. If necessary, continue cooking uncovered until the liquid is absorbed.
2. Remove from the heat and fluff with a fork. Stir in the remaining ingredients.
3. Spoon into a 9-inch square baking dish and refrigerate until chilled.

Variation: Baked Prehito: Before transferring to the baking dish, add 1 lightly beaten egg, and bake in a 350° oven for 40 minutes.

from www.cyber-kitchen.com

Nut balls

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1 c. margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 c. flour | 3 T. sugar |
| 1 c. almonds, chopped | powdered sugar |

1. Mix margarine, flour, nuts, vanilla, and sugar together.
2. Roll into small balls.
3. Bake in 325° oven for 20 minutes, or until golden brown.
4. Remove from oven and roll in powdered sugar while hot.

from Judaism.about.com



Couscous with apricots

Serves 4

- | |
|--------------------------------------|
| 1-1/2 c. water |
| 1 c. instant couscous |
| ½ c. dried apricots, roughly chopped |
| ¼ tsp. salt (optional) |
| 1 T. unsalted butter (optional) |

1. In a small saucepan, bring the water to a boil.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and boil for 1 minute.
3. Remove from the heat and let stand for 1 additional minute. Serve immediately.

This has only 109 calories per serving and 3 grams of fat, so you can enjoy the holiday without the guilt on this one.

from www.cyber-kitchen.com



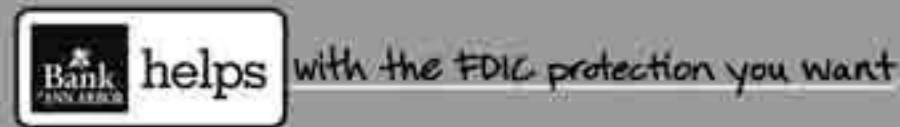
Orange Persian barley

Serves 4

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 c. regular pearl barley | ¾ tsp. ground cumin |
| 3 c. water | ½ tsp. salt |
| ½ c. chopped pitted dates | ½ tsp. pepper |
| ½ c. dried apricots | ½ c. slivered toasted almonds |
| 3 T. orange marmalade | |

1. In a medium saucepan bring the barley and the water to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook, covered, for 45 minutes, until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed
2. Coat a large skillet with nonstick spray. Stir dates, apricots, and marmalade over medium heat for three minutes. Blend in cumin, salt, and pepper, and simmer for two minutes longer. Stir in cooked barley and almonds. Reduce heat to medium low and cook until warmed through.

from www.jewishfood-list.com.



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Calendar

February 2009

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.*

World Wide Wrap: BIC. Followed by Polar Bear Tefillin photo in the snow. Lox and bagels provided. 9:30 a.m.

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.*

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

Monday 2

Music Appreciation and Exploration: JCC Seniors. Accomplished musician Laura Dunbar, Education and Outreach Director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, teaches an eight-week class that began January 12. For more information or to register, call Merrill at 971-0990.

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State St. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

Alternative Spring Break Can Drive: EMU Hillel. Meet at Hillel at 1 p.m. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Torah Study: TBE Sisterhood. With Cantor Annie Rose. Bi-monthly study session using the new WRJ *Women's Torah Commentary*. 7 p.m.

Text Study: BIC. “Jewish Perspectives on the Beginning and End of Time.” With Rabbi Dobrusin. 8 p.m.

Tuesday 3

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m.; \$4/session or \$10/3 sessions; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects, and card games, 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday.*

“The Bible in It's Time:” JCC Seniors. Taught by Dr. Liz Fried, this class runs through March 24.

Blood Pressure Clinic: JCC Seniors. A registered nurse from Care Response will take blood pressures, record them and address any questions. 1 p.m. *First Tuesday each month.*

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group). All ages and levels welcome including UM and non-UM participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of UM Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

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. *Every Tuesday.*

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rod Glogower presents different topics each week 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 4

Board Meeting: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Introduction to Judaism: BIC. Taught by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal. Free twelve-session class. Class starts at 7:45 p.m., however students are encouraged to join the congregation for Ma'ariv evening service at 7:30 p.m.

Jewish Learning Institute: Chabad. Winter semester class “You Be the Judge.” Challenge your sense of right and wrong with an exploration of Jewish Civil Law. 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Thursday 5

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

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., \$4, or 3/\$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky will resume in March.

Birthdays and Presentation: JCC Seniors. Celebration for all with birthdays in February. Friends and family are invited to join group for lunch and birthday cake at 12:30 p.m., followed by presentation by Tomer Zur, Jewish Federation *Shaliach* (emissary) who will present a program about Sderot, a Western Negev city in the Southern district of Israel. 1 p.m.

Take and Bake: TBE Sisterhood. Jewish sweets of rugelach, date cookies, and orange nut cookies. Bring a rolling pin. 2–4 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 Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 6

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

First Friday Shabbat: JCS. This year's theme for dinner is Local Ann Arbor, focusing on local favorites, locally owned businesses and locally grown foods. \$10/person or \$25 for family of four. 6:30 p.m. in the JCC Lounges. RSVP online at www.jewishculturalsociety.org to ensure that enough food is ordered.

Sisterhood Shabbat: TBE Sisterhood. National Board member and VP of Marketing and Communication for Women of Reform Judaism Sharon Benoff will present the Torah portion. (Benoff will also lead a Saturday group discussion.) Music with Kol Halev. 7:30 p.m.

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

Saturday 7

Shabbat Limud (Shabbat Learning): BIC. Facilitated by Rabbi Dobrusin. Discussion of weekly Torah portion over coffee and cakes. 9–10 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.*

Yiddishe Cup. Performance by the group considered to be one of the top klezmer bands in America. From Northeast Ohio, Yiddishe Cup revives the wacky Jewish humor of the '50s and '60s by parodying everything from chacha to doo-wop to rock. \$20/tickets. 8 p.m. at The Ark, 316 South Main.

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of calendar.

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.*

Tu B'Shevat: JCS. Gemini will perform, plus there will be storytelling, crafts, workshops, a walking seder and a popular conservatory scavenger hunt. 10 a.m. at Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

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.*

Tu B'Shevat Outdoor Family Program: TBE. Leslie Science Center. 10 a.m.–noon. RSVP to tginsburg@templebethemeth.org.

“Family Affairs: Inter marriage and Jewish Parents in Historical Perspective:” JFS. Examination of inter marriage throughout the ages and today by Keren McGinty, PhD, author of *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Inter marriage in America*. McGinty is the Mandell L. Berman Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Contemporary Jewish Life at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. Following her presentation, a panel of Jewish parents of intermarried children will discuss their experiences. 2–4 p.m. at the JCC. For information, call 769-0209 or email abbie@jfsannarbor.org.

Get Out of Your Room: Detroit Pistons: EMU Hillel. Join members of Hillel of Metro Detroit at the Palace of Auburn Hills to see the Pistons take on the Phoenix Suns. First ten students to buy tickets will get to tour the Fan Tunnel. \$20/ticket. Tickets are very limited and the cost is highly subsidized by EMU Hillel. 8 p.m. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Tu B'Shevat Seder: Chabad. Full seder dinner of special food and drinks of Israel in honor of Jewish Arbor Day. Study session on the meaning of the day and the Jewish perspective on ecology. 8 p.m.

Monday 9

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State St. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

Tot Tu B'Shevat Dinner and Seder: BIC. 5:30 p.m.

Text Study: BIC. “Jewish Perspectives on the Beginning and End of Time,” with Rabbi Dobrusin. 8 p.m.

Tuesday 10

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Exercise Energy with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m.; \$4/session or \$10/3 sessions; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects, and card games, 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday.*

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group). All ages and levels welcome including UM and non-UM participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of UM Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Tu B'Shevat Seder Dinner: TBE Sisterhood. D.A.M.E.S. dinner (Dinner in Appreciation for the Membership of our Extraordinary Sisterhood) beginning with wine and cheese at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. Led by Cantor Annie Rose, with participation by all. No charge for paid up members. For information or to RSVP, contact Jenny Hackel at 660-3461 or email jennyhackel@gmail.com.

Bet Midrash: BIC. Facilitated by Rabbi Dobrusin and Rabbi Blumenthal. To register, contact Mary at mary@bethisrael-aa.org or phone 665-9897.

Battle of the Bands Semi-Finals: EMU Hillel. 8 p.m. in the Student Center Auditorium. Third Annual battle semi-finals where six EMU-connected bands will compete. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rod Glogower presents different topics each week 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.

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. *Every Tuesday.*

Wednesday 11

Introduction to Judaism: BIC. Taught by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal. Twelve session free class starts at 7:45 p.m., however students are encouraged to join the congregation for Ma'ariv evening service at 7:30 p.m.

Men's Torah Study: TBE. Led by Roger Stutesman. The group meets second and fourth Wednesday each month. 7:30 p.m.

Jewish Learning Institute: Chabad. Winter semester class “You Be the Judge.” Challenge your sense of right and wrong with an exploration of Jewish Civil Law. 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Thursday 12

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

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., \$4 or 3/\$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky will resume in March.

Presentation: JCC Seniors. Arie Lipsky, Maestro of Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra (AASO) and Laura Dunbar, Education and Outreach Director of AASO, will present on music history, music appreciation and music in Ann Arbor. 1 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 Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Calendar

Friday 13

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

Coffee and Chill with Hillel: EMU Hillel. 5 p.m. at the EMU Student Center Starbucks. For information, contact Erin at FYSH@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Annual Knowledge Exchange: EMU Hillel. Holy Trinity visits Hillel for *Love Shabbat*. 6 p.m. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456. *See also February 15.*

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

Saturday 14

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.*

Have a Heart—Give Blood: TBE. Blood Drive. 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Shabbat Service: TBE. Led by sixth graders followed by lunch for students and their families. 10 a.m.

Kehillat Shabbat: BIC. For first through fifth graders. Today's theme is "Big Ten Shabbat." Participants should wear favorite team's colors and learn about the Big Ten from the Torah. 11 a.m.

Tot Shabbat: BIC. For tots ages 3–5 years old and parents. 11:15 a.m.

Mini-Shabbaton: TBE. 1–3:30 p.m.

Kol Halev Cabaret: TBE. Annual cabaret with dinner and music from Broadway to Opera to Israeli favorites. 6–8:30 p.m.

JCC Kids' Night Out: JCC. Fun monthly event for kids in grades K-5, featuring games, crafts, dinner, and a movie. This month will feature *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. \$20/ JCC Members, \$18/additional siblings; \$25/ non-members, \$23/additional siblings. Register by February 12 at www.jccannarbor.org or contact Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or call 971-0990.

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

Sunday 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.*

An Afternoon of Heart and Sole: JFS. Honoring Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein with the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Leadership Award. Dessert Reception at 2 p.m. at the UM Michigan League. \$36/tickets. Reception attendees may also purchase tickets for the Batsheva Dance Company performance at the Power Center at 4 p.m. Phone the JFS at 769-0209 or email robin@jfsannarbor.org for ticket information. Register at www.jfsannarbor.org.

"Safely Navigating Your Child through Adolescence in a Jewish Context:" TBE. With Jerry Miller, PhD. 6–7:30 p.m.

Annual Knowledge Exchange: EMU Hillel. Hillel visits Holy Trinity for *Sunday Supper*. 6 p.m. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456. *See also February 13.*

Take and Bake: TBE Sisterhood. Coffee cakes, apple and sour cream and current cakes. 6–7 p.m.

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

School's Out/JCC's In: JCC. For JCC members only in grades K–5. Middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers. Participants will take part in activities celebrating President's Day. Register by February 12 at www.jccannarbor.org or contact Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or call 971-0990.

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State St. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

Torah Study: TBE Sisterhood. With Cantor Annie Rose. Bi-monthly study session using the new WRJ *Women's Torah Commentary*. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 17

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m.; \$4/session or \$10/3 sessions; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games, 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday.*

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Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rod Glogower presents different topics each week 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.

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. *Every Tuesday.*

Wednesday 18

Alternative Spring Break Night Out: EMU Hillel. 6 p.m. at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Meditation: TBE. 7 p.m. in the chapel.

Introduction to Judaism: BIC. Taught by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal. Twelve-session free class. Class starts at 7:45 p.m., however students are encouraged to join the congregation for Ma'ariv evening service at 7:30 p.m.

Jewish Learning Institute: Chabad. Winter semester class "You Be the Judge." Challenge your sense of right and wrong with an exploration of Jewish Civil Law. 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Thursday 19

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

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., \$4 or 3/\$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschawsky will resume in March.

Discussion and Presentation: JCC Seniors. Jewish Family Services Geriatric Social Worker Allison Pollock, MSW, will be available for discussion, questions, and assistance at 12:30 p.m. Rabbi Kim Blumenthal of BIC will present on a topic TBD. 1 p.m.

Taglit Birthright Israel Registration: EMU Hillel. 10 a.m. at Pray Harrold and noon at Student Center. For information, contact Ricky at program@emuhillel.org or by phone at 482-0456.

Caregiver Conversations: JFS. Monthly drop-in educational and support group for adult children in a variety of caregiving roles for their aging parents who either live independently or require full-time care at home or in a residential facility. This month's topic is "The Driving Dilemma: Is Your Loved One Safe on the Road?" Learn how to initiate this difficult discussion and how to create positive solutions. A guest expert will present followed by open discussion. 6:30–8 p.m. at the JCC.

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 Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 20

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

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

Saturday 21

Shabbat Limud (Shabbat Learning): BIC. Facilitated by Rabbi Dobrusin. Discussion of weekly Torah portion over coffee and cakes. 9–10 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.*

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

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.*

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

Monday 23

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State St. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

February Break Fun Days: JCC. For JCC members in grades K–5. Middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers. A week featuring field trips and special activities, plus crafts, games, and gym time or outdoor recess. \$34 per day for care from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. \$32 for additional siblings and \$8 for Extended Care from 4–6 p.m. Registration and payment due by February 19. For information or to register, visit www.jccannarbor.org or contact Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or call 971-0990.

Tuesday 24

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Exercise Energy with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m., \$4/session or \$10/3 sessions; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games, 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday.*

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group). All ages and levels welcome including UM and non-UM participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of UM Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Bet Midrash: BIC. Facilitated by Rabbi Dobrusin and Rabbi Blumenthal. To register, contact Mary at mary@bethisrael-aa.org or phone 665-9897. 8 p.m.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Rabbi Rod Glogower presents different topics each week 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.

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. *Every Tuesday.*

Wednesday 25

Busy Women's Lunch: TBE Sisterhood. 11:45 a.m. at Zingerman's Roadhouse. RSVP to Shirley Harkness at 994-1104 or email Sandy Harlacher at sandra.harlacher@siemens.com.

Jewish Learning Institute: Chabad. Winter semester class "You Be the Judge." Challenge your sense of right and wrong with an exploration of Jewish Civil Law. 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Introduction to Judaism: BIC. Taught by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal. Twelve-session free class. Class starts at 7:45 p.m., however students are encouraged to join the congregation for Ma'ariv evening service at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday 26

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

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., \$4 or 3/\$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; \$3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschawsky will resume in March.

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Seniors on Stage: JCC Seniors. Walk down memory lane watching several excerpts from “Seniors on Stage” performances. 1 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 Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 27

Meditation: TBE. 1 p.m. in the chapel.

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30–3 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

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

Saturday 28

Tot Shabbat: BIC. For tots ages 3–5 years old and parents. 11:15 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.*

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of calendar.

Weekly Friday night Shabbat services

Shabbat Service: AAOM. Services held at UM Hillel. Call 994-9258 in advance for times.

Shabbat Service: BIC. 6 p.m.

Shabbat Service: TBE. Tot Shabbat at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 6 p.m.; Shira: Family Shabbat in Song at 6:45 p.m.; Traditional Service at 7:30 p.m. For information, call 665-4744.

Shabbat Service: Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. 6:15 PM at the JCC the last Friday 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@aaarecon.org or visit www.aaarecon.org.

Shabbat Service: Chabad. Begins at candle-lighting time. Home hospitality available for Shabbat meals and Jewish holidays. Call 995-3276 in advance.

Weekly Shabbat services and classes

Shabbat Services: AAOM. Morning service, 9:30 a.m. Evening service, 35 minutes before sunset. Call 662-5805 for information. Mincha/Ma’ariv with Seudah Shlisheet and Dvor Torah every week. Torah topics and a bite to eat. Discussions led by Rabbi Rod Glogower and other local scholars. Home hospitality available for Shabbat and meals. UM Hillel.

Shabbat Services: BIC. 9:30 a.m.; 6 p.m. Mincha. Morning childcare from 10 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Shabbat Services: AA Reconstructionist Havurah. Discussion-based format with topics changing monthly. For info, email info@aaarecon.org or call 913-9705 or visit www.aaarecon.org.

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

Shabbat Services: Pardes Hannah. Generally meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. Call 663-4039 for more information. 10 a.m. Led by Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg.

Shabbat Services: TBE. Torah Study at 8:50 a.m. Chapel Service at 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service at 10 a.m. Call the office at 665-4744 or consult website at www.templebethemeth.org for service details.

Home Hospitality for Shabbat and Holiday Meals: AAOM. Call 662-5805 in advance.

Home Hospitality and Meals: Chabad. Every Shabbat and *yom tov* (Jewish holiday). Call 995-3276 in advance.

“Mystical Insights to the Torah:” Chabad. For women to learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. Saturday, one hour before sundown. Call 995-3276.

“Laws of Shabbat—Jewish Ethics:” Chabad. Study group examines the code of law for Shabbat and Jewish ethics. Saturday, 1/2 hour before sundown. Call 995-3276.

Phone numbers and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM)
1429 Hill Street 994-5822

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah (AARH)
P.O. Box 7451, Ann Arbor 913-9705

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC)
2000 Washtenaw Ave. 665-9897

Chabad House
715 Hill Street 995-3276

EMU Hillel
965 Washtenaw Ave., Ypsilanti 482-0456

Jewish Community Center (JCC)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive 971-0990

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive 975-9872

Jewish Family Services (JFS)
2245 South State Street 769-0209

Jewish Federation
2939 Birch Hollow Drive 677-0100

Pardes Hannah
2010 Washtenaw Ave. 761-5324

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE)
2309 Packard Road 665-4744

UM Hillel
1429 Hill Street 769-0500

Shabbat Candlelighting

February 6	5:35 pm
February 13	5:44 pm
February 20	5:53 pm
February 27	6:02 pm

Batsheva Dance Company, continued from page 1

and reorganizes them into a new experience, providing an opportunity to look at Naharin’s repertoire over time, from its most extravagant to its most intimate and heartrending.

Batsheva Dance Company was founded in 1964 by modern dance pioneer Martha Graham and one of her students, Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild. The turning point for the company was the appointment of award-winning Israeli dancer/choreographer Ohad Naharin as artistic director in 1990, launching Batsheva into a new era. Today, Batsheva Dance Company operates throughout the year, with two companies and 40 dancers. The company includes dancers from Israel and abroad who are encouraged to affirm their distinct creative gifts either in the rehearsal process or in the creation of their own works during the ongoing Batsheva Dancers’ Workshop series. Many of Batsheva’s dancers develop their skills during an extensive training period in the junior company, the Batsheva Ensemble. The Ensemble serves as a greenhouse for the next generation of dancers and choreographers, and dedicates the majority of its time to Batsheva’s comprehensive outreach and education program.

With 250 annual performances in Israel and around the world, the company is now considered one of Israel’s leading cultural ambassadors. International performance highlights include engagements at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave Festival, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, American Dance Festival, Lyon Biennale, The Barbican Center, Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, HetMuziek Theater, and the Cannes Festival.

Dancer and choreographer Ohad Naharin began his dance training with the Batsheva Dance Company. At the invitation of Martha Graham, he came to New York to join her company and study at the School of American Ballet and the Juilliard School of Music. After a year with the Graham Company, Naharin enjoyed a period performing with major dance companies in Europe and

the United States. He made his choreographic debut in 1980 in the Kazuko Hirabayashi studio in New York, where he studied and worked with Maggie Black, David Gordon, Gina Buntz, and Billy Seigenfeld.

In 1990, Naharin was appointed artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company, where he quickly developed artistic associations with prominent Israeli designers, including lighting designer Bambi and costume designer Rakefet Levy. He often collaborates in the musical compositions for his work (Naharin trained musically before he started to dance) using widely divergent musical sources, from Arvo Pärt and John Zorn to Johann Strauss. He has collaborated with such musicians as Tractor’s Revenge, Avi Belleli and Dan Makov, Ivry Oider, Peter Zegveld, and Thijs van der Poll. Many of his works include live music performed on stage.

Naharin’s dance technique, which he devised when he was having back trouble, is known as Gaga. In an interview with Dance Magazine, Naharin explained the theory behind Gaga: “With Gaga we discover our movement patterns, and we become attuned to our weaknesses and to the places of atrophy in our bodies. We become more efficient in our movement and it allows us to go beyond familiar movements. We connect to our joy of dance and to our explosive power. The dancers become really great interpreters and also inventors of movement.” This exploratory method has become the cornerstone of Naharin’s work, acclaimed by critics and audience members alike.

For tickets or additional information, contact the University Musical Society at 764-2538 or online at www.ums.org. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the League Ticket Office (911 North University Ave). UMS Ticket Office hours: Monday-Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.–1 p.m., closed Sunday. ■

Black Jewish Alliance, continued from page 21

supportive not just on civil rights, but on aid for sub-Saharan Africa.”

It needs to trickle down, Saperstein says.

“There’s too little social interaction,” said the rabbi, who delivered the invocation the night Obama accepted the presidential nomination in August. “We can develop more opportunities for youth groups to work together on common projects. It is the building of levels of trust and personal connection that helps us through tough times.”

Using Internet outreach, ADL asked its activists and others to take the Martin Luther King Day “service pledge.”

“By signing this pledge, I recognize that respect for individual dignity, achieving equality and opposing anti-Semitism, racism, ethnic bigotry, homophobia, or any other form of hatred is a non-negotiable responsibility of all people,” it concludes.

An array of national and local Jewish groups signed up with the inaugural committee’s black-Jewish outreach.

In Washington, Jews attending inaugural festivities also were asked to join the Washington Hebrew Congregation’s “work day” on January 19, helping the homeless.

“If you’re a Jewish person coming to Washington for the inauguration, you’ll see that -- but you’ll also see homeless shelters and soup kitchens,” said the senior inauguration official, who spoke on the transition team’s strict condition of anonymity.

Other programs were more lighthearted.

The Greater Washington Jewish Community Relations Council marked the King day evening with the Black-Jewish Dialogues, which was described as “a hilarious two-actor, multimedia romp of sketches, theater and video that reveals the absurdity of prejudice and hate within the context of the American Black-Jew experience.”

Schneider insisted such activities were not out of the ordinary—“we’re close to the heyday of the black-Jewish relations”—but he said it was thrilling in recent weeks to see the alliance at its most rarefied level.

“When I saw Rahm Emanuel appointed White House chief of staff,” he said, “I saw the black-Jewish alliance at work again trying to restore this country.” ■

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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

Ruthless Cosmopolitan

Just being (Jewish)

By Ruth Ellen Gruber

ROME (JTA)—Not long ago, a Facebook friend of mine wrote that she had had a great time at a Shabbat dinner even if there had been “a wee bit much talk” of religion.

“Why all this American obsession with Jewish identity?” she wrote on her profile page on the social networking site. “Just BE!”

Her comment got me thinking.

Defining Jewish identity, refining Jewish identity, reclaiming Jewish identity, reinforcing Jewish identity—these seem indeed to be constant concerns among many Jews, and not just in the United States.

“Jewish identity” has been the subject of endless conferences, surveys, books, articles, analyses and movies—not to mention comedy routines. A Google search for “Jewish identity” gave me 573,000 matches!

What impact, I wondered, does this all have on who we are—or at least on who we say we are?

I decided to carry out an unscientific study to find out—a very unscientific study.

My methodology was simple: I used Facebook to see how Jews, or at least Jews I know, define themselves in terms of religious identity.

For those unfamiliar with Facebook, a site that has 120 million users around the world, its software permits you to connect with lists of “friends” who are in turn linked with friends’ lists of their own.

Upon joining you create a profile, including information you want to make public about your age, sex, location, profession, personal views, and even your sexual preference. You pick and choose what you want to post. Some people post only their name; others provide the whole *megillah*.

One of the choices is to state your “religious views.” You can choose whether or not to post anything at all about your religious beliefs and, if you opt to post, you choose how you want to define yourself; there is a blank space you can fill in with whatever you want to say.

For my study, I simply checked how my Facebook friends I know to be Jewish chose to respond.

I have more than 200 Facebook friends, and as it turns out, the overwhelming majority are Jewish. They include several rabbis, a cantor, klezmer musicians, Jewish scholars and leaders or staff members of Jewish organizations, as well as friends and family who have nothing to do with the Jewish institutional world.

About half of them chose not to fill in the “religious views” blank. Some clearly wanted to keep their religious beliefs personal; for others it was unimportant to define them. For others still, filling in the blank would have been redundant.

“It would be stating the very obvious,” Herschel Gluck, an Orthodox rabbi who for more than 20 years has done Jewish outreach work in East-Central Europe, told me in an e-mail.

All of his other postings on Facebook, he noted, including pictures that show him in a long beard and black hat, made his religious identity clear.

“EVERYTHING is naturally and unashamedly proudly Jewish!” he said.

Of my more than 80 Jewish Facebook friends who did choose to state their religious views, only a minority went the standard route. Barely a dozen wrote simply “Jewish,” and only another dozen or so identified themselves as some traditional formulation of Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox.

The others produced a cornucopia of qualifiers, inventions, political statements, and imaginative shadings that demonstrated a vast and colorful spectrum encompassing the widest range of belief, observance and nuanced sense of self.

They include: Jewish atheist; Absolute atheist; I love being Jewish; The Golden Rule; Incoherent; That’s between me and my imaginary friend; It’s all good; Eclectic; Panoramic; Anything I Can Cling To; Ignostic; Resolutely Secularly Jewish; Neo-tribalist, neo-pagan of Zion; “Still haven’t found it” Jewish; Spiritual Jewgavism; Whirling Dervish; Rationalist; Jewishjewishjewish; I can see a church from my window; Jewish but not obsessive; All; Post Pigeon-Holistic; Waiting for UFOs to Take Me to Hawaii.

Some of these are frivolous or funny; others tweak stereotypes. Most, though, even if outlandish, are at heart thoughtful expressions of complex contemporary IDs that go far beyond the usual definitions of who (or what) is a Jew.

One friend summed it all up by stating his religious views as follows: “A simple Jew (who am I kidding? Is there such a thing????).”

I asked a few of my friends why they chose to define their views as they did. The klezmer musician and filmmaker Yale Strom, for example, called himself a “Yiddish pagan.”

“Yiddish is the tongue I relate to most as in my second tongue,” he said in an e-mail. “My pagan beliefs come from me not believing in a typical omnipotent god figure sitting on a throne but a more amorphous one as in ‘Mother nature.’”

Strom said he felt connected to Mother Nature, “as did the Baal Shem Tov who lived in the forests, studied the plants and was a known herbalist among the Jews and non-Jews.”

“I am not an atheist,” he added, “because I know there is something greater than myself—or there better be or we are all doomed—in fact there has to be, why else be born, put into this life?”

Bruno Bitter, in his early 30s, coordinates a popular Jewish blog and online community in Budapest. He described his religious views as “opiate of the few.”

Why that?

“Marx wrote that *‘Die Religion ... ist das Opium des Volkes’*,” he told me. “This is often referred to as ‘religion is the opiate of the masses’ in English. But the Jewish religion is for no ‘masses,’ as we are a small minority.”

In Philadelphia, meanwhile, Michael Seifert, a retired technical writer, described himself as “Secular Humanist Jewish.”

“I call myself a secular humanist because I put my faith in civic, political, charitable, and educational institutions not affiliated with any religions and follow the teachings of the Western humanist tradition, which emphasizes the rights of man and the dignity of the individual,” Seifert told me.

“Oh yes,” he added. “I was born Jewish, so I have certain traditions and beliefs that come from my Jewish upbringing and education, as well as a birth-right and familial alliances with Jewish people.”

Two of Seifert’s siblings are also Facebook friends of mine—one, a musician, calls himself a “spiritualist,” and the other, a professor, is “in-different.”

Members of my own extended family described themselves as “Jewish of the Reform and secular sort,” or “Jewish-ish,” or simply wrote “yes” after the words “religious views.”

Myself? I chose not to say anything.

If anyone wants to know, they can ask.

Ruth Ellen Gruber’s books include *National Geographic Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to Eastern Europe, Letters from Europe (and Elsewhere)* and *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*. She blogs on Jewish heritage issues at jewish-heritage-travel.blogspot.com ■

Around Town

Our summer camps, ourselves

David Erik Nelson, staff writer

Although it’s hard to focus on summer camps while scraping ice from your windshield every morning, take note: these camps all have early-bird discounts, scholarships, and other incentives for families that can commit early.

Two local Jewish day camps offer programs geared towards kids in kindergarten through eighth grade. **Camp Raanana** holds their annual day camp at Independence Lake County Park (about 20 minutes from Ann Arbor). This outdoor program runs from June 22–August 21, and aims to instill a love of nature and water, with ecology lessons, explorations, and Red Cross-certified swim lessons. Camp Director Deborah Huerta notes, “Camp Raanana prides itself on its dedicated and experienced staff. All of Camp Raanana’s head counselors are mature college students with extensive day camp experience and a commitment to providing exceptional programs for campers.” Raanana’s staff also includes two Israeli *shlichim*, who serve as counselors and share their perspective on Israel and the Jewish experience.

Weekly field trips and special events include trips to the Toledo Zoo, the Ann Arbor Hands On Museum, Jump City, Greenfield Village, several water parks, and a visit from the Israeli Scouts Friendship Caravan.

The three-day program (for campers entering kindergarten) costs \$150 per week, while the full-week program (campers up to fifth grade) costs \$200 per week. The Pioneer Adventure Program (for grades six through eight) costs \$220 per week. Camp Raanana also offers a four-week, \$360 Counselor-in-Training program for teens entering ninth or tenth grade. Registration fees include daily transportation from the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County to Independence Lake. All pre-May 1 registrants are entered in a raffle to get a free week at camp. Learn more at their website (www.campraanana.com) or contact Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990.

Camp Gan Israel is an Ann Arbor-based day camp (just a few minutes from downtown) offering three sessions—June 23–July 3, July 6–24, and July 27–August 7—with a half-day session for pre-kindergartners.

Camp Director Shternie Zwiebel’s hand-picked staff are noted for their warmth and quick rapport with campers and their families. Zwiebel places a high value on maintaining as much year-to-year continuity in her staff as is possible. Daily activities include a mix of field trips and summer camp staples like cooking, crafts, music and dance, team sports, and swimming, as well as science programs and other projects with a focus on education, personal growth, and social development. According to their website, Camp Gan Israel is committed to fostering “a totally non-judgmental environment made up of campers from all Jewish backgrounds. An individual’s level of observance is not stressed. All children enjoy a shared Jewish spirit through songs and projects.”

Camp is \$190 per week for kids five through 13-years-old (or \$1,254 for the full season), and \$135 per week for three- and four-year-olds (\$898 for the full season). For more information, contact camp director Shternie Zwiebel at 995-3276 (ext.15), or

look online at www.mycampganisrael.com

We have two prominent Jewish overnight camps. **Camp Young Judaea** is located in Waupaca, WI, on Lake Stratton (2 hours north of Milwaukee), and offers the familiar fixtures of traditional sleep-away camp: team sports, archery, swimming, sailing, tennis, drama, and crafts, plus water-skiing, rock climbing on their 40-foot climbing tower, a ropes course with zip line, disc golf, and a new nine-hole miniature golf course.

Camp Young Judaea’s program aims to strengthen campers’ Jewish- and Zionist identity, with Hebrew classes, Israeli folk dancing, Shomer shabbat observance, and a certified kosher kitchen under rabbinic supervision. Their trained and certified staff includes an on-site registered nurse or doctor.

Camp Judaea has two three-and-a-half week sessions, running from June 15–July 9 (\$3,400), and July 13–August 6 (\$3,300), as well as a two-week session for third and fourth graders (\$1,900). Camp Young Judaea offers sibling and referral discounts. Call (847) 328-4942 (ext.16), or visit their website (www.cyjmid.org) for more information.

Located on Lake Kaiser in Three Rivers, MI (just 2 hours from Ann Arbor), **Camp Tavor** takes its lead from Israel’s collective farms in nurturing personal and community identity. Camp Tavor is a part of the Habonim Dror movement and bases their program on Progressive Labor Zionism, Cultural Judaism, and social justice. Counselors and campers work together to define their community goals, determine activities, and resolve conflicts.

Camp Tavor offers traditional camp activities daily (including swimming, boating, team sports, crafts, etc.), likewise augmented with Hebrew classes, Shabbat observance, Israeli folk dancing, and healthy meals from their kosher kitchen.

But Camp Tavor’s atmosphere is more similar to a kibbutz than a traditional sleep-away camp. Each morning includes a one-hour work session (*avodah*) during which campers elect to care for the camp’s livestock, work in the organic garden, or otherwise maintain and develop the camp. Camp Tavor also maintains the spirit of *tikkun olam* and social justice, volunteering in the Three River’s community.

This co-ed program is geared towards campers in the fourth through tenth grades, and enjoys a 4:1 camper-to-counselor ratio and licensed on-site medical staff.

Camp Tavor offers a three-week and a four-week summer session, as well as a full seven-week season, which runs from June 21–August 11. Each session costs around \$3,000, but Camp Tavor offers a \$1,000 tuition reduction for first-time campers who enroll for a full-session. There is also a price break for full season campers. Current rate information is available online at www.camptavor.com. Scholarships may also be available. To meet local campers and counselors, contact their Ann Arbor recruiter, Ron Sussman, at (313) 702-3116. ■

Vitals

Mazel tov

Shira Hammerslough on her bat mitzvah, February 7.
 Noah Hirsch on his bar mitzvah, February 7.
 Eliza Caughey on her bat mitzvah, February 7.
 Hannah Cook on her bat mitzvah, February 28
 Lillian Sedman Clark on her bat mitzvah, February 28
 Yael Silver on her bat mitzvah, February 28.
 Gary and Harriet Charson on the marriage of daughter, Rachel, to Joe Tunk, on November 28.
 Rich and SaraJane Adler on the marriage of their daughter, Ruth Adler, to Danny Jacob, October 26.
 Steven and Nancy Goldstein on the birth of their granddaughters, Leah Danit and Jordyn Sarah Goldstein, daughters of Aaron and Alison Goldstein.
 Avi and Ginger Derrow on the birth of their daughter, May Sophia Derrow (Mimi), on December 13.
 Jill and Daniel Pritts on the birth of their son, Daniel Thomas Pritts, Jr., on December 29.
 Richard and Lesley Hume on the engagement of their son, Michael, to Kimberly Mina.
 Fredda and Paul Unangst on the engagement of their son, Dan, to Beth Holland.
 Leonid and Maria Gankin on the birth of their daughter, Bella Pearl Gankin, on January 4.

Condolences

Yaakova Sacerdoti on the death of her father, Zev Abraham.
 Caroline Helton on the death of her mother, Nancy Caroline Helton.
 Ellen Stroff on the death of her father, Oscar Schwartz, on November 22.
 The family of Millie Rostow on her death, November 23.
 Ann Epstein on the death of her mother, Kate Savishinsky, on November 29.
 Pamela Harnick on the death of her father, Steven Harnick, on December 9.
 Bill Parkus on the death of his mother, Carolyn Parkus, on December 20.
 Shelley Griffith on the death of her step-father, R. Gibson Fair, on December 25.
 Deb Schild on the death of her uncle, Jack Solomon, on December 27.
 Rivka Black-Elk on the death of her father, Don McCracken, on December 27.
 Leora Druckman on the death of her mother, Sylvia Druckman, December 18.
 Sarah Weiss on the death of her father, Alan Holliday, on January 5.

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www.jewishannarbor.org

For questions, email AnnArborMussarWeekend@gmail.com

or call Steve at 734-274-5185.

See the article on page 4 to learn more about Mussar



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CAMP RAANANA FOR GRADES 3-5

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PIONEER ADVENTURE PROGRAM FOR GRADES 6-8

The Pioneer Adventure Program caters to the interests of our oldest campers. Each week campers travel to unique field trip destinations, participate in stimulating mitzvah projects, and enjoy fun activities, Shabbat celebrations, and special events at camp.

High schools students may apply to be CITs or Junior Counselors.



For more information or to obtain a registration form, please visit www.CampRaanana.com or contact camp director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 734-971-0990.