



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hebrew prayers open memorial

Hebrew prayers led by a U.S. Navy rabbi began a memorial service for the seven astronauts killed in the Columbia shuttle tragedy.

Capt. Harold Benison opened Tuesday's service at NASA's Mission Control in Houston. The memorial was attended by 10,000 to 15,000 people.

President Bush, who spoke at the ceremony, spoke afterward with the families of the astronauts, including Rona Ramon, the widow of Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon.

### 2,000 at shul memorial service

Nearly 2,000 people attended a memorial service Monday night at a Houston synagogue for Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon and his six fellow Columbia crew members.

Among them were Ramon's father, Eliezer Wolferman, and Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon. Wolferman said he is grateful to the American people, Israel and NASA for their support.

"They really are doing their best," he said at the memorial service held at Beth Yeshurun.

Ayalon called Ramon "a national hero," adding that the astronaut "had a very strong identity as a Jew, as an Israeli. I think his personal story embodies the true triumph of the Jewish people."

### 'Iran 5' given 'vacation'

The last five Jews still held in an Iranian prison have been released on "vacation," although it remains uncertain whether they will be permanently freed.

The five were among 13 Jews arrested in early 1999 for allegedly spying for Israel.

In a case that drew worldwide attention, they were tried in the southern city of Shiraz, and 10 received prison sentences.

Five already have been released after serving some of their time. Israel denies that the men were its spies.

### Israel charges infant's murderer

An Israeli court filed charges against a Palestinian terrorist accused of slaying Shalhevet Pass, a 10-month-old Jewish girl, in Hebron in March 2001. Mahmad Mahmud Amru also is accused of carrying out other terror attacks on Israelis.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### U.S. Jews memorialize Ramon as link between stars and Earth

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — Yeshiva University this week was covered with signs of Jews coping with the loss of the Columbia space shuttle and its seven crew members, including Israel's first astronaut.

Students jammed the university's 1,000-seat auditorium Monday for a memorial to the astronauts, fliers blaring "Yeshiva Mourns" decorated buildings and bus stops, and talk of the tragedy soured the sweetness inside Grandma's, the campus sandwich and bake shop.

"It's a state of mourning for the whole nation. Our school is no different," said Joseph Schwarcz, 18, a Yeshiva freshman.

At the same time, Schwarcz was quick to note the special status of Israel's representative on board, Col. Ilan Ramon, as a role model for Jews.

"Throughout the whole week, our deans have come into our class and discussed with us how we should be just like Ilan Ramon," he said.

In mourning the tragic fate of the Columbia crew, Jews across America are especially touched by the loss of Ramon.

Some say his death alongside his American colleagues has further strengthened the U.S.-Israel bond.

Whether Jews saw Ramon as a pioneer or a peacemaker, most saw him as the best of the Jewish people.

They herald his observance of Jewish laws in space, the Jewish artifacts he carried into the ether and his life of integrity and courage.

That sentiment is evident in memorial services across the country and in e-mail and written messages to Ramon's family.

"He took the hopes and aspirations of all Jews into space with him," said Yehudit Adar, 54, a social worker and dance therapist who visited the Israeli Consulate in New York on Monday to inscribe her words in a black book of condolences for Ramon's family.

"I felt that he represented the possibility of Jewish unity," David Ratzker, 21, a Yeshiva senior, said, noting that the secular Ramon observed some Jewish laws in space to represent Jewry.

Mark Klein, 48, a vocational counselor who also trekked to the consulate to write a message to Ramon's family, echoed the view of many when he said, "During this time, when Israel really needed a morale boost, for this to happen was just heart wrenching."

But Klein, like many others, is trying to create something positive from the tragedy by planting trees in Israel to honor Ramon's memory.

In a televised conversation from space with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Ramon had said, "I call upon every Jew in the world to plant a tree in the land of Israel during the coming year."

The Jewish National Fund is coordinating a massive effort to fulfill Ramon's request. The JNF received some 1,000 calls for about 3,000 trees on Monday alone, an all-time record of unsolicited calls, according to the group's CEO, Russell Robinson.

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement has determined another way to respond to the catastrophe.

The Chabad Jewish Community Center of the Space Coast in Florida is raising funds for a new Torah to replace the one Ramon brought into space. The group plans to

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Volunteers to help ID astronauts

Four Israelis who help collect and identify body parts after suicide bombings are in Houston to help find the remains of the seven astronauts who perished aboard the space shuttle Columbia.

The four, volunteers in the ZAKA organization, arrived in Houston on Monday. ZAKA is a Hebrew acronym for "identifying disaster victims." ZAKA volunteers often can be seen donning surgical gloves at suicide bombing sites in Israel and collecting scattered body parts.

### Israel: Arafat gave terror order

Yasser Arafat told the leaders of Palestinian terror groups to kill more Israelis, according to Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz.

Referring to a never-before publicized conversation between Arafat and the leaders of the terror groups in February 2001, Mofaz said last Friday that "the Palestinian plan was to cause a few thousand Israeli deaths within a number of months, so that Israel would give in" to Palestinian demands, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. Mofaz also said Israel has additional intelligence proving Arafat's involvement in terror, adding that the United States and other countries also have this information.

### Israel: Iraq war inevitable

A U.S.-led war against Iraq is inevitable, according to Israel's defense minister. Speaking at a navy base in Haifa, Shaul Mofaz said the United States appears determined to go ahead with its military plan, Israel Radio reported. He stressed that all preparations in Israel have been carried out satisfactorily and in keeping with the set timetable. He also said there is no need now for the public to alter its normal routine.

Mofaz's remarks came as the Israeli army was to begin distributing leaflets on civil defense preparations in the event of an attack by Iraq.

present the Torah to Ramon's family in time for his son Tal's Bar Mitzvah in April.

The new Torah will ensure that Ramon "will live forever in our lives," said Rabbi Zvi Konikov, the center's director, who advised Ramon on observing Sabbath in space.

Rabbis around the country grappled with the tragedy, even as many of them learned of it while leading Shabbat services.

Rabbi Joshua Hammerman of Temple Beth El in Stamford, Conn., hesitated to share the initial, inconclusive reports with his congregants.

"But the shattering truth could not be avoided," Hammerman said this week. "So we read the Torah, an act of affirmation since a small Torah scroll was also destroyed in the catastrophe."

Rabbi Ron Fish of Congregation Beth El in Norwalk, Conn., was in the middle of the prayer for the sick when someone on the bimah, or dais, told him about the shuttle.

"There was silence in the room for about 30 seconds. I didn't know how to react at first," Fish recalled. "We went ahead because Shabbat is about life."

The rabbi said he didn't change his sermon about the weekly Torah portion, Mishpatim.

The portion "is really about the laws of life, how Jewish life, Jewish law and Jewish living is not in the clouds but on Earth. Ilan brought us the connection between the stars and what goes on on the Earth."

At day schools and synagogues across the country, students tried to come to grips with what happened.

From Hillel Academy in Milwaukee to the Hebrew Day School of Montgomery County in Silver Spring, Md., students set up memorials, and wrote and e-mailed letters of condolences to Ramon's family.

At the Gesher Jewish Day School in Fairfax, Va., students participated in discussions of "what it means to be a symbol of your country and what it means to take risk," Rabbi Michele Sullum said.

The children, she said, were concerned about the astronauts' families and how "extra sad" it was for Ramon's mother as a Holocaust survivor.

The groundswell of emotion in response to Ramon's death not only has mobilized many American Jews, but it has helped strengthen the bond many Americans feel with Israel.

"Ramon's mission symbolized the close ties between Israel and America, not only strategic and military, but also scientific and technological. He was truly representative of Israel's very best, and he is united in death with America's best today," said Rabbi Richard Margolis, the rabbi for Temple Beth Shalom, a Conservative congregation near the Kennedy Space Center, who was called to NASA to help the grieving families after the shuttle disintegrated.

"It is the most positive press that Israel has had in two years," said Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, a consultant for a project to improve Israel's image in the world.

"They talk about his life on every news channel in America and they point out that he was a part of protecting the world from Saddam Hussein having nuclear weapons. It brings Americans closer to Israel," she said.

Indeed, Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas) the House majority leader, reinforced that view when he addressed a gathering of the Republican Jewish Coalition in Boca Raton, Fla., on Saturday night.

"At this moment, America and Israel grieve together," said the lawmaker, who came to the RJC event after flying home to Houston immediately after the shuttle disaster.

"I can think of no two nations that are so connected by so many timeless truths. We are kindred nations and tonight we are siblings in mourning," DeLay said, tears streaming down his face. He ended by reciting the last two lines of the Mourners Kaddish.

At the Yeshiva University memorial, a slide show presentation laced with music from the movie "Apollo 13" and a tearful Jewish ballad underscored the American-Israeli connection.

David Weinberg, 21, the Yeshiva junior who created the slide show, imposed his words over images of George Bush and the exploded shuttle: "This mission saw the dreams and hopes of two nations fuse together." □

(The Connecticut Jewish Ledger, the Washington Jewish Week, the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle and the Florida Heritage Jewish News contributed to this report.)



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Jewish groups to hold memorial

Leading U.S. Jewish groups are holding a memorial Wednesday in New York for the Columbia astronauts. New York Gov. George Pataki will be among the politicians attending the ceremony at 11:45 a.m. at Park East Synagogue.

The ceremony was convened by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Consulate General of Israel in New York, UJA-Federation of New York, the New York Board of Rabbis and the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

### Paper has anti-Sharon poem

The Toronto Globe and Mail published a poem vilifying Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and showing sympathy for Palestinian suicide bombers. "The Angel Ariel" speaks of Sharon's earlier days, when, it says, "babies died and girls were raped." It also says no show of Israeli force can stop a suicide bomber who would "stick a bomb against her chest/To be a model for the rest."

Keith Landy, national president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, called the poem "an out-of-context, one-sided portrayal" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that totally discounts Palestinian violence while depicting Sharon as "an unredeemable, corrupt, callous, hateful killer."

In a letter published in the Globe, Landy said he found it "unconscionable" that the poem saw "the light of day in a newspaper with a long tradition for credibility and judiciousness."

### Mexico urged to support Israel

U.S. lawmakers are pressing Mexico to support Israel in the United Nations. More than 30 lawmakers, led by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), ranking member of the House International Relations Committee, have sent a letter to Mexican President Vicente Fox, criticizing Mexico's anti-Israel voting record at the United Nations and asking Mexico to support Israel.

The letter is one in a series being sent to Caribbean and Latin American leaders regarding their anti-Israel voting records at the United Nations.

### Israeli ex-soldier to go on trial

Jury selection began in the trial of three young men, including a former Israeli soldier, charged with second-degree murder four years ago in Toronto. Daniel Weiz and his two co-defendants are charged with the beating death in a park of Dmitri Baranovski, 15.

Weiz, who is now 23, returned to Israel a week after the crime. He was extradited back to Canada in October 2000 and since then has been in custody awaiting trial.

## News of candidate's Jewish roots adds another flavor to campaign

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — First it was then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Next it was Gen. Wesley Clark, the supreme allied commander of NATO during the war in Kosovo.

Now it's Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry whose Jewish roots are being reported.

Kerry? The Massachusetts senator, the quintessential WASPy-looking politician with an Irish-sounding name?

Yup. Two of Kerry's grandparents were Jewish, it turns out.

Kerry, who is a practicing Catholic, said he has known for 15 years that his paternal grandmother was Jewish, but had unsuccessfully searched for news of his paternal grandfather's roots.

However, a genealogist hired by the Boston Globe found that Kerry's grandfather was born to a Jewish family in a small town in the Czech Republic.

"This is incredible stuff," Kerry told the Globe. "I think it is more than interesting. It is a revelation."

The records show that his grandfather, Frederick Kerry, was born as Fritz Kohn. He changed his name to Kerry in 1902, immigrated to the United States in 1905 — and committed suicide in a Boston hotel in 1921.

Frederick Kerry's story highlights the Jewish experience of earlier generations, Brandeis University professor Jonathan Sarna said.

"What we are realizing is how significant was the trend toward conversion and abandonment of Judaism, for the sake of upward mobility, in an earlier era of America," said Sarna, the Braun professor of American Jewish history at the school in Waltham, Mass. "Given the quite significant anti-Semitism of the early 20th century and the evident obstacles that stood in the path to success, people simply changed their names and sloughed off their Judaism."

But that path wasn't always successful, Sarna said.

Kerry's grandfather's suicide apparently stemmed from financial troubles. But one could wonder if, by changing his name and identity, the man had cut himself off from any sense of community, Sarna said.

The Kerry story also might hold lessons for the present and future makeup of American Jewry, Sarna said. According to current statistics, millions of Americans like Kerry may have Jewish roots but don't consider themselves Jewish.

"The question is if that is going to be seen a century from now as a harbinger of where American Judaism is going," Sarna asked.

Of course, several people contact the American Jewish Historical Society every year asking for help in their search for Jewish roots.

The e-mails usually run along the lines of, "My name is Kelly Smith, but my grandmother's name was Sara Goldstein," said Michael Feldberg, the executive director of the historical society, which is based in New York.

Observers say the revelation about Kerry is unlikely to affect the 2004 presidential race.

But the revelation adds another Jewish flavor to the 2004 race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), who declared last month that he will seek the nomination, is an observant Jew.

Another contender, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, is married to a Jewish woman and is raising his children as Jews.

And Clark, who told the Forward recently that he is descended from "generations of rabbis," is also weighing a 2004 Democratic presidential bid.

"I wonder what this means for his Saturdays?" Jano Cabrera, a spokesman for Lieberman's campaign, joked about Kerry. "Regardless, at this rate, we should have a minyan at the debates." □

(JTA correspondent Matthew E. Berger in Washington contributed to this report.)

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**As White House presents budget, Jewish groups focus on vouchers**

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Bush administration may be consumed with international affairs, but Jewish groups examining the White House's proposed budget are more concerned with the president's domestic priorities.

Spending is higher in the White House budget for fiscal year 2004 released Monday, but most of that money is going to defense and homeland security. Many of the Jewish community's domestic priorities either have not increased or have been trimmed.

In addition, the budget includes \$75 million for the Choice Incentive Fund, which would push states to create school voucher programs and would create a test program in Washington. Many Jewish organizations oppose vouchers, which provide government funds that students can use to attend parochial or private schools.

Also included in the \$2.23 trillion budget for fiscal year 2004 are:

- \$480 million in economic aid for Israel and \$2.16 billion in military aid. Economic aid to Israel is being cut by \$120 million each year and should be phased out entirely by 2009, while military aid is rising by \$60 million a year.

- \$575 million in economic aid and \$1.3 billion in military aid for Egypt, as well as \$250 million in economic aid and \$206 million in military aid for Jordan.

- \$75 million for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which would be doled out through the United States Agency for International Development. The United States will continue to support the U.N. Refugee and Works Administration, which assists Palestinian refugees.

- \$50 million for the United Israel Appeal, which is used primarily to resettle Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. The figure represents a cut of \$10 million.

In any case, the House of Representatives and the Senate will have to pass their own plans, which will need to be reconciled with Bush's proposal. That means that the final spending numbers are far from certain — and that it could be months before a final budget is approved.

In fact, the budget for fiscal year 2003, which included an additional \$200 million in aid for Israel and \$50 million for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, has yet to clear Congress. That has left government agencies running on prorated portions of their 2002 budgets.

The voucher provisions of the 2004 budget are expected to be among the more controversial portions for Jewish groups, which are concerned about federal money going to religious schools.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that vouchers don't violate the constitutional separation of church and state. But many Jewish groups continue to oppose them on policy grounds, arguing that vouchers divert attention and funds from the public schools.

Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said the Washington pilot voucher program "is part of a larger federal decision to abdicate its federal responsibilities" by aiding private schools rather than fixing public ones.

In addition to the program in Washington, the Education Department budget includes \$226 million in tax credits for parents transferring their children out of failing public schools — which

Jewish groups say essentially is a voucher — and \$220 million in grants for charter schools, a \$20 million increase from last year's budget proposal.

The Orthodox community is a staunch supporter of vouchers. "We think that parental choice in education is a good thing for society at large and the Jewish community," said Rabbi David Zwiebel, executive vice president for government and public affairs at Agudath Israel of America, a fervently Orthodox group.

In Milwaukee, which has a pilot program, Jewish students who otherwise couldn't afford it have used vouchers to pay for yeshiva.

This year's budget also would cut \$200 million in social service block grants — which are given to states to distribute at their discretion, according to local needs — and would cut \$496 million from welfare programs. Diana Aviv, vice president for public policy at United Jewish Communities, is concerned that plans to change low-income housing from a federal spending item to a block grant could hurt Jews who depend on such housing.

Aviv also said she was anticipating a "massive conversation, if not changes" in the next year about the future of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which account for more than 18 percent of the total budget. As lawmakers push for a prescription drug plan, the discussions will focus on controlling the programs' costs.

In foreign aid, the administration has requested a \$1.3 billion increase for Millennium Challenge Accounts, an initiative the president unveiled last year. The accounts, which would supplement existing aid programs, aim to reward countries that are making progress in protecting political and human rights, improving citizens' quality of life — and using aid money efficiently.

No Middle Eastern country is expected to qualify for the aid immediately, but Jewish leaders say the initiative may make it easier for the total foreign aid bill — which includes money for Israel — to pass Congress each year. By diversifying foreign aid recipients and giving additional money to countries that can show they are using it effectively, Israel's aid package won't have to be defended as vigorously, some supporters of Israel say.

"Increased foreign aid supports the idea that you don't have to make a choice between supporting Israel and supporting Africa," one Jewish leader said.

Republicans traditionally have been much harsher critics of foreign aid than Democrats. Because the foreign aid increase is being proposed by a Republican White House, it is considered to have a better chance of becoming law. But any increase in overseas spending could face resistance this year, with a \$307 billion budget deficit and the cost of a possible war with Iraq looming.

Also included in the foreign aid is \$145 million for the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which aims to foster democracy and the rule of law in Arab and Muslim countries. The program was introduced by Secretary of State Colin Powell last December. Democrats say neither the Middle East Partnership Initiative nor the challenge grants have enough funding to accomplish its goals.

The budget request doesn't include funds for a possible war against Iraq, which would be covered by a supplemental request, if necessary. Also left out of the budget is additional aid beyond Israel's normal package. Israel has been seeking up to \$8 billion in loan guarantees and \$4 billion in additional military aid because of the terrorist threat from the Palestinian intifada and Israel's severe economic recession.

Negotiations over the package continue between Jerusalem and the White House. A request to Congress isn't expected to come until after any attack on Iraq. □