

IN THE NEWS

Five Palestinians are killed in clashes

Five Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers over the weekend.

Three of the deaths occurred during an Israeli raid in the West Bank city of Nablus on Saturday. The cousin of one of the men killed in Nablus died during his cousin's funeral after troops fired on an armed Palestinian who was about to throw a firebomb, Israeli army spokesmen said.

The fifth died last Friday while allegedly attempting to blow up an Israeli position in Gaza.

Israel's top spy: Assad is serious

Syria's peace overtures are genuine, the chief of Israeli military intelligence said.

Israeli media quoted Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash as telling Israel's Cabinet on Sunday that Syrian President Bashar Assad's recent offer to restart peace talks with Israel resulted from a real desire to remove U.S. sanctions against Damascus.

But the military intelligence chief said there was no sign of Syria ending its support for Palestinian terrorist groups or Hezbollah in Lebanon.

A NEW NAME, A NEW LOOK

We begin 2004 with a new name and a new look for JTA's premier daily publication. The *JTA World Report* will continue to bring you the best reportage, news analysis, background stories and features about developments and issues affecting Israel and Jewish communities around the globe. This is just the beginning of a series of exciting changes designed to ensure that you receive the best coverage available of news affecting the Jewish people. Let us know how you like the new format.

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG

Jewish knowledge reaches deep into Howard Dean's past, home

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

CONCORD, N.H. (JTA) — In the middle of a rowdy rendition of "I Have a Little Dreidel" at the Sobelson family Chanukah party, Howard Dean walks in and declares himself the cantor.

The Democratic presidential candidate recites the blessings over the candles in near-perfect Hebrew in a dining room crowded with campaign staffers.

"It's another Jewish miracle," Carol Sobelson exclaims.

It's just a regular Chanukah for Dean, the former Vermont governor later says, "except there's usually only four of us, instead of 54 of us."

Dean's most immediate connection to Judaism is his Jewish wife and the couple's two children, who identify themselves as Jews. But Dean says he has been connected to the religion for decades.

Dean never considered converting to Judaism, but he says the family did ponder the prospect of joining the Reform synagogue in Burlington, Vt., though they "never got around to it."

The candidate's ties span from a college friendship with a Zionist activist, to frequent political appearances at Vermont's synagogues, to lighting the menorah and participating in other Jewish rituals at home.

"We light the menorah; we have about three of them, we sing the prayers," Dean told JTA recently as he was driven from the Chanukah party back to his hotel, picking with his fingers at a container of Chinese food. "We always like the first night the most because we like the third prayer," he said.

Dean is spending a lot of time in New Hampshire, and it's paying off. He has a healthy lead in polls there, and political pundits have all but anointed him the favorite to win the Democratic primary campaign.

The candidate stopped by the Manchester Jewish Federation on Dec. 21 to pass out Chanukah presents for children. He brought two of his own childhood favorites for the swap — an air hockey game and an electronic board game called Operation.

Dean's first spiritual home was the Episcopal Church, but he became a Congregationalist after fighting with the Episcopal Church in Vermont 25 years ago over a bike path.

Rivals say the switch signals a cavalier approach to worship, but Dean says his move was prompted by his former church's arrogance.

"We were trying to get the bike path built," Dean told ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." "They had control of a mile and a half of railroad bed, and they decided they would pursue a property-right suit to refuse to allow the bike path to be developed."

Born on Nov. 17, 1948 in East Hampton, N.Y., Dean had a prep-school education and grew up in New York City and at a country house on Long Island.

His first connection with the issues and concerns of the Jewish community came when he enrolled at Yale University in 1967 and became friends with David Berg, a fellow student who was a former president of Young Judeaea.

"My memory is that Howard was unusually interested, respectful and accepting of that

Continued on page 2

AMERICA
DECIDES
2004

■ Jewish knowledge reaches deep into Howard Dean's past — and his home

whole part of who I was," said Berg, a psychologist from New Haven, Conn.

Their friendship developed over the years, and Berg counseled Dean on his interactions with the Jewish community — for instance, when he attended the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and married a Jewish woman.

Dean chose Einstein, the medical school of Yeshiva University, simply because it was the best school available to him, but the selection clearly impacted his education on Jewish issues.

"I used to commute with a woman who was Orthodox and kept kosher, so I learned a lot about the dietary laws and more ritualistic parts of Judaism," Dean said.

Berg said Dean felt very comfortable in the environment at Einstein.

"I remember us sitting down and talking about kashrut at the dining hall at Einstein," he said. "He wasn't afraid of making a mistake; he wasn't treating it like going to a foreign country."

These days, Dean slips into Jewish terminology like a set of comfortable old clothes. Before a November debate in a Des Moines, Iowa, synagogue, he circulated among congregants and chatted amiably about how hard it was for Burlington's Orthodox shul to get a minyan together until Chabad-Lubavitch came to town.

'I have a pretty ecumenical approach to religion.'

Howard Dean

"We were impressed that he knew what a minyan was," congregant Dory Goodman said afterward.

When Dean began to date his future wife, Judith Steinberg, a fellow student at Einstein, Dean's family had little problem with the fact that he was marrying a Jewish woman, the candidate said.

"I think the reason it wasn't an issue in my family was because my father was a Protestant and my mother was a Catholic, and when they got married, that was a very big deal," Dean said. "My father, I think, was determined not to put me through the experiences he went through when he married outside his faith."

But there was some frustration in the Steinberg household that Judith was marrying a Christian.

"It was a little bit of an issue for Judy's grandmother, because she was of the old school," Dean said. "But she loved me and I loved her."

Steinberg's grandmother would tell Dean stories about escaping pogroms in Poland and coming to the United States by herself at age 17.

Judith Steinberg, who Dean says is "not political at all," was not available for comment.

The Deans soon settled in Vermont, where they began a medical practice and a family. The couple have two children: Annie, who is studying at Yale, and Paul, who is a senior in high school.

"From early on, he was committed to them both, to giving them some Jewish education," Berg said, noting that Dean would take the children to synagogue.

Neither child had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah or much formal Jewish education. Dean has said he allowed both children to choose their religion, and both now identify as Jewish.

The family celebrates Passover and the High Holidays at home. Many in Vermont's Jewish community tell of how Dean skipped an appearance with Vice President Al Gore in the mid-1990s to travel to New York to be at a Passover seder with his family.

Rabbi David Glazier, who is the rabbi at Burlington's Reform synagogue, Temple Sinai, says he is not really sure what the family's religious practices are. A Congregationalist in a family where

everyone else sees themselves as Jewish is hard to define, he says.

"The paradox is between himself and what the Jewish community is," he said.

Glazier first met Dean briefly when the rabbi was asked to give an invocation in the State Senate and Dean, then the lieutenant governor, was presiding.

Dean was thrust into the governor's office in 1991 with the sudden death of Gov. Richard Snelling. Glazier's synagogue invited Dean to speak one Friday night to express its appreciation for the smooth transition.

"I felt really sorry for Howard, not because he was deserving of pity, but his life was in tumult," Glazier said.

By that time, Dean had become a full-time politician, forced to give up completely the family medical practice that he had scaled down after being elected to the Vermont House of Representatives in 1982 and after becoming lieutenant governor in 1986.

When he attended political events at Glazier's synagogue, Dean would remark that he felt very comfortable, Glazier said, and once Dean said he would like to join the temple.

Dean said he left the decision about joining the temple to his wife, and that the family did not get around to affiliating. Glazier said he tried not to ask Dean about his family's religious practices or encourage them to join the synagogue.

Dean says he doesn't see much difference between his family's beliefs and his own.

"I have a pretty ecumenical approach to religion," Dean said. "There is a Judeo-Christian tradition, and there are different doctrinal aspects and different beliefs, but the fundamental moral principles are very similar between Judaism and Christianity."

He does, however, wish his children knew more about Christianity, having experienced it little beyond Christmases at the home of Dean's parents, in New York. Dean himself says he does not attend church often but prays every day.

"The thing that I like the most about Christianity is the idea that Jesus sought out those people who were left behind — the lepers, the prostitutes, the Samaritans that were cast aside," he said.

"And that's kind of what I think the mission of the Democratic Party is in some ways."

JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Leonore A. Silverstein
Finance and Administration Director

Paula Simmonds
Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Dean's advisers react to Israel controversy

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

BURLINGTON, Vt. (JTA) — An e-mail smear campaign distorting Howard Dean's positions on Israel, coupled with the candidate's genuine gaffes, has his staff working overtime to persuade Jewish voters that he is committed to Israel.

"Even-handed is not a way anyone fairly describes Howard Dean," said Stu Brody, chairman of the Democratic Rural Conference in New York and a former liaison between the Vermont governor and Jewish leaders. "His commitment to Israel is as strong as anyone's."

The former Vermont governor's now-famous comment that he would support an "even-handed" approach to the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict led more than a few Jewish community leaders to fret that Dean would push Israel to make risky concessions for peace.

The e-mail campaign this fall — denounced by the Anti-Defamation League as a distortion of Dean's record — accuses Dean of having "promised" to "no longer support Israel the way it has in the past under both Democratic and Republican presidents."

"In his own words, he will insist that the United States be 'even handed,'" said the unsigned e-mail.

"I urge you that if you have any love for America and Israel you should not and cannot vote for Howard Dean for the office of president."

The e-mails have had an effect, and national Jewish organizations report field-

ing calls from constituents worried about Dean's record.

Brody and other Jews close to Dean insist that the U.S. approach to Israel would not significantly change under Dean's watch, and that Dean is a strong supporter of Israel's security.

They say Dean's "even-handed" comment referred to perceptions that the Bush administration had distanced itself from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Dean meant that he wanted the United States to resume its role of honest broker between the sides.

Several Jewish leaders remain unconvinced.

"There are some real reservations and concerns," said one senior Jewish leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"There is real concern whether this guy could stand up to the war on terrorism and do the right thing."

Morris Amitay, a pro-Israel activist, said Dean's remarks mean more than his scripted clarifications after the fact.

"He can say the right thing, but they aren't obviously what he feels when he's speaking on his own," said Amitay, a former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "He'll have to go to real great lengths to convince people that he can be trusted on this issue."

Jewish leaders say their concerns run deeper than the off-handed use of "even-handed."

They worry that Dean does not have a clear record on the Middle East and that

he has made other questionable comments and decisions. They include naming Clyde Prestowitz as a foreign policy adviser. Prestowitz has said U.S. aid to Israel should be conditional on Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

Campaign officials stress that Prestowitz will focus on globalization and international economics, not the Middle East.

Dean has called Hamas terrorists "soldiers," a term that some say legitimizes the group. Dean used the term on CNN in defending Israel's right to single out Hamas leaders for targeted killings, and his campaign says the word reinforces the argument that terrorists are legitimate military targets. Dean since has backed off those remarks.

Most notably, Dean has been a vocal opponent of the war in Iraq. Many Jews believe the war ousted a dangerous tyrant who had attacked Israel and could do so again, and they now see potential for stability in the region.

The campaign counters that many in the Jewish community who are highlighting Dean's missteps are supporters of President Bush or of Dean's Democratic primary opponents.

Dean even has suggested that Karl Rove, the White House's senior political adviser, was behind the e-mail campaign.

The White House and the Bush re-election campaign have refused to comment.

"To send an e-mail like that is exactly the perfect tactic to set off fears in this community," Dean recently told JTA. "Politics is a rough game and it's an ugly game, but people who do these kinds of things ought not to be in politics and don't deserve to win."

Dean's advisers insist he is committed to Israel's security.

Arrest of activist's shooter buoys family

By RICHARD ALLEN GREENE

LONDON (JTA) — It's not often that an Israeli soldier is arrested for using his weapon in the battle zone of the Gaza Strip.

So when the parents of a young Briton shot in Gaza in April 2003 heard that the soldier who fired at their son had been arrested, they were pleased and a bit hopeful.

Tom Hurndall was 21 when he was shot in the head in Gaza. The shot caused brain damage that left him in a persistent vegetative state, from which he is not expected to recover.

Hurndall was in Gaza with the pro-Palestinian International

Solidarity Movement, whose members serve as "human shields" to foil the Israeli military's anti-terrorism operations. Israeli authorities have said members of the group may be supporting Palestinian terrorism.

Hurndall's father Anthony, a London property lawyer, said the arrest was "a starting point."

The Israel Defense Forces originally said there was a gunman in the area when Hurndall, a photography student at Britain's Manchester Metropolitan University, was shot.

But following interrogation by military police, the soldier in custody admitted there was no gunman.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Israel lifts closure

Israel allowed 30,000 Palestinian workers to enter Israel from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sunday's move came as Israel lifted a general closure on the Palestinian-populated territories. Meanwhile, Israel arrested 48 Israelis suspected of employing and driving illegal Palestinian workers into Israel while the closure was in effect.

Could fence lead to boycotts?

The West Bank security barrier could lead to boycotts against Israel, an Israeli Cabinet minister said. Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, Israel's justice minister, said Israel would have itself to blame for the South African-style boycott because it set a route for the fence that the international community has not accepted.

Lapid made his comments as an Israeli committee prepared its defense of the fence for a hearing at the International Court of Justice at The Hague, slated for Feb. 23.

Kahane outpost to go

A West Bank outpost named after the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's slain son and daughter-in-law is slated for removal.

On Sunday, Israel announced it would dismantle Tal Binyamin, a hilltop yeshiva still under construction, as well as a second outpost called Havat Maon, to honor its obligations under the U.S.-led "road map" peace plan.

Settlers, who already are appealing eviction orders issued against four other outposts last week, have 10 days to appeal Sunday's decision. The Palestinians have dismissed the planned evictions as a publicity stunt, while settlers say they could spark serious domestic strife.

Israel's population at 6.75 million

There are 6.75 million people living in Israel, reflecting the smallest population increase in 13 years. The 1.3 percent increase in 2003 was attributed to low immigration rates, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

Of that number, 5.45 million — 81 percent — are Jewish and most of the rest are Arabs, according to the bureau.

Israeli refuseniks sentenced

Five conscripts were sentenced to jail for refusing to serve in the Israeli army. The five signed a letter while in high school saying they would not serve in the army "as long as it acts as an army of occupation." They were given one-year jail sentences Sunday.

NORTH AMERICA

U.S. opposes settlement in Golan

The United States opposes the expansion of Jewish residence in the Golan Heights.

State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said Wednesday that U.S. opposition to settlement activity extends to the Golan, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed in 1981.

"It's been our long-standing policy that there should not be settlement activity in land that is subject — the final status of which has not been determined through negotiation," Ereli said. Israeli Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz announced a plan to attract new families to the Golan Heights, where the current population is 17,000.

U.S. fight against terrorist funds questioned

U.S. senators are questioning a federal agency's competency in preventing terrorism funding.

The United States has failed to freeze the funds of people identified as terrorist financiers by U.S. allies, top members of the Senate Finance Committee wrote in a letter to the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, The Associated Press news service reported.

Sens. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Max Baucus (D-Mont.) charged the Office of Foreign Assets Controls with poor record-keeping and failure to provide required information to both houses of Congress.

They also charged the office with reliance on banks' voluntary compliance to sanction suspected terrorists and failure to implement internal recommendations.

Groups affiliated with Hamas, Fatah and other pro-Palestinian terrorist groups are on the list.

WORLD

Swiss rescuers of Jews pardoned

Switzerland pardoned citizens who smuggled Jews to safety during World War II.

Nearly 60 years after the war, the government late last week pardoned people who were jailed or fined for breaking the law by smuggling Jews into the neutral nation.

Some 25,000 Jews found shelter in Switzerland between 1938 and 1945.

But thousands more were turned away at the border.

Anti-abortionist suspected in museum arson

By JOE BERKOFISKY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Investigators are analyzing evidence that could link an abortion-clinic arsonist to a fire at a Holocaust museum in Indiana.

Earlier this month, police arrested Joseph Charles Stockett, 57, after an informant told police Stockett was involved in the November attack on the CANDLES Holocaust Museum in Terre Haute and was planning to kill Jews.

Stockett, who in 1976 was convicted of burning down a Planned Parenthood office in Oregon and has been diagnosed

with schizophrenia, currently is being held on an unrelated firearms charge.

The museum's founder, Auschwitz survivor Eva Mozes Kor, says she has collected \$80,000 in donations toward rebuilding her museum, which she estimates will cost \$250,000.

"I have never in my nicest dreams imagined that so many Jewish people would care about a little Holocaust museum here in Terre Haute," Kor told JTA.

Kor, 69 — among thousands of children subjected to medical experiments in the Holocaust — and her husband, Michael, 75, founded the museum in the Indianapolis suburb in 1995. ■