

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

3 killed in suicide attack

At least three Israelis were killed and 15 wounded in a suicide attack Sunday at a gas station near the Israeli settlement of Ariel.

Three people were seriously wounded and the rest sustained light to moderate injuries, hospital officials said.

All of the fatalities were army reservists, and at least one was an officer.

The Al-Aksa Brigade, the military wing of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Following the attack, a group of Jewish settlers assaulted Palestinian olive pickers and foreign peace activists in the West Bank.

The attack followed an Oct. 21 suicide bombing of a bus in northern Israel that killed 14 people.

Sharon confronts budget crisis

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday's terrorist attack underscores the need for unity among all members of the governing coalition.

Sharon's remarks came amid efforts to avert a coalition crisis over the Labor Party's threat to oppose the 2003 state budget.

Among its demands, Labor has demanded cuts in funds allocated for settlements. Sources close to the prime minister said he would not give in to Labor's demands.

Israeli survives Moscow crisis

An Israeli woman who was among the hostages taken by Chechen rebels in Moscow was recovering after suffering from what was believed to be gas inhalation.

Valeria Lisanskia, 45, from the Haifa area, was visiting her father in Moscow and went with friends to the theater when she was caught up in the hostage crisis.

She said she got rid of her Israeli passport out of fear the captors would hurt her if they knew her nationality.

During the standoff, the Israeli Embassy in Russia and the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem tried to prevent publication of her presence among the hostages out of concern for her well-being.

During the crisis, Lisanskia sent text messages via cell phone to her son, husband and mother in Israel.

OBITUARY

Jewish community stunned by sudden death of Sen. Wellstone

By Matthew E. Berger and Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — American Jewish leaders are mourning the tragic sudden death of Sen. Paul Wellstone, a two-term Democrat from Minnesota almost universally lauded as a "mensch."

Wellstone, 58, a Jew known for his liberal views on domestic and Middle East issues, died in a plane crash last Friday in Eveleth, Minn., less than two weeks before a pivotal and hotly contested election.

"You had to like Paul Wellstone," said Judy Yudof, president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, a personal friend of the senator. "He was just honest and completely forthright. If you walked up to Paul, he'd give you a hug."

The plane was taking Wellstone to the funeral of a state legislator's father. Wellstone's wife, Sheila, 58, his daughter, Marcia, three campaign staffers and two pilots were also on board, and all perished in the crash.

There was inclement weather in Minnesota last Friday, including light snow and freezing rain.

Wellstone was in the midst of a heated re-election battle against a Republican challenger, former St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman. The race was the only Senate contest pitting two Jews against each other, much like the 1990 race Wellstone won to join the Senate.

Both Wellstone and Coleman had strong backing within the state's 45,000-strong Jewish community.

The political implications of the tragedy could be enormous. With Democrats clinging to a one-vote majority in the Senate, every race was considered important, and Wellstone's race with Coleman was seen as neck and neck.

It's unclear what will happen now. Over the weekend, Wellstone's sons asked former Sen. Walter Mondale to replace Wellstone on the ballot, and it appeared likely that Mondale would agree.

If Wellstone's name remains on the ballot and he wins, Gov. Jesse Ventura, an independent, would have to choose a replacement.

Wellstone was known for his liberal views, highlighted recently in his hesitancy to support the Bush administration's drive for military action against Iraq.

Wellstone argued that there ought to be more of a focus on disarming Iraq, and that the public was worried about the United States launching an attack without first gaining international support.

In the end, Wellstone voted against the bill authorizing military force against Iraq. The bill passed.

Jewish leaders said Wellstone's voting record was always strong on aid to Israel.

In recent years he signed or co-sponsored various congressional letters in support of Israel, including one to President Bush criticizing Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and urging the administration not to meet with Arafat until the Palestinians ended violence against Israel.

Wellstone also supported moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

In the early 1990s, however, Wellstone was not considered stalwart on Israel.

He did not sign on to a number of other letters and resolutions, including a 1998 letter that urged President Clinton to stop publicly pressuring Israel to make concessions and that criticized Arafat for violating the Oslo peace accords. Such points led some

MIDEAST FOCUS

4 Palestinians killed in West Bank

Four Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank on Sunday. In Jenin, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was killed according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. In Nablus, three Palestinians were killed and two soldiers were lightly wounded during an exchange of gunfire. On Saturday, Cabinet Secretary Gideon Sa'ar said the army will remain in Jenin as long as necessary. Sa'ar made the statement on Israel Radio a day after the army launched a large-scale operation to round up terrorists in Jenin.

By Sunday, troops had arrested some 40 Palestinian terror suspects, including one would-be suicide bomber.

The incursion into Jenin followed the Oct. 21 car bombing of a bus in northern Israel that killed 14 people.

Arafat aide may move to Jordan

Yasser Arafat's deputy is reportedly considering relocating to Jordan to set up an opposition movement to the Palestinian Authority. Mahmoud Abbas is considering the move after serious disagreements with Arafat, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported, citing an Omani newspaper.

The paper quoted a source close to Abbas, commonly known as Abu Mazen, as saying he sees Arafat as an obstacle to progress in the peace process and holds him responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Convicted Israeli officer freed

A former Israeli Air Force procurement officer convicted of embezzlement was set to go free after serving more than 13 years in prison.

Rami Dotan, a former brigadier general demoted to private, was convicted of embezzling millions of dollars from U.S. aid packages by purchasing inferior equipment and pocketing the difference.



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pro-Israel voices to declare that Wellstone had a poor record on Israel, and some pro-Israel donors directed their contributions to Coleman in this year's race.

The charge that he was weak on Israel greatly upset Wellstone, according to Steve Silverfarb, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

"Nothing angered him more," he said. "That really got under his skin."

In 1998, Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, took Wellstone on a tour of religious Jewish and Palestinian communities in Jerusalem.

Wellstone talked and listened, and at night looked down from the scenic Teyelet promenade at a breathtaking view of Jerusalem.

Wellstone talked about his vision of Palestinian and Israeli coexistence, Saperstein said.

"This light is what Jerusalem can be for the world," Saperstein recalls Wellstone saying, referring to the sparkling city lights.

Silverfarb said the Minnesota Jewish community was proud of its senator, who spoke passionately about the environment, health care and social justice, reflecting moral principles and teachings of Judaism.

Wellstone was admired and respected for his convictions and was not afraid to be a lone voice on an issue, Silverfarb said.

"In private or in public, he was really the same person," Silverfarb said. "He stuck to his guns."

Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, called Wellstone's death a "devastating blow" for America. She mourned the loss of someone who worked for progressive change.

"He was exactly what he portrayed himself to be, which was a tireless advocate for the entire social justice agenda," said Rosenthal, a personal friend of both Wellstone and his wife.

Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of Americans for Peace Now, had been with Wellstone a few months ago when the organization brought relatives of victims of Arab-Israeli violence to Washington.

"He was a tremendous human being," Roth said. "Much less a senator, he was a sterling example of the best that the American Jewish community had to offer."

Wellstone was elected to the Senate in 1990 after defeating incumbent Rudy Boschwitz, a Jew and pro-Israel activist. Reached by phone last Friday, Boschwitz called Wellstone a formidable opponent.

"He was a believer, and he had my respect," Boschwitz told JTA. "He believed in what he stood for."

Wellstone was a frequent contributor to the dovish Tikkun Magazine. The magazine's editor, Rabbi Michael Lerner, issued a statement praising Wellstone's "vision of hope that affirmed the best in Judaism and the best in the secular humanist traditions."

Daniel Spiegel, a member of the American Jewish Committee's board of directors from Minneapolis, recalled Wellstone's enthusiasm at a Middle East briefing with AJCommittee officials.

"He absolutely reveled in the fact that he was Jewish and supported Israel," Spiegel said. "People felt that he was very much concerned about Jewish causes."

Before coming to Washington, Wellstone was a community activist who taught for 21 years at Carleton College, at one point lecturing on "Social Movements and Grass-Roots Organizing."

He was born on July 21, 1944, the son of Russian immigrants, and raised in Arlington, Va.

He married the former Sheila Ison in 1963, and the couple had three children.

The couple is survived by two sons, David and Mark, and six grandchildren.

Wellstone originally had pledged to serve only two terms, but changed his mind last year.

Earlier this year, he announced that he had been diagnosed with a mild form of multiple sclerosis. □

(JTA staff writer Joe Berkofsky in New York contributed to this report.)

JEWISH WORLD

Doctor helped in hostage crisis

A Jewish physician helped mediate the release of child hostages during the terrorist standoff at a Moscow theater.

Leonid Roshal, a 70-year-old pediatric surgeon who has treated children in war zones around the world, including Chechnya, offered his services to the Russian authorities. He told the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* that the Chechen rebels in the theater were aware of his work and allowed him to enter.

Roshal said that he asked the leader of the hostage-takers if he would have wanted his children to be bargaining chips in a political conflict. Roshal said the negotiations improved after he treated two of the wounded rebels.

The standoff ended on Saturday when Russian troops entered the theater after the Chechens began executing some of the hostages. More than 100 hostages and about 50 of the rebels were dead by the time the standoff ended.

Jewish Agency officials meet

Two hundred Jewish leaders from around the world are convening this week in Israel to participate in the deliberations of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors.

Among the topics on the agenda are promoting immigration from the former Soviet Union; studying the increased immigration from Argentina and France; and strengthening Zionist education abroad. The meetings are taking place Sunday through Tuesday.

Scottish synagogue attacked

A synagogue in Edinburgh, Scotland, was attacked with a Molotov cocktail.

The device was thrown through the synagogue's door on Oct. 24 and is being treated as an anti-Semitic attack, according to the *Edinburgh Evening News*. No injuries were reported, and damage to the synagogue was minimal.

Jewish war hero reburied

Greek Jews reburied a World War II army hero after a 50-year campaign by his family to have his remains returned from Albania. More than half of Salonika's 1,100-member Jewish community attended the Oct. 24 funeral for Col. Mordechai Frizis, who died in December 1940 while fighting Italian troops in southern Albania.

He was decorated for leading Greece's first victory on the Albanian front against the Italian army. "This is so important for our history because Greeks know about the Holocaust, but not about the contribution of Greece's Jews in the wars of our country," David Saltiel, the president of Salonika's Jewish community, told *The Associated Press*.

In Rome, anti-terror guidelines placed in Jewish magazine insert

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Jews here received something extra this month with their regular copy of the Jewish community's magazine: a manual of anti-terrorism guidelines.

Titled "Some Useful Advice on How to Live More Safely," the brochure, published by the community, also provided a 24-hour hotline number for use in case of emergency.

"It's not the first time that the community has issued security guidelines, but it is the first time that we got the magazine, *Shalom*, involved," Jewish community spokesman Riccardo Pacifici told JTA.

"We wanted to make sure that it reached as many Jewish families as possible," he said. *Shalom* is distributed widely among Rome's 15,000-strong community.

The booklet states that synagogues, Jewish schools and other Jewish centers and institutions represent potential terrorist targets.

This, it says, makes a heightened awareness of security indispensable.

"It doesn't mean that you must live your Jewish life only thinking about how to defend yourself," the booklet says, "but that greater attention on all our part could help us prevent ill-intentioned people from committing actions against the community."

The booklet was prepared by Gianni Zarfati, director of security for Rome's Jewish community.

It was issued almost 20 years to the day after Palestinian terrorists hurled hand grenades and fired on the crowd leaving Rome's main synagogue on Oct. 9, 1982. A toddler was killed and about 100 other congregants were injured in the attack.

The attack took place amid a groundswell of anti-Israel feeling in the wake of the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon. Throughout the 1980s, Rome was the scene of several other Palestinian terrorist attacks.

Since that time, Jews in Rome have sharply stepped up security. The community instituted its own internal security operation, and gained protection from the state.

"Obviously, politicians and the forces of order were totally embarrassed for having undervalued the signs of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism that had opened the way to the attack on the synagogue," Zarfati told *Shalom*.

Armed Italian police began guarding the synagogue, the Jewish schools and other institutions.

By now, said Pacifici, police stationed outside the Jewish schools are such a familiar presence that children suspect something is wrong if they are not in place. "This is how we have grown up," he said. "It's just the opposite from a regular school, when it is the appearance of police that gives cause for alarm."

The security manual is directed at adults and children alike. It is divided into seven sections, each of which describes norms of behavior. It urges Jews to be watchful, particularly around synagogues and other Jewish institutions, and to make sure that no one can insert something into handbags, backpacks or cars.

The booklet also advises what to do in case of emergency, or if a suspicious person, package, vehicle or object is spotted.

One of its key points is that individuals should not inadvertently supply information about Jewish communal operations that could eventually aid terrorists.

"Most of us are already sensitized to many things, but we are not sensitized to the possibility that information, even banal information, could be used," Pacifici said.

Therefore, the booklet advises, "Avoid talking in a loud voice about appointments, events, itineraries or meetings that regard the life of the community: people with bad intentions could be listening."

Pacifici said the response to the booklet has been generally positive, but that there have been some complaints that it actually caused a sense of panic.

For example, the booklet cautions Jews to "avoid showing off your Judaism in an exaggerated way with strangers; it could cause an unpredictable chain reaction."

"It does seem to be me to be a bit premature," said Alexander, a member of the Rome community who is the father of a 3-year-old boy. "But on the other hand, it is similar to material that we have been receiving from the community by other means for years. I just hope that the time never comes when we need it." □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Nimoy's nudes spark debate over line between art and desecration

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Leonard Nimoy insists he isn't morphing into the Jewish world's Robert Mapplethorpe.

Yet Nimoy, who won fame as the ultra-rational "Mr. Spock" in the 1960s TV series "Star Trek," is stirring Jewish passions with his new book, "Shekhina."

The book is a collection of Nimoy's black-and-white photographs of women, many naked but for prayer shawls and tefillin.

"I don't think I'm quite in the Mapplethorpe territory," Nimoy told JTA, referring to the late photographer of nude figures and graphic homosexual sex.

"I wasn't thinking about profanity when I was doing this" book, he said. "I was thinking beautiful and spiritual."

Yet with "Shekhina," Nimoy, 71, is igniting an artistic debate in the Jewish community over art and censorship that echoes the battles that swirled over Mapplethorpe, and other artists like Andres Serrano and Chris Ofili, who created controversial religious imagery.

The storm over "Shekhina" — a term for the feminine aspect of the divine spirit — erupted after Nimoy embarked on a nine-month, 26-city promotional tour of Jewish book fairs, JCCs and synagogues.

He defends the photos as part of a longtime journey into his Jewish roots, and a trek into exploring the feminine aspect of God.

In the book, many of Nimoy's nudes are accompanied by quotes from such Jewish thinkers as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and biblical tales of Kings David and Solomon.

"I'm not introducing sexuality into Judaism; it's been there for centuries," he said. "The Sabbath Bride is the shekhina. It's always been considered a mitzvah, a commandment, that husbands and wives should have sex Friday night to usher in the Sabbath."

Last week, as reports emerged that Nimoy had backed out of an appearance at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle's annual fund-raising dinner, Nimoy drew 400 people to the San Diego JCC book fair.

Papers from the Seattle Times to the Forward reported Nimoy's decision to back out of the Seattle event after a dispute began over his desire to show slides and discuss his monograph.

"I expected more of an open-minded community," Nimoy said of the Seattle federation. "I think they were more interested in entertainment than illumination."

Barry Goren, executive director of the Seattle federation, said the group was not trying to act as some kind of "Ayatollah Khomeini," but felt it wasn't a good idea to have Nimoy show potentially controversial slides at a fund-raising dinner.

"I think they're beautiful pictures," Goren said. "But I think they're not everyone's cup of tea, and I thought they'd be offensive to some people."

Nimoy's agent, who also represents Al Franken, got the comedian booked instead.

Goren said he then put Nimoy's agents in touch with a local supporter, Rabbi Jonathan Singer of Seattle's Temple Beth Am.

Singer signed Nimoy for a book promotion at his Reform synagogue.

Singer agreed that it would have been inappropriate to show images from the book at the federation dinner, but added that it was important to allow Nimoy's photographs to be seen elsewhere in the Jewish community.

"We have to make sure our Jewish community doesn't become intellectually empty and culturally frozen," he said.

Too often, Jewish art reflects a kind of shtetl kitsch, Singer said, with synagogue hallways adorned only with pictures of "old men with beards in tallises."

Nimoy, in contrast, is "stirring up the pot of Jewish creativity," he added. "That Jews are discussing art — not just ritual art — is a sign of Jewish cultural renewal, and should be encouraged."

Richard Siegel, executive director of the National Foundation of Jewish Culture, agrees.

Nimoy, who is a member of the group's artistic advisory committee, is a "serious artist" who is "undertaking a serious exploration of Jewish spirituality," Siegel said.

For Nimoy, that journey began when he was 8 and saw Kohanim in his Orthodox shul in Boston split their fingers in a "V" sign as they administered the priestly blessing to the congregation.

His father explained they were forming the Hebrew letter "shin" and, by wrapping themselves in their tallitot, were hiding from the Shekhina, whose light was too intense for men to view.

Nimoy later used that "V" sign as Spock's iconic Vulcan greeting on Star Trek.

Years later, already established as a pop culture figure, Nimoy began studying photography at UCLA. His works exploring Judaism and Kabbalah blend black and white, light and shadow, figures and abstraction.

Most of the book's 54 photos are of nude women, many wearing prayer shawls and tefillin. Nimoy said some of the women — one of them is his wife — are Jewish.

Nimoy's representatives and others watching his tour say they have heard some complaints, but far more compliments, about "Shekhina."

The only other federation to book Nimoy is the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties in Fort Myers, Fla. He will have top billing at the federation's \$1,500-a-plate annual fund-raising dinner in February.

"There will be those who choose not to participate because of the nudity, but that's their choice," said Annette Goodman, the group's executive director.

The federation received a copy of "Shekhina" on Monday, and Goodman said she found the images "absolutely elegant."

Some will attend the event because Nimoy's work reflects a Jewish "neshama," or soul, she said, while others will come because they are "Trekkies," or Star Trek fans.

"He'll offer something that I think will be both Judaically interesting and thought-provoking," she said.

Whether other federations will act like Seattle or Fort Myers remains unclear. Glenn Rosenkrantz, spokesman for the United Jewish Communities federation umbrella, refused to discuss the issue.

"This is a matter between Mr. Nimoy and the Seattle federation," he said.

Nimoy, for his part, is not entirely upset by his 15 minutes of infamy.

"Let's face it: I did the book in order to shine a light on an idea," he said, and the Jewish federation of Seattle "shined a light on my book." □