

IN THE NEWS

Bush to write Qurei

President Bush will write to the Palestinian Authority prime minister, explaining his views on Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The letter to Ahmed Qurei satisfied a condition Jordan's King Abdullah II had set for his endorsement of Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Announcing the letter Thursday after meeting with Abdullah in Washington, Bush said "the United States will not prejudice the outcome of" Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, a further indication that the United States is backing away from commitments last month to recognize some Israeli claims to the West Bank and reject a "right of return" to Israel for Palestinian refugees.

Hamas leader killed

Israeli troops assassinated a senior Hamas leader near Nablus.

Forces shot Imad Mohammed Janajra, 31, as he approached his village of Taluza, outside the northern West Bank city of Nablus late Wednesday. The army said Janajra had been involved in planning terrorist attacks.

His death follows an initial attempt on his life last week in which soldiers mistakenly shot and killed a Palestinian doctor.

Also Wednesday, Israel released Mohammed Taha, a co-founder of Hamas who had been in Israeli custody for a year.

French clergy visit Jewish graves

Leaders of France's main religious groups attended a ceremony near a Jewish cemetery in France.

Thursday's ceremony took place after swastikas and Nazi slogans were scrawled on more than 100 tombstones at the site last week.

Addressing the gathering, France's chief rabbi, Joseph Sitruk, said anti-Semitism is not simply a Jewish problem and that all of France should "mobilize to stamp out this scourge."

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WORLD REPORT

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



Toby Axelrod

Foreign Minister Solomon Passy of Belgium, right, presents German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer with the yellow star that Passy's grandfather was forced to wear during the Holocaust.

Jews and other Europeans wonder how to recall Shoah — yet move on

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

BERLIN (JTA) — When it came time to end a recent international conference on anti-Semitism, Bulgaria's foreign minister chose a gesture that would be charged with emotion and heavily freighted with symbolism and memory.

In a brief ceremony, Solomon Passy presented the yellow star his grandfather had worn as a Jew in Bulgaria during World War II to German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.

Passy had chaired the high-level, two-day

conference, organized by the 55-member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and Fischer had been its host.

"My grandfather used to say that the time will come when we and the Germans will be allies again," Passy told Fischer. "My grandfather used to say: 'Then we shall return the yellow star to the Germans.'"

"I am happy that now I can fulfill the legacy of my grandfather and return the yellow star which he wore," he continued. "Thank you, Joschka."

Both men, born after the Holocaust and

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**JEWIS IN
A NEW
EUROPE**

■ *Jews and other Europeans wonder how to recall Shoah — yet move on*

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brought up on opposing sides of Cold War Europe, blinked back tears.

That ceremony took place April 29, just two days before the European Union expanded to embrace 10 new members — Malta and Cyprus, plus eight former Communist states whose Jewish communities largely were wiped out in the Shoah: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Passy's gesture, in the capital of the nation whose one-time Nazi leaders decreed the annihilation of European Jewry, demonstrated how much Europe has changed since the end of World War II.

It also demonstrated how powerfully, 60 years on, the Holocaust and its legacy still frame European identity and self-awareness.

Today, as direct memory fades and the Shoah recedes into history, one of the challenges facing both Jews and non-Jews is how to draw meaning from the past without getting trapped in empty rituals.

"Most of us, of course, do not have memories of the Shoah nor, often, sufficient means for apprehending that event," Eva Hoffman, the Polish-born child of Holocaust survivors, wrote in an intensely personal new book on the legacy of the Shoah, "After Such Knowledge."

"What meanings does the Holocaust hold for us today — and how are we going to pass on those meanings to subsequent generations?" she asked.

In effect, the challenge is how to build

on history without becoming a prisoner of it, she wrote.

"For the inheritors of traumatic historical experience," Hoffman wrote, "the ability to separate the past from the present — to see the past as the past — is a difficult but necessary achievement. The moment of that separation, of letting go, is a poignant one, for it is akin to the giving up of mourning."

For Jews, attempting to move on can trigger a range of emotions, including guilt, relief and lingering reluctance.

"For a lot of people it's not so much a problem to move forward, but many don't realize that you can — or should," said Slavka, a woman in her mid-20s who works for the Auschwitz Jewish Center, a Jewish study, memorial and culture center based near the former Nazi death camp.

In North America, the proliferation of Holocaust memorials and museums in recent years has prompted some commentators to compare Holocaust remembrance to a quasi-religious experience.

In this context, said Shai Franklin, director of governmental relations for the U.S. Jewish advocacy organization NCSJ, Holocaust monuments can testify that we have paid our debt to the past, serving almost as shrines.

But by now, he told JTA, "it's up to us to be the survivors and to make ourselves into a real, living memorial. Never again should we misread what our duty is, in our own, living, generation" and in the future.

In Europe, the situation is somewhat different — and so is the challenge.

Europe is where the Holocaust took place. It's also where, as the OSCE conference declaration put it, "anti-Semitism, following its most devastating manifestation during the Holocaust, has assumed new forms and expressions which, along with other forms of intolerance, pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security."

As Passy demonstrated, in much of Europe most Jews have a direct and tangible personal connection to Nazi-era persecution.

Indeed, the very landscape can bear

eloquent witness to the destruction: The modern-looking Jewish community center in Berlin, for example, is built on the site of a grand synagogue that was destroyed on Kristallnacht in 1938. Today's building incorporates surviving architectural elements from the destroyed synagogue.

In many countries, thousands of Jewish cemeteries lie abandoned and hundreds of derelict synagogues stand scattered, few of them used as houses of worship.

Until fairly recently, however, the Holocaust and its commemoration were re-

garded as a Jewish affair, detached from the general flow of European national history and national memory.

In Eastern Europe, communist ideology made the extermination of the Jews a footnote to overall suffering in World War II.

Surviving Jews in many countries kept low profiles after the war. Particularly in communist states, where Jewish life after the Shoah was forcefully suppressed, they often sought to shed or conceal their Jewish identities as a means of self-protection.

Only in the past 10 to 15 years have these attitudes begun to change, often slowly and at times painfully.

The revelation several years ago that local villagers and not Nazis had murdered their neighbors in a small town in northeastern Poland sparked a lacerating national debate on Poles' role and responsibility during the Holocaust.

Younger Jews in Europe use the Holocaust experience of their families and European Jews in general as a touchstone for their identities. But they often chafe under the burden. They frequently say they want to get out from under the shadow of the Shoah, to escape the mournful imagery and memory-laden stereotype.

"Will we ever be able to change our image as martyrs and victims, that we ourselves sometimes allow and even cultivate?" asked Zanet Battinou, director of the Jewish Museum in Athens.

"Unless we manage to understand the message of the Holocaust, to adapt it to today, unless we turn it into a strength, we will never get away from it," she said. ■

Until fairly recently, the Holocaust and its commemoration were regarded solely as a Jewish affair, not a European one.

JTA WORLD REPORT

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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.
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Some want to tap aging Jews as a resource

By JOE BERKOFSKY

PHILADELPHIA (JTA) — Bernice Bricklin has retired as a family law attorney, but at 75 she remains active on several organizational boards and attends Mishkan Shalom, a local Reconstructionist synagogue.

But there's a problem: When Bricklin attends Torah study classes with her daughter, people all but ignore her. "I'm invisible," she said, shaking her fist.

On paper, however, she's not: As Jewish fertility rates drop and life expectancy rises, Bricklin and millions of other elderly Jews represent a growing slice of American Jewry.

The recent National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 estimated that a quarter of America's 5.2 million Jews are 60 or older, and that the very old are growing as a percentage of the Jewish population.

Of all Jews, 19 percent are 65 or older — compared to only 12 percent in the general population — a marked increase since the last study, in 1990, when they comprised 17 percent of the general Jewish population. Their median age is 75, up from 71 in 1990.

"That's a big change. We've got an aging population," said Allen Glicksman, director of research and evaluation at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging and one of the foremost experts on the demographics of Jewish aging.

For the first time, the community is beginning to respond to the graying of American Jewry. This week, more than two dozen academics, gerontologists, rabbis and social service professionals gathered in Philadelphia for an unusual one-day event dubbed "Aging and the 21st Century Synagogue: A Think-Tank for Creating Positive Futures."

Other responses are cropping up as well. The Philadelphia forum was preceded by a summit on the looming "age wave," and it emerged from a new project of the Union for Reform Judaism's Department of Jewish Family Concerns, called "Sacred Aging."

The effort to raise the profile of Jewish aging came as surveys show that nearly half of Reform synagogue members are 50 years old or above.

These older Jews "represent a new wave of congregational entities that are only going to grow," said Rabbi Richard

Address, Sacred Aging's director.

Co-sponsoring the event was the new "Hiddur: The Center for Aging & Judaism," at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pa.

Rabbi Dayle Friedman, Hiddur's director and a leading figure in Jewish chaplaincy and pastoral care, said Hiddur aims to convince the community that older Jews are an untapped resource that can enrich Jewish life, not a liability.

"Hiddur's humble mission is to transform the vision of aging in our community," Friedman said.

For years Friedman worked in and taught geriatric chaplaincy at RRC, which so far remains the only seminary of the major Jewish streams to offer courses on aging. Like Reform's Sacred Aging project, Hiddur also is striving to become a clearinghouse of Jewish aging tools for the community.

So far, Hiddur has raised more than \$490,000 in funding. In addition to training rabbinical students, the center is producing kits that non-Jewish staffers in senior-care facilities with only a few Jews can use to help those seniors celebrate Shabbat, Chanukah and Passover.

Those on the front lines of Jewish aging welcome these moves. Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow, a chaplain at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged in Boston, said she feels the community treats its residents "like an island" of Jewish culture.

She urged synagogues to run programs involving seniors, especially at nursing homes like hers where residents are hungry for spiritual nourishment.

The home could be "a center for Jewish learning," she said. "We have perpetual care for gravestones, but not for people."

Much of the problem revolves around the perception of aging, said Rick Moody, director for the Institute for Human Values in Aging.

Being old once meant retirement and infirmity, but many elderly today tackle new pursuits and remain healthier longer.

Still, "we have no meaning for this latter part of life," he said.

In the Jewish world, philanthropists, communal leaders and synagogues build schools and fund adult education but largely ignore seniors, aging experts said.

Some hope to stem this tide. San Francisco's Congregation Emanu-El, one of the Bay Area's largest synagogues, is conducting a Sacred Aging pilot project called "My Life As a Sacred Journey," in which seniors write journals about their lives that explore the spiritual paths they have taken and can serve as models for others.

At New York's West End Synagogue, Rabbi Yael Ridberg said, the congregation is beginning to integrate congregants of all ages in a step experts say is crucial to getting seniors involved.

Recently the synagogue began holding a pot-luck kiddush and dinner sandwiched between family Shabbat services and those for older members, with the aim of getting people to mix.

"These two poles of the community were focused on their own interests, but we're starting to see them as part of a whole," Ridberg said.

Anita Steiner, 61, has seen that bigger picture. Steiner is about to graduate from the RRC and plans to return to her adopted hometown of Ashkelon, Israel, to work in hospice care.

While in Philadelphia, Steiner worked with one woman in her 80s with terminal cancer. Because she was frail and alone, the woman was afraid to use matches, so Steiner brought her a menorah and lit it for Chanukah.

"I was sitting there, the candles were between us, and she was just so appreciative that her Jewish self could come out," Steiner said. "It was just so amazing."

Abraham Joshua Heschel said the way the aged are treated is the truest reflection of a society, but respect for previous generations also is key to Jewish survival, said Rabbi David Gutterman, executive director of the VAAD: Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia.

The Fifth Commandment says to honor your mother and father, but it really means the "collective parents of the Jewish people," he said. "We must have a relationship with those who came before." ■

'We have perpetual care for gravestones, but not for people.'

Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow

Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged

Jewish welfare helps needy in Belarus

By MICHAEL J. JORDAN

MINSK, Belarus (JTA)—Mara Savanets is hunched over the reading-room table, pondering responses to a questionnaire. She scribbles furiously, then ponders some more.

Her husband Alexey sits beside her, entertaining their 11-month-old son Svetozar, who is content with cramming into his mouth whatever is within reach.

Both Mara and Alexey are 21 and Jewish and, they say, in dire financial straits.

The questionnaire Mara Savanets is filling out for Jewish Family Outreach Services will for the first time survey the state of young Jewish families in Belarus, which ranks among the poorest republics of the former Soviet Union.

Officials say they hope to learn their specific needs and design programs to further satisfy them. Results and analysis are due in June.

The survey may become a model for other countries in the former Soviet Union, says Sofia Abramova, director of Hesed Rachamim, the Minsk community welfare program and one of 18 nationwide initiatives funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Claims Conference and others.

The Jewish Family Outreach Services is a unit of Hesed Rachamim.

The Savanets' story is partly a Jewish love story: They met in the Minsk Hillel three years ago as university students. But the story is primarily Belarussian: They married young and had a child early, before graduating from university.

She quit school, he opted for long-distance study while scrounging for the occasional computer-programming gig. But without his degree, Alexey says, it's impossible to find a decent-paying, full-time job.

Untold numbers of young Belarussian couples are in the same position. Many end up divorcing.

The difference is, the Savanets have a fallback option: the Jewish community.

"When families can't afford food and rent, they start nitpicking and it can lead to more serious problems," says Mara Savanets. "But in our community, the support and help we get is invaluable. They're helping and encouraging us to overcome our

problems and keep the family together."

But the survey's aim is not purely humanitarian, Abramova says.

It's also part of a long-term strategy, one more way to draw deeply assimilated parents — reared in the atheistic, anti-clerical Soviet Union — back into the fold of Jewish life.

"Many of these families have not really identified themselves as Jews, so our task is to show our people that we, the Jewish community, can address

all of their problems," Abramova says. "If they can't support themselves with enough food, how can they worry about their spiritual development?"

The JDC is not the only Jewish organization in Belarus working on Jewish welfare.

Chabad-Lubavitch, in Belarus as across the former Soviet Union, is the only religious denomination with a stable of young rabbis ready to head to the farthest corners of the globe with their wives and children to invigorate Jewish life.

And in Belarus they find a relatively large, geographically concentrated pool of lapsed Jews to work with, says Rabbi Avraham Berkowitz, the Moscow-based executive director of the Chabad-led Federation of Jewish Communities.

"Even through 70 years of assimilation, there remain many halachic Jews, but they don't even know they are Jews," Berkowitz says, referring to Belarussians with Jewish mothers. "So one of the greatest challenges is to find those Jews and make sure they know

they're part of the community."

One way the federation does that in Belarus, he says, is by running ads in local media that appeal to "mothers and grandmothers" — in an effort to trigger Jewish memory among women.

As for children, the federation is building a \$3 million educational facility in Minsk that will combine a full-time day care center and Jewish day school with a synagogue and community center. The facility, financed by

mega-philanthropists Ronald Lauder, Lev Leviev and George Rohr, is expected to open by year's end.

"It's our way of trying to integrate the kids into the community," Berkowitz says. "We hope that if a child comes to use the computer center, they might also drop into the synagogue or take a class in Torah."

'Once we can stand on firm financial ground, then we'll have spare time to be more involved with the Jewish community.'

Mara Savanets

**FROM
MINSK
TO PINSK**



Michael J. Jordan

A pensioner collects food packages in Minsk.

The federation, through Colel Chabad, also provides 1,000 free meals a day across Belarus.

"Because Jews are generally poorer here, they have fewer things to take them away from religion," Berkowitz says. "It's not like they're going out every night to a movie. So they're willing to listen and learn in a different setting. We'll never expect everyone here to become religious, but we provide programs for every level."

But the JDC still is the major player when it comes to Jewish welfare in Belarus.

In the first decade of its operations in Belarus, the JDC and its Hesed programs focused much of their attention — understandably — on the elderly.

As in many corners of the former Soviet Union, a sputtering post-Communist economy coupled with meager pensions force most elderly to choose between food and medicine, or between medicine and utilities like heat and electricity.

The elderly remain the priority today. Roughly 18,000 of the estimated 65,000 Jews in Belarus — though some say the number actually may be closer to 50,000 — are elderly, and they are assisted in some way by Hesed, usually receiving food, medical and psychological assistance.

Depending on income and health, pensioners receive anywhere from two to nine packages per year, with extra goodies around the holidays.

On one weekday in December, dozens of recipients arrived in the community center in Minsk for food staples like cooking oil, flour, rice, coffee, tea and sugar.

The seniors streamed into a multipurpose room that was stacked high with cardboard boxes. They gave their names, collected a package and went out into the hallway. There, they transferred the booty into shopping bags brought from home.

The low-income homebound and bedridden, meanwhile, receive boxes and meals on wheels. But welfare services have expanded as needs have grown, extending to the disabled, then to at-risk children and now on to young families.

The children phenomenon is relatively new. It was first discovered soon after the opening of the Jewish Campus — a JDC-financed facility that houses most of the major Jewish organizations in Minsk and has become the center of Jewish life in the capital.

An 11-year-old boy started hanging



Michael J. Jordan

Children draw Jewish stars at a Jewish center in Minsk.

around and was observed at various events stuffing cakes into his pockets. It turns out he was taking them home to his ill, homebound mother.

As social workers combed the community, they came across kids reared by a single ailing grandparent, or by an ill or alcoholic mother. In some form or another, they were "abandoned."

Once they got up to eight children, in the middle of last year, Hesed decided it was a critical mass and created the Campus Children program to keep them occupied and well-nourished after school. There are now 13 kids, ranging from 8 to 12 years old.

"Every week, it seems our case workers bring in a new one," Abramova says.

The needs may be greater among young families. While average monthly pensions are about \$75 — buttressed by free medicine and food each month — the average salary in Belarus is \$100 per month. So if a husband and wife each earn \$100, and they have to feed, clothe and shelter their children, they may be living worse off than a grandparent.

As of the end of January, three case workers and a psychologist had conducted interviews with 837 participants in Minsk. Across the country, 2,285 families have been interviewed. The surveying recently ended, Abramova says.

Analysis of the interviews is being carried out in conjunction with faculty

from Emory University in Atlanta and the JDC-affiliated Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem.

Hesed now advises single-parents on how to find work, how to present oneself to a prospective employer, and how to prepare for a job interview. Hesed recently began a three-month accounting course, with eight women enrolled and angling to become bookkeepers. Next up: hairdresser and manicurist courses.

The women pay a third of the course fee; JDC contributes the rest. Meanwhile, Hesed offers day care for their children to allow the women time to study.

While there's no sign of let-up in their financial pressures, Mara Savanets says her family has a confidence other young couples lack.

While some are discouraged from starting a family out of financial insecurity, watching the JDC and Hesed provide the lifeline for Belarussian Jewry over the past decade, she says, means "if we needed support, we would receive help."

This support may indeed pay dividends for the Jewish community in the future.

Savanets says she's already considering leaving her son at day care to spend time volunteering at the Campus.

"Once we can stand on firm financial ground, then we'll have spare time to be more involved with the Jewish community," she says. "Hesed helps people, and people help the community."

Quail, bison, cow udder, locust on O.U.'s menu

By URIEL HEILMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — At \$161 a head, most people paying for dinner at an upscale Manhattan restaurant would be upset to be served dessert while eyeing a locust crawling around not far from their plates.

But that's exactly what diners sought when they signed up for the Orthodox Union's exotic kosher event Sunday at Levana restaurant, in New York.

Diners paid for a multicourse meal including cow udder, wild turkey, quail, bison, venison, goat, sheep stew, pigeon, dove and sparrow.

In between courses, O.U. kosher officials explained what makes the animals kosher, why they are rarely eaten and how to identify and prepare them.

"The whole point of this event is to keep the mesorah alive," said Menachem Genack, head of the kosher division at the O.U., as waiters collected plates of cow udder from diners. "Mesorah" is Hebrew for "tradition."

The aim of the dinner — and a daylong conference that preceded it — was "to eat animals to re-establish the fact that they are kosher," he said, so that the tradition of what animals are kosher can be passed on to a new generation.

While some animals can be identified as kosher using empirical characteristics — beasts that chew their cud and have split hooves are considered kosher — others, such as bird species, are kosher only because they traditionally have been known to be so and have been eaten by observant Jews.

Diners on Sunday ate quail and dove and sparrow to ensure that the memory that these birds are kosher is not forgotten, Genack said.

If reaction to the food was any indication, that memory is safe.

"I'd never eaten quail before," said Frada Nager, from Manhattan's Upper East Side, a kosher observer who said she came because she wanted to taste something unusual.

"Being kosher, you don't have that much choice," she said.

Though Nager was not so impressed with the taste of the exotic meats she was served — when asked what she liked best, she noted that the seven-grain bread rolls had been good — she said she

nevertheless was glad she came.

"It was an experience — a costly one, but an experience," she said.

Earlier in the day, the Orthodox Union held a daylong conference at the Lander College for Men on kosher species, how to recognize them and how to make them kosher.

About 450 people turned out for the conference, O.U. officials said. Some were rabbis, some were professional kosher slaughterers, but most merely were curious, kosher-observant Jews, the union said.

At one point during the conference, a Yemenite Jew prepared a kosher locust — Sephardi Jews, unlike Ashkenazim, ate such kosher insects until recently — but there weren't many takers when it came time to eat the fried grasshopper.

Stuart Shaffren, a New York dentist, said he canceled a day's worth of patients to go to the conference.

Even if he had skipped the dinner, he said, "the lectures alone were far worth it."

Shaffren, who received the dinner as a birthday gift from his family, said he also was excited to be keeping the tradition alive.

There wasn't a vegetarian in the house on Sunday night. Yet while the tables were full until late into the evening, some plates went back into the kitchen nearly untouched.

"I couldn't eat anything," said one woman, who left shortly before waiters began passing out plates of cubed goat and sheep stew. "I want to get out of here before they serve goat. Goat I can't take."

Another diner, Pinchus Merling, a Chasid who lives in Manhattan, said he came for shibuta, a fish that purportedly tastes like pork. But shibuta was unavailable.

"That's what I really wanted. To tell my friends I ate pork. To say I know what pork tastes like," he said.

Nevertheless, Merling said the soup, whose ingredients included pigeon, dove, sparrow, duck and a "fleishig egg" — an unhatched egg found in a slaughtered chicken that is considered meat, rather

than pareve, according to Jewish law — brought him back to his childhood.

"I haven't tasted a fleishig egg since I was a child," Merling said wistfully.

"My mother used to open chickens and find fleishig eggs in there."

The egg consists solely of a yolk that is smaller and harder than typical yolks.

Avraham Kirschenbaum, who owns Levana along with two of his brothers, said the biggest challenge was

not the food preparation — his non-Jewish chef is well-versed in preparing unconventional meats — but finding the animals to kill according to Jewish law.

"There are people that put things into theory, but theory is not reality," he said. "The hardest part of the project is that someone's got to bring it into reality."

The restaurant's standard menu includes bison and venison, but things got a little trickier when Kirschenbaum wanted to serve goat.

He went to a meat market in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and found the perfect goat. But when Kirschenbaum picked it out, it was given to a non-Jew and slaughtered before Kirschenbaum — and the ritual slaughterer he had brought with him — could intervene.

"They killed my goat!" he said. "I'm like, 'What are you doing, man? You killed my goat!'"

An alternative goat was selected and slaughtered, along with two sheep, one of which Kirschenbaum described as "drop-dead gorgeous." The shochet — the ritual slaughterer — was a little nervous, Kirschenbaum said.

"All along the way, everybody was shaking," he said.

But "the kill was perfect" and the result made it onto the plate of Rabbi Tzvi Flaum, among others.

"To see firsthand the reality of the kosher bird species we learned about in the Talmud," said Flaum, rabbi at Congregation Knesseth Israel of Far Rockaway, N.Y., "you're finally finding out about what you learned about in childhood."

"It was a unique life experience," Flaum said.

The cow udder course was followed by soup made of pigeon, dove, sparrow, duck and a 'fleishig egg.'

COMMUNITY

TRANSITIONS

■ The American Jewish Congress chose Paul Miller as its president, replacing Jack Rosen, who became the group's chairman.

■ David Black was named executive director of the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan.

■ Larry Garber was named executive director of the New Israel Fund.

■ Kathy Greenberg was elected chairwoman of the board of Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

■ JTA board member Shoshana Cardin was named chairwoman of The Israel Project's Press Ambassadors for Israel Program.

■ Barbara Balzer was chosen as the Anti-Defamation League's national chairwoman.

HONORS

■ Argentine President Nestor Kirchner received an award from the American Jewish Committee for shedding light on the entrance of Nazis to Argentina after World War II, his commitment to human rights and measures taken in the investigation into the 1994 bombing of a Buenos Aires Jewish center.

■ Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) received the American Jewish Committee's Congressional Leadership Award.

■ The Institute of International Education announced the creation of the Ruth Gruber Chair of the Scholar Rescue Fund in honor of the photojournalist and humanitarian.

■ The Weizmann Institute of Science honored philanthropists Helen and Martin Kimmel of New York.

■ The Jewish Labor Committee gave human rights awards to Joseph Hansen and Peter Ward, and a lifetime achievement award to Evelyn Dubrow.

■ The late Jacob Rader Marcus, founding director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, was awarded the Society of Ohio Archivist's Merit Award.

■ The Jewish Women's Foundation of New York gave its humanitarian award to Kathy and Alan Greenberg; its education award to Joan Rosenbaum; its empowerment award to Diane Oshin; and its endowment award to Abby Joseph Cohen.

Marrow registry head wins prize

By E.B. SOLOMONT

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jay Feinberg doesn't like being called a hero. Founder of the Gift of Life bone-marrow registry, Feinberg reserves that term for organ donors.

Most people would disagree with him.

Last month, Feinberg, 35, received the inaugural Charles Bronfman Prize, a new award for humanitarian efforts in the Jewish world.

"Different people do wonderful things in the Jewish world and beyond," Stephen Bronfman said. Feinberg's story "really hit a note in all of us," he said. "How could it not? He's a real lifesaver."

Stephen Bronfman, along with Ellen Bronfman Hauptman and Andrew Hauptman, chose Feinberg for the prize, which was created in honor of their father's 70th birthday. The prize will be given annually.

"We wanted to do something that would respect what he has done through his life," Stephen Bronfman said. "To perpetuate Dad and his attention to humanitarian issues, to the Jewish world and to youth."

As part of the award, Feinberg will receive \$100,000, most of which he plans to donate to Gift of Life. The Gift of Life is funded by private donations and grants, mostly from Jewish groups.

Gift of Life is a bone-marrow registry geared specifically for Jews. The genetic make-up of all body tissue — including bone marrow — is an inherited characteristic, and Gift of Life offers Jews from similar ethnic backgrounds better odds of finding a viable donor.

Like other small ethnic groups, Jews are under-represented in the nearly 50 worldwide bone-marrow registries. Jews face an added challenge because so many Jewish bloodlines were severed in the Holocaust.

Gift of Life grew out of Feinberg's own search to find a donor after he was diagnosed with leukemia in 1991. During the four years until he found a donor, nearly 60,000 people were tested — and some matched with other needy patients — thanks to an organization of family, friends and volunteers then known as Friends of Jay Feinberg.

Following his recovery, Feinberg created Gift of Life as a "way of giving back," he said.

"A hero saved my life," Feinberg said. "I can think of no greater thing to do with mine."

During the past decade, the organization has registered another 75,000 people as potential donors. Nearly 1,000 donations of bone marrow and peripheral blood cells already have taken place.

Feinberg said he hoped to announce a new cord-blood registry — blood from the umbilical cord, rich with immature stem cells, also is effective in bone marrow transplants. Cord blood often is a more viable donation than bone marrow or blood stem cells, but it can cost around \$1,000 for the first year and \$100 each year after that to store.

To determine if two people match, doctors look at the proteins on the surface of each person's white blood cells. A "perfect match" occurs when 10 human antigens match up. The closer the match, the less chance there is of graft-versus-host disease, an ailment similar to organ rejection following an

organ donation.

Feinberg's match was Becky Faibisoff of Milwaukee.

In order to accept the marrow, Feinberg's immune system was completely destroyed through irradiation and chemotherapy. Then, over two hours, the new marrow was infused, followed by a grueling recovery that lasted nearly two years.

Since the 1995 procedure, science has progressed, as have Feinberg's efforts to keep his registry up to date.

Today, he said, doctors choose whether they want their patients to receive blood stem cells or marrow. Cord blood increasingly is harvested and stored for future transplants. Already, Feinberg has attracted the attention of families whose relatives he has helped.

"There are nearly a thousand people alive and well today because of his efforts," Warren Spector wrote in a letter endorsing Feinberg's nomination for the Bronfman Prize. "By his existence as a transplant survivor, Jay is a comforting presence. His own survival offers patients hope in their darkest hours." ■

Jay Feinberg,
a bone-marrow
recipient himself,
created Gift of
Life as a way to
give back.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Rabbi joins prayer day

A rabbi led prayers at the U.S. National Day of Prayer. Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, the Orthodox Union's executive vice president, joined a Protestant minister and a Catholic priest in leading prayers Thursday at a convocation hosted by President Bush.

Weinreb read from Psalm 67, beginning, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations."

U.S. freezes water projects

The United States is freezing its backing for two water projects in the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Authority's failure to capture terrorists who killed three people in a U.S. diplomatic convoy in October is behind the action, The Associated Press reported Thursday.

Hillel leader fired

A student leader of the Hillel campus organization was fired after criticizing Israel.

Jilian Redford, a junior at the University of Richmond in Virginia, was ousted as president of the school's Hillel chapter this semester after e-mailing the Israeli Embassy in Washington to ask that they stop sending her "radical Zionist propaganda," the Chronicle of Higher Education reported.

Redford, who was raised Baptist but converted to Judaism in college, was forced to resign by the local Jewish community center. The JCC, which oversees the Hillel, said Redford refused to apologize for her strident tone.

NPR 'regrets' Gaza report

National Public Radio apologized for a report that said the presence of Jewish settlers in Gaza sparked the killing of a pregnant woman and her four daughters.

The apology on NPR's Web site came after reporter Julie McCarthy filed a story Monday, a day after the woman and her daughters were gunned down by Palestinian terrorists, saying that "there was ample evidence yesterday to show that" the settlers' "presence in Gaza is provoking bloodshed."

Study reports on Orthodox sex

Orthodox women have a lot of sex but low levels of sexual satisfaction, a new survey says.

The 382 Orthodox women in New York studied by the American Psychiatric Association follow Jewish laws in which husbands and wives do not have sex during menstruation and the week after, then undergo ritual cleansing in the mikvah before they resume having sex, the Forward reported.

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli soldiers repel infiltration

Israeli soldiers repelled two groups of potential infiltrators from crossing into Israeli via the Lebanese border.

The soldiers opened fire on the first group of infiltrators as they approached an army post early Thursday morning. The group did not return fire, but a short time later another group was seen approaching the border and the Israeli soldiers again opened fire.

Taxi driver pleads guilty

An Israeli taxi driver pleaded guilty to driving a suicide bomber to the site of an attack. According to the plea bargain, Ofer Schwartzbaum

will perform six months of community service for his role in the Dec. 25, 2003, bombing near Tel Aviv in which four Israelis were killed and 20 wounded.

Schwartzbaum apparently knew he was illegally driving Palestinians into Israel, but he has denied knowing that the man and an accomplice were on their way to commit a terrorist attack.

WORLD

Olympics capital brouhaha

Israel is not given a capital on the official Olympics Web site. Instead, www.Athens2004.com gives an asterisk, which refers to a footnote on the bottom of the page giving a link to the U.N. Web site.

The U.N. site says that the U.N. position on Jerusalem is in Resolution 181, which calls for international control of the city.

Center to monitor anti-Semitism

The European Union and the Conference of European Rabbis are setting up a center to monitor the effects of anti-Semitism on European Jewish life.

Speaking Wednesday at the Convention of European Rabbis near Paris, Rabbi Aba Dunner, secretary-general of the Conference of European Rabbis, said the center would demonstrate the importance of community rabbis' role in dealing with the effects of anti-Semitism.

U.S. Jews pressed to help German brethren

American Jews should show more commitment to Jews in Germany, according to a high-level U.S. rabbinic delegation.

Rabbis and teachers are particularly needed, said Rabbi Eric Lankin of New York, director of religious and educational activities for the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of North American Jewish federations. Twelve members of UJC's Rabbinic Cabinet spent several days in Berlin this week.

The trip, also supported by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, was to conclude in Israel.

Greek soccer coach suspended

A Greek soccer coach was suspended for making anti-Semitic remarks.

Nikos Alefandros, coach of the Olympiakos soccer team, last year's Greek champion, was suspended Monday for seven months for recent remarks about Israeli Yitzhak Shum, who currently coaches Olympiakos' rival, Panathinaikos.

Herzl to get a square in Vienna

Vienna's City Council approved plans to name a city square after Theodor Herzl.

The council voted this week to OK plans to name the square after Herzl, a native of Vienna who founded modern Zionism, despite protests from the city's Muslim community and the Arab League.

Controversial comedian to turn legislator?

A French comedian facing charges for performing an allegedly anti-Semitic sketch on TV is running for the European Parliament.

Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala joined with a group of pro-Palestinian activists heading the Euro-Palestine Party list, which announced it would field candidates for the Paris region in elections next month. At the new party's launch Wednesday, leaders of the group — which includes a number of well-known Jewish anti-Zionists — said "the State of Israel as it has functioned since 1967 is the vector for a new anti-Semitism."