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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli girl rescued in Turkey

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The bodies of Shiran's twin brother, father and grandparents were recovered Saturday.

Israeli rescuers also found the bodies of another Israeli couple who were vacationing in the resort town of Cinarcik. [Page 3]

Jewish Iranian speaks up

A Jewish member of Iran's Parliament called on Iranian authorities to speed up the trial of 13 Iranian Jews being held there on charges of spying.

Manouchehr Eliasi was quoted in an Iranian newspaper as saying a timely trial could reduce Western pressure against Iran in the case.

The 13, who were arrested in March, could face the death penalty.

Star of David under review

A Mississippi school board agreed to review a school policy it cited in forbidding a Jewish student to wear a Star of David symbol to school.

The Harrison County school board ruled that the six-pointed star is sometimes used as a gang symbol and therefore could not be worn in accordance with school policy.

Conservative Baptist leader Jerry Falwell, Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson and a variety of Jewish leaders have condemned the move.

Meanwhile, the president of the Southeast Region of B'nai B'rith International said he is confident that the board's decision was not motivated by anti-Semitism, but by a desire for school safety.

Generator part stays put

A ruling by Israel's High Court of Justice last Friday prevented another part of an electrical generator from being transported during the Jewish Sabbath. The company responsible for moving the generator had asked the court to allow it to do so until a compromise is reached on the issue, which has become the latest flash point for secular-religious tensions in the Jewish state.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Will George W. Bush be the candidate to break the Democratic lock on Jews?

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Now that George W. Bush has solidified his position as the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination by winning last weekend's Iowa straw poll, the Texas governor will try to find support in unconventional places.

But can a pro-life governor — who wants church and state to “work together,” thinks schools should display the Ten Commandments and once said that only followers of Jesus can go to heaven — break the Democratic Party's lock on Jewish voters?

Jewish Republicans certainly think so.

“He's somebody who is the perfect model of who the Jewish community is looking for in a candidate,” said Matt Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

For Brooks and other Republicans, Bush's mantra of “compassionate conservatism” has struck a chord.

“A lot of the Jewish community can relate to him because he's running a campaign that's not very threatening.

“You can't demonize his campaign as being a captive of the religious right,” said Brooks, who stressed that his group officially has no favorite in the race for the nomination.

Eager to reclaim the White House Bush's father lost in 1992 to President Clinton, many Republican governors, members of Congress and big donors have united around Bush's campaign.

The Texas governor's record fund raising, which has netted almost \$40 million, has given Bush the political power to reshape the primary landscape.

But Republican unity, of course, does not translate into Jewish support.

Clinton and Vice President Al Gore received about 80 percent of the Jewish vote in 1992 and again in 1996.

Bush's supporters hope he can make some headway among Jewish voters with his support for Israel.

He traveled there with the Republican Jewish Coalition last year and recently issued a statement from his spokesman that he would move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as soon as he is elected.

“That's a position I'd be happy to take to the Jewish community,” Brooks said.

Bush has quietly distanced himself from his father's legacy of confrontation with the Jewish community.

Relations between the United States and Washington soured during President Bush's term when he attacked Jewish lobbyists and his secretary of state, James Baker, publicly criticized Israel.

While George W. Bush's strong early showing has enabled him to take a more moderate position along the GOP's political spectrum, he has drawn fire from many in the Jewish community on a host of domestic issues, especially on the church-state front.

“In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people, we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities and community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives,” Bush said last month in a speech in Indianapolis.

“We will rally the armies of compassion in our communities to fight a very

MIDEAST FOCUS

Palestinian stabs security guard

A crossing point between Jordan and the West Bank was closed for several hours Sunday after a Palestinian attempted to stab an Israeli security guard. The guard was unharmed, and the Palestinian was detained after Israeli guards at the crossing fired in the air.

Under the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords, Israel has overall security responsibility for the international Allenby Crossing, while Palestinian police are also stationed there.

In a separate incident, Palestinian police, acting on reports from Israeli security forces, thwarted an attack in which an 18-year-old Palestinian is suspected of planning a stabbing in Jerusalem's indoor mall.

Two Israelis wounded in Lebanon

Two Israeli soldiers on an Israeli Army outpost in Israel's security zone in southern Lebanon were wounded in clashes with Hezbollah fighters.

Also over the weekend, two members of the Islamic fundamentalist group were killed by Israeli airstrikes.

Palestinians come to Washington

Palestinian negotiators were scheduled to travel to Washington for meetings Monday with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The meetings come as Albright prepares for her trip to the Middle East, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 1.

Noted playwright dead at 56

One of Israel's most respected and controversial playwrights died last week in Tel Aviv.

Hanoch Levin often sparked national furors during his more than 30-year career. His work included the highly political "You, Me and the Next War," which was a criticism of Israeli society after the Six-Day War, and "Queen of the Bathtub" in 1970.



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different war against poverty and hopelessness, a daily battle waged house to house and heart to heart."

Bush went on to promise that if elected he would "allow private and religious groups to compete to provide services in every federal, state and local social program. We will create an advocate position, reporting directly to the president, to ensure that charities are not secularized or slighted."

Bush hopes to fund many of these programs by encouraging "an outpouring of giving" by creating a new charity tax credit "which will allow individuals to give a part of what they owe in state taxes directly to private and religious institutions fighting poverty in their own communities."

Although many Jews oppose using religious institutions to provide government-funded social services, Bush could gain support among Orthodox Jews with positions like this.

"Gov. Bush has clearly championed these kind of initiatives in Texas," said Nathan Diamant, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs.

"In the Orthodox community, this is one of a set of issues that will help him get support," he said.

While the Orthodox community "is in favor of charitable choice," as these initiatives are known, Diamant said, "we are still waiting for explicit statements on Israel, Jerusalem and church-state."

In June, when Bush called for schools and government buildings to hang the "standard version" of the Ten Commandments, he was quickly attacked by many church-state watchdogs.

Bush's idea "dramatizes again the folly of allowing the heavy hand of government to shape our religious lives," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"The naive assumption that a 'standard version' of the Ten Commandments could be easily agreed to ignores the conviction with which different faith groups embrace their teachings and will make those children whose version is not selected feel like outsiders," Saperstein said.

The controversy over the Ten Commandments came shortly after Bush tried to silence criticism for remarks he made six years ago that were interpreted as precluding Jews from going to heaven.

After returning from a trip to Israel last November, Bush told reporters, "My faith tells me that acceptance of Jesus Christ as my savior is my salvation, and I believe I made it clear that it is not the governor's role to decide who goes to heaven."

Around the same time, he sent a letter apologizing for his remarks to the Anti-Defamation League.

The letter prompted the group's national director, Abraham Foxman, to say "the matter of his 1993 statement is now behind us."

But others in the Jewish community continue to press Bush on the issue, which is likely to follow him, if he campaigns actively for Jewish support.

Although Bush has faced criticism for many of his pronouncements on religious issues, he has received high marks in Texas for his support for the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which restored protections to religious liberties after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a federal version of the law in 1997. But more recently Bush has been criticized for not standing up and supporting a hate crimes bill that proponents say died this year after the governor did not lobby for it.

While staunchly pro-life, Bush has moved to take the abortion issue off the political table.

"Abortion is not going to be an issue he is going to force onto the American political scene," Brooks said.

Bush has committed himself not to have a litmus test on abortion for a running mate — or for judges if elected.

As the son of a former president and the self-declared "compassionate conservative" criss-crosses the country seeking support from minorities, Jews and others, he's attracting critics who charge that his ideas are "crumbs of compassion."

By next year's primaries, he says, he hopes to convince skeptics that they are actually "the bread of life."

JEWISH WORLD

Aryan Nations could be sued

Two Jewish groups are planning lawsuits against a white supremacist group linked to Buford O'Neal Furrow's recent shooting rampage in Los Angeles.

The Jewish Defense League and the Anti-Defamation League are planning separate class-action federal civil rights lawsuits against the Aryan Nations stemming from the incident.

Richard Butler, the leader of the Aryan Nations, dismissed the possible lawsuits last week as a "typical Jew response" and said he had no contact with Furrow since 1994 or 1995, when he was an active member of the paramilitary group.

Medical waste found near shuls

U.S. authorities are investigating after containers of medical waste marked with swastikas and references to the recent shootings at the Los Angeles Jewish center were found outside synagogues in two Connecticut cities.

Police, who are working with federal authorities, believe the incidents involving the plastic containers, found Aug. 17 and Aug. 19, are linked.

Ford used slave laborers

Ford's European operations used slave laborers during World War II, according to a document recently discovered in Russian archives.

The U.S.-based Ford has responded to similar allegations in the past by saying that it did not control its European operations during the war.

Firm drops 'Mein Kampf' online

A German company stopped selling Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in its online bookstores, according to a company spokesman.

Bertelsmann's move came after reports that Germans were circumventing laws against the sale of "Mein Kampf" in their country by ordering it from online stores based in other countries.

Portuguese gold accusations grow

Portugal took in Nazi gold worth about \$1 billion in today's currency, according to the World Jewish Congress.

The accusation came as a conflict over Portugal's involvement in Nazi gold escalates in the wake of a report released by Portugal that said the country had no reason to compensate victims from the Nazi era.

Jewish universities rank high

Two Jewish universities rank among the top 50 in the United States, according to a new survey. Brandeis University was ranked 31st and Yeshiva University 44th in U.S. News and World Report's annual report of American universities.

Israeli girl buried in quake rubble recovering after dramatic rescue

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In a rescue operation that defied shrinking odds, Israeli rescue teams have saved a 9-year-old girl who had been trapped for four days in earthquake rubble in Turkey.

Doctors said Shiran Franco was dehydrated but in good condition when they reached her early Saturday morning. Her mother, Iris, who was rescued from the ruins on Thursday, said the first thing her daughter asked for was a soft drink. Shiran also asked her mother why it had taken so long to reach her.

"They worked very hard," Iris Franco responded.

Israeli teams on Saturday also recovered the bodies of Shiran's twin brother, her father and grandparents. The bodies of another Israeli couple who had been vacationing in the resort town of Cinarcik were also found.

Rescue units reached Shiran around 4 a.m. on Saturday morning in the wreckage of an apartment building where she had been staying with her family.

Maj. Eran Magen, who first spotted Shiran, said he decided to drill a hole in what he believed was the room in which the children had been sleeping.

"I drilled a hole and looked inside, and thought I saw a hand," Magen said. "I yelled down, and I think I was answered. I ordered everyone to turn off the [drilling] equipment. From there, everything started moving quickly."

The reunited mother and daughter were flown back to Israel on Saturday, where the girl was hospitalized at Sheba hospital in Tel Hashomer.

Doctors marveled at her condition in light of the circumstances. They said she would remain hospitalized until she was fully rehydrated, and until doctors could determine whether there is damage to internal organs or muscles.

Family members said Shiran has no recollection of the earthquake. Her mother said her daughter thought she had been in a car accident.

Israeli aid efforts, including a field hospital, continue to operate in Turkey. Some of the several tons of food, clothing and blankets collected in Israel for the earthquake victims were due to be sent to Turkey on Monday. □

Israeli researchers at Technion charged up by their better battery

By Julia Goldman

NEW YORK (JTA) — Prepare for a new breed of battery-powered bunnies.

Researchers at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have developed a high-energy "Super-Iron" battery that delivers power for longer periods and is more environmentally friendly than alkaline batteries.

According to the Haifa-based institute, some 60 billion batteries are used around the globe each year, with much of today's demand coming from "high-drain electronics" such as laptop computers and cellular phones.

Despite the need for safe, inexpensive, higher capacity batteries, the market has been dominated by batteries using manganese dioxide, a material dating back 130 years, the Technion's research team wrote in the journal *Science* this month. Their new class of batteries is made of an uncommon form of iron combined with oxygen, called ferrate, and can store 50 percent more energy than conventional batteries of comparable size.

"A conventional AAA-size alkaline battery may last only a few minutes at a high drain rate," lead researcher Stuart Licht told *The New York Times*, "but under the same conditions a AAA super-iron battery discharges for well over an hour."

Moreover, the Technion's "energetically rich" batteries are rechargeable, made of inexpensive material and can be used in the same way as AA or AAA batteries.

Plus, the super-iron batteries break down into "green" iron dust, which is "relatively environmentally benign" compared to the toxic discharge of many batteries currently being used. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Camps focus on content while tailoring it to children*By Julia Goldman*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Surprise Lake Camp, a 775-acre wooded haven that attracts “minimally affiliated” Jewish kids from the New York area, is sprucing up its Judaic programming.

Camp Ramah in the Berkshires, one of the Conservative movement’s nine Jewish overnight camps, is beefing up its classes in sports, crafts and music. Camp Young Judea Sprout Lake, run by the youth movement of Hadassah, the women’s Zionist organization, is making designs to distinguish itself through fine arts.

These camps aren’t looking to attract more students — Jewish camps around the country fill to capacity, with waiting lists hundreds of names long. Camps are going through a boom time because of a strong economy and a camper-age population bulge.

But the estimated 100 Jewish overnight camps hope to remain competitive against private specialty camps, other summer experiences — including trips to Israel — and eventually one another.

“We want to feed into all the different passions” kids have, said Ron Polster, assistant director of Camp Ramah of the Berkshires, which is the summer home to approximately 550 campers between 9 and 16, most of whom attend Jewish day schools.

“We pride ourselves on being a Jewish camp with general activities, but we want to be able to compete.”

This year, Polster applied to the Foundation for Jewish Camping for a grant to fund “A.I.R.: Artists and Athletes in Residence,” which brings in coaches, musicians and artists to work with campers. “There is no reason why someone should have to choose between being a serious Jew and a tennis player,” said Rabbi Ramie Arian, the foundation’s executive director.

In the last decade, the Jewish community has sought out the factors that contribute to what is often termed “Jewish continuity.” Overnight Jewish summer camps — along with day schools and Israel trips — rank high on the list of factors that make for strong, life-long Jewish connections.

The foundation’s goal is to build awareness of the positive, long-term effects of Jewish camps on Jewish identity. The goal, ultimately, is to create more camps to attract more Jewish students.

Arian believes that there are about 350 private for-profit summer camps with no Jewish mission that serve “overwhelmingly Jewish clientele.” The roughly 30,000 Jewish youth attending Jewish overnight camps each year represent only 4 percent of all Jewish young people, according to the Jewish camping foundation, which began operating last August and announced its first \$200,000 in grants this March.

Arian and Robert and Elisa Spungen Bildner, a New Jersey couple who started the foundation in 1997, hope to triple that number and help finance the building or acquisition of at least 100 new camps. Three of the foundation’s grants went to planning studies for the creation of new camps. But half of the grants went toward recruiting specialized staff and bolstering creative and outdoor activities and Hebrew and Jewish programming.

At Camp Sprout Lake, one of Young Judea’s six overnight camps, a new air-conditioned chadar ochel, or dining room, dominates the small campus in Verbank, N.Y. But the camp’s focus is its art studio — which was converted out of the old dining hall that stands in a shady spot overlooking a creek.

On a recent afternoon, members of the art chug, or activity group, were piecing together a major oeuvre: making clay plaques and other decorative designs to designate each of the camp’s 16 bunks with the name of an Israeli city.

With intense concentration, Hannah Grossman, 11, guided a small blade through three blocks of clay to create a design of stone walls and ocean waves. “Akko,” the second-year camper from New Jersey said, indicating the three Hebrew letters for the name of the ancient town on Israel’s northern coast.

Grossman and 27 other artist-campers this session are being guided in their creative efforts by Judith Resheff and her husband, Ori, artists from Israel, and two graduates of the Bezalel fine arts academy in Jerusalem. The artists are fundamental to the camp developing an art program that is “serious, interesting and challenging” said the camp’s interim director, Yardena Spector.

The foundation deemed the effort worthy of a \$10,000 grant.

The project is part of “a new tradition,” said Spector, an Israeli shlichah, or emissary. Campers used to clamor “to take stuff home,” but now the camp is encouraging them to “put things back” into the camp structure. Last session, the art chug made a sculpture — a 10-foot yellow “monster,” that stands outside the new dining hall — a project they directed from sketching the preliminary design to painting the final polka dots on the beast’s back.

The improvements in the art program have impressed the campers and helped to undergird the Zionist youth movement’s emphasis on peer leadership.

At Surprise Lake Camp, which is one of 23 camps affiliated with the Jewish Community Centers Association and supported by UJA Federation of New York, the challenge was to stimulate interest in Jewish activity.

Most of its 500 campers are what the director calls “the prototypical continuity target” — children from interfaith families or homes with minimal active Jewish connection.

There is no formal Jewish instruction, said Jordan Dale in an interview at the idyllic site an hour’s drive north of New York City.

“Our philosophy is if they have a good time, they’ll have a positive association” with Judaism.

There are weekly limudim, or learning sessions, on Saturday afternoons, when campers discuss contemporary issues from a Jewish perspective, and teva programs, in which campers explore Judaism’s connection to nature.

But “we’ve always had problems in the past — how can one person run an oneg” or Friday evening Sabbath reception “for 250 people?” Dale said.

This year, a grant from the Jewish camping foundation helped him recruit eight additional counselors with Jewish educational and professional experience to work primarily on improving Jewish content.

Sean Zam, a former camper and camp counselor who is entering his sophomore year at Penn State, was considering a professional internship to propel his business career.

Instead, he was convinced to return to Surprise Lake by the salary bonuses Jewish program staff receive — up to \$500 over the base salaries that run between \$1,200 and \$1,900, depending on experience. Money aside, Zam is committed to turning up the Jewish volume of camp.

He leads the more traditional prayer service on Shabbat and tutors kids for their bar and bat mitzvahs — some of which take place at the camp. But he thinks what the kids will remember most is having fun. □