

IN THE NEWS
Shuttle astronauts remembered in Israel

A ceremony in Israel marked the first anniversary of the Columbia space shuttle tragedy.

Sunday's commemoration for Israeli astronaut Col. Ilan Ramon and the six others who died when the shuttle disintegrated during re-entry on Feb. 1, 2003, was held in the Galilee.

In Israel, Shin Bet grills Tannenbaum

An Israeli businessman freed from Hezbollah captivity is being questioned on suspicion of divulging state secrets.

The Shin Bet began interrogating Elhanan Tannenbaum, 58, near Netanya on Sunday after doctors certified that he was fit enough to undergo questioning. A reserve artillery colonel who returned home Jan. 29 in a prisoner swap between Israel and Hezbollah, Tannenbaum is suspected of giving up state secrets, perhaps under torture by the Lebanese militia.

Israeli media said he had been privy to classified military data before he was abducted in October 2000.

Egon Mayer is dead at 59

Egon Mayer, a leading sociologist of American Jewry, died last Friday of cancer in New York at age 59.

A professor at the City University of New York, Mayer was known for his studies of intermarriage, and was considered a pioneer in urging that non-Jewish spouses be welcomed into the Jewish community.

More recently, Mayer found in 2001 that while the total number of U.S. Jews is 5.3 million, the number rises to 10 million if non-Jewish spouses and family members are included.

Mayer was born in Hungary in 1944; his parents were among a group of 1,684 Hungarian Jews who bought their way to freedom from Nazi Adolf Eichmann in a controversial exchange.

WORLD REPORT

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Immigrant killed in bombing worked with troubled youth

By DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Riding together recently on a Jerusalem bus, Devora Goldberg, 19, asked her uncle whether or not being on buses in Israel frightened him.

Outside of his home, where relatives and friends now gather to sit shiva for the 42-year-old Yechezkel (Chezi) Goldberg, one of 11 people killed in the Jan. 29 bus bombing, she repeats his answer: "Life must go on. We have to live and we have to give them the message that we will continue living here as proud Jews."

About 10 years ago, the Canadian-born Goldberg and his wife immigrated to the Jewish state with their children, determined to make their lives here.

To Goldberg, "moving to Israel was the be-all and the end-all, saying things like 'God did not take us out of Egypt to live in Toronto,'" recalled Goldberg's longtime friend, Joe Halpert, who immigrated from Toronto around the same time.

Goldberg, a father of seven, was commuting by bus to his Jerusalem office, where he counseled at-risk teenagers and their families, when he was killed by the massive blast. The bomb was set off by a suicide bomber, a Palestinian Authority policeman from Bethlehem.

The other dead were identified as Avraham (Albert) Balhasan, 28; Rose Bona, 39; Chana Anya Bunder, 38; Anat Darom, 23; Natalia Gamril, 50; Baruch Hondiashvilli, 38; Dana Itach, 24; Eli Tsifira, 48; Octovian Floresco Viorel, 42; and Mebebra Valadi Zadik, 35.

A frequent contributor to Jewish newspapers and Web sites, Goldberg repeatedly had written about terrorist attacks.

In one column he discussed the proximity between bombers and their victims, noting that every morning he traveled by Palestinian cities such as Bethlehem to reach Jerusalem from the religious Jewish community in the West Bank where he lived, Beitar Illit.

Referring to a 2002 attack, "The bomber could very well be someone I have seen in a passing moment," he wrote in an article originally printed on Israel National News.com's Opinion page on Nov. 24, 2002. "I think we are in this bloody mess because many of the politicians making life and death decisions for this country have forgotten that terror is just a five-minute ride from home, anywhere."

Goldberg is remembered as a charismatic, almost larger-than-life figure who fit a tremendous amount into the day — balancing work, his home life, involvement in three synagogues and civic activities.

Bearded and burly, he always was on hand with a joke and an extraordinary capacity to help others, relatives and friends say.

He had a master's degree in education and training in crisis counseling and conflict resolution.

He spent the last decade dealing with children, especially those with special needs and teens in crisis.

His colleagues say part of his talent was an ability to focus on children's abilities instead of their disabilities, and to push them

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ An immigrant killed in a bus bombing is remembered for helping others

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to reach their potential. One of his past jobs was with the Jerusalem municipality helping get teenagers off the streets.

He recently had opened his own office where he privately counseled troubled teenagers and their families, many of whom came from Jerusalem's Orthodox, English-speaking community.

He also hosted a local radio show focusing on teenagers.

For eight years Goldberg worked for Gan Harmony, a center that tries to integrate special-needs children into mainstream schools.

"He was a very strong personality. When he thought something was right he went all the way for it and didn't mind taking slack over it," said Shoshana Savyon, a supervisor of Goldberg's at Gan Harmony who became a close friend. "He was willing to champion kids no one was willing to champion."

As part of his work with Gan Harmony, Goldberg spent time at an Arab school in eastern Jerusalem, where he helped teachers develop a program to mainstream students with special needs.

Savyon related how a staff member at the school who worked with Goldberg began crying hysterically on the phone when she called to express condolences.

■

Last week Goldberg lectured to over 500 religious social workers and therapists at an international conference in Jerusalem on working with at-risk youth

while staying within the framework of Jewish law.

"I will remember him as a person with a lot of charisma, optimism, energy and hope, a commitment to the Land of Israel, who was determined to make his life here and to make a difference," said Dodi Tobin, director of social services for Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization that helps North Americans immigrate to Israel.

Goldberg worked closely with the group's staff.

"He was very much about youth at risk and gave his heart and soul to that work. It will be a tremendous void felt by the teens he helped and the community," Tobin said.

In Beitar Illit, a large settlement that is populated by Orthodox Jews in the hills near Jerusalem.

Goldberg took a leading role in the community, including lobbying for more bus service to the settlement.

On Jan. 29 he had a packed day of appointments with clients.

That morning, however, he missed the bus he usually rode to Jerusalem and had to take a different one that took him to central Jerusalem — from where he caught the ill-fated No. 19 bus.

When clients started calling Gold-

berg's home asking where he was, the family began to suspect that he may have been on the bombed bus.

In the Jewish World Review of Dec. 3, 2001, Goldberg wrote an article entitled,

"Because, If You Don't Cry, Who Will?" bemoaning what he saw as Israelis' complacency in the face of repeated suicide bombings.

Israelis "have turned to stone. Some would call it 'numbness.' Some would call it 'collective national shock,'" he wrote. "Some would say that we all have suffered never-ending trauma

and it has affected our senses. Frankly, the excuses are worthless."

"All the reasons in the world don't justify our distance from the real pain that is burning in our midst. When an attack happens, in the heat of the moment, we frantically check to see if someone we know has been hurt or killed.

"And then, if we find out that 'our friends and family are safe,' we sigh a deep sigh of relief, grunt and grumble about the latest tragic event, and then we continue with our robotic motions and go on with our lives," he wrote.

"We have not lost our minds, my friends. We have lost our hearts. And that is why we keep on losing our lives." ■

Yechezkel Goldberg was 'willing to champion kids no one was willing to champion.'

Shoshana Savyon
Goldberg's close friend

London radio station back on air

By ANDREW MORRIS

LONDON (JTA) — Britain's only Jewish radio station has gone live for its third stint on the air.

While its current license only lasts for four weeks, those behind the station hope that ShalomFM will be a permanent fixture on the community-based broadcasting dial by the end of the year.

"We are one of the few ethnic groups in London without a radio voice, and it would be nice to hear some balanced reporting about the community and Israel," says the station's co-founder, Mike Mendoza.

Mendoza, a veteran late-night phone-in DJ with a popular London radio station, is pinning his hopes for a permanent

license on new broadcasting laws that promote community-based stations. The station has already secured the support of 30 members of Parliament and has been endorsed by the Board of Deputies, the umbrella organization of British Jewry.

But the station faces an uphill battle to convince listeners to tune in to its programs, which range from Jewish dating shows to the Chabad-Lubavitch hour to Jewish music programs.

London's airwaves are crammed with both local and national stations and the growing popularity of unlicensed pirate stations. "The aim is to be as good as a good local radio station, and I think we have a real chance of achieving that," Mendoza says. ■

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THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ President Bush hands his budget proposals to Congress. Jewish officials say the budget provides insight into the administration's priorities. Jewish groups concerned about church-state issues are watching out for money earmarked for faith-based charitable work.

■ More than 100 European rabbis will hold a forum organized by the Rabbinical Center of Europe. The group will take part in the inauguration of the first yeshiva to be established in Vienna since World War II.

TUESDAY

■ Primary elections in seven U.S. states could spell the end for Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), the first viable Jewish candidate for president.

■ The topic of Jewish poverty will draw new scrutiny when the UJA-Federation of New York and the city's Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty make public their 2004 Report on Jewish Poverty. Insiders expect the study won't paint a bright picture.

■ The Israeli Embassy in Washington commemorates the Feb. 1, 2003, deaths of seven astronauts in the Columbia space shuttle, including Israeli Col. Ilan Ramon.

■ The prosecution presents closing statements in the case of the 1994 bombing of Argentina's AMIA Jewish community center. The prosecution is expected to sum up evidence against a car mechanic and four former police officers accused of playing a role in the attack.

■ France's National Assembly is to begin debating a bill banning "conspicuous" religious insignia in state schools. Most Jewish groups support the bill.

WEDNESDAY

■ European Evangelical Christians convene for an emergency meeting in Jerusalem to address issues of rising anti-Semitism and anti-Israel propaganda in Europe.

THURSDAY

■ Jewish organizations strategize with legal experts ahead of the Feb. 23 hearing at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, which will address the legality of Israel's West Bank security fence.

SATURDAY

■ Michigan voters hold their caucuses on Saturday. The state has the nation's highest concentration of Arab Americans.

SUNDAY

■ Jewish educators and philanthropists will tackle how to attract and retain good teachers at the inaugural Jewish Education Leadership Summit sponsored by JESNA, which runs Sunday to Tuesday in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Worries persist despite plan to combat terror at Jewish sites

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — When it comes to terrorist threats, it's time for Jewish institutions to wake up, security experts and national Jewish groups say.

"We can no longer bury our heads in the sand," Steven Pomerantz, a former assistant deputy director of the FBI, told Jewish groups gathered last month to discuss the new Secure Community Alert Network, or SCAN. "We are the principal targets of Middle East terror in the world today."

Organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizers and the North American federation system, SCAN has developed a system to alert Jewish institutions in case of danger.

The way the system works, once a "management team" — made up of 10 permanent member organizations and three rotating groups — evaluates the threat, it notifies an outside firm to alert national Jewish groups.

It contacts them through a rollover approach, dialing cell phones and beepers until reaching someone.

National groups then determine how to contact their affiliates, either through their own means or the firm employed by SCAN.

Except for tests, the system has never been used.

According to David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, SCAN is "the best, most comprehensive system that our law enforcement experts could find."

"The first step forward is developing a communications network," he said, to share information and dispel rumors.

"The second step forward was introducing Jewish leaders to the very sophisticated security apparatus that British Jewry has developed over the last decade," Harris said. "That really opens people's eyes out there to what's possible and perhaps to even what may be necessary down the road."

Most officials with local Jewish institutions praise the plan as a good first step to address national Jewish security.

But some say a proactive strategy would better defend Jewish institutions, many of which already receive notification of threats from law-enforcement authorities.

Carolyn Shane, executive director of Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, N.J., which the FBI alerted of a threat last month, says physically securing institutions is a greater communal priority.

"It's nice to let us know that something bad's going to happen," Shane said, "but what good is it if we don't have the money" to secure the institution?

Securing facilities is "very, very costly, and right now there's no financial assistance to synagogues who need this kind of protection."

In Temple Emanu-El's case, the local police and SWAT team quickly safeguarded the facility, but Shane has learned the best kind of security is visible guards that make would-be criminals

"think twice about doing something."

One of Israel's top security experts agrees that focusing on prevention is paramount.

"People should be prepared before something happens, and not after," said Arieh Amit, former police chief of Jerusalem and head of operations for Israeli police. "If a community will not know what to do with the intelligence, it's nothing."

Fearing a wave of anti-Semitic attacks after Sept. 11, Amit headed a team of Israeli security consultants that devised contingency plans he hopes to give to Jewish communities around the world.

His prescription, an "umbrella of security to the community," runs the gamut from prevention and reaction, like training Jewish neighborhood police, to psychological counseling to restore a sense of normalcy after an attack.

The organizers of SCAN say the \$25,000 project, begun 13 months ago, is only in its initial stages. ■

'People should be prepared before something happens, and not after.'

Arieh Amit
Israeli police official

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Jericho raid

Israeli commandos killed a terrorist in the first Israeli army raid on Jericho in months.

The target of Sunday's operation on the normally quiet West Bank city was Shahdi Melhem of the Al Aksa Brigade, a terrorist group within Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement. Israel's elite Yamam SWAT team, coming under fire at Melhem's home, shot him dead and arrested four other men.

The last Israeli operation in Jericho was in August.

Hamis threatens kidnappings

Hamis leaders say they will kidnap Israelis to use as bargaining chips for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The statement came a day after Israel freed 429 Arab prisoners in exchange for a kidnapped Israeli businessman and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers. Many Israelis had worried that the exchange would encourage other terrorists to kidnap Israelis for ransom.

Countries oppose fence hearing

Thirty countries have written to the International Court of Justice opposing a hearing on Israel's West Bank security fence.

The United States, the European Union, Canada, Russia and South Africa are among the countries or bodies that oppose this month's hearing at the International Court of Justice.

The countries argue that the fence is an issue that should be decided in direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, rather than at the court. But the Feb. 23 hearing at The Hague still is likely to take place, an Israeli official said Sunday.

Bomb toll rises

The death toll from last week's Jerusalem bus bombing reached 11.

Doctors identified the 11th victim of the Jan. 29 attack as Mebebra Valadi Zadik, 35, an illegal worker from Ethiopia. Police said Zadik's husband apparently had hesitated to come forward and report her missing, fearing he could be deported.

The other 10 were identified last week: Avraham (Albert) Balhasan, 28; Rose Bona, 39; Chana Anya Bunder, 38; Anat Darom, 23; Natalia Gamril, 50; Yehezkel Goldberg, 42; Baruch Hondiashvilli, 38; Dana Itach, 24; Eli Tsfira, 48; and Octovian Floresco Viorel, 42.

WORLD

Clashes over art exhibit

Neo-Nazis and counterdemonstrators in Germany clashed over a controversial exhibit on the German army's actions during World War II.

Several arrests were made Saturday after police in Hamburg were unable to keep right-wing and left-wing demonstrators apart. Neo-Nazis have protested, sometimes violently, against the "Crimes of the Wehrmacht" traveling exhibit since its release in 1995, claiming that it wrongly criminalizes German soldiers.

Hamburg is the last stop for the groundbreaking exhibit, which documents war crimes committed by the Nazi army.

France to ban anti-Semitic broadcasts?

France will introduce legislation to prevent anti-Semitic and racist material from being aired by foreign TV satellite channels.

A new bill is to go before Parliament later this month that will allow the country's public broadcasting commission to act against satellite providers and TV channels that broadcast such material,

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin told guests Saturday at the annual dinner of the CRIF umbrella organization of French Jews.

For the third consecutive year, the dinner was attended by a number of Cabinet ministers and the leaders of France's major political parties, who have paid increasing attention to the wave of anti-Semitism in France since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000.

Bombing suspect nabbed

Turkish police arrested a suspect in the November suicide bombings at two Istanbul synagogues.

The man, detained Jan. 30, is a leader of a Turkish cell of Al-Qaida.

He is believed to have been one of the planners of the truck bombings.

NORTH AMERICA

Mel Gibson wants detente

Mel Gibson sent a letter to Abraham Foxman regarding Gibson's controversial movie on Jesus.

As the Feb. 25 opening of "The Passion of the Christ" nears, Gibson sent a conciliatory letter to the ADL's national president asking for a halt in mutual recriminations.

Gibson asked Foxman to join him in "setting an example for all our brethren" by following the path of respect and "love for each other despite our differences."

The Los Angeles Times, which obtained a copy of Gibson's letter, said that though the director did not address fears that the film might reignite anti-Semitic religious prejudices, Gibson assured Foxman, "I do not take your concerns lightly."

Foxman and other Jewish officials have warned that, by graphically dramatizing supposed Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus, "The Passion" could revive old anti-Semitic libels and set back Catholic-Jewish relations.

Made in Taiwan

Jewish communal leaders were given the royal treatment on a trip to Taiwan.

Leaders of Hadassah, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, National Committee for Labor Israel, Zionist Organization of America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs were treated to a five-day, all-expenses-paid tour of Taiwan last month to bolster relations and promote the island among a group seen as influential, the Forward reported.

"It was clear we were people they wanted to have a good impression of Taiwan," Marie Abrams, incoming chair of JCPA, told JTA.

The group met top leaders of Taiwan's government.

Hebrew saved at New York school

A Hebrew program at a well-known New York City high school was saved.

Parents whose children study Hebrew at Stuyvesant High School received a letter last month stating the program would be canceled because the regular teacher was ill and a replacement could not be found.

But after protests from parents, the program, which has 60 students, was rescued.

"The parents' and kids' passion for the program has more to do with religious feelings than with intense academic interest in Hebrew," said one of the parents, Seth Akabas.

Hebrew, which is taught at five other high schools in New York City, is one of nine foreign languages taught at Stuyvesant.