

## IN THE NEWS

## Sports and politics mix at Olympic Games

An Iranian athlete may have been disqualified from judo competition because he was overweight, not because he refused to fight an Israeli competitor. It was originally reported that Arash Miresmaeili refused to fight Israel's Ehud Vaks last Friday out of support for the Palestinians, a move that drew praise from Iranian President Mohammed Khatami.

But the International Judo Federation later said Miresmaeili was overweight for the 146-pound match. The Guardian newspaper reported that the weight ban may be a way for Miresmaeili to avoid sanctions for his pullout, which was apparently ordered by Iranian officials.

Meanwhile, Vaks lost his next match to an Algerian opponent.

## Trouble rumbles in Israeli prisons

Hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners in Israel went on a hunger strike. As many as 1,500 inmates at Nafha, Eshel and Hadarim prisons announced Sunday they would take no food until their conditions were improved. [Story, Pg. 2]

## Tomb desecrator in custody in France

A man admitted to desecrating some 60 Jewish tombstones in the French city of Lyon.

The man, a French national, is being held by police after giving himself up voluntarily Saturday night.

Police believe he could have carried out the attacks as part of an initiation rite linked to a U.S.-based far-right group which requires members to commit a "Phineas Act," usually of a violently racist or anti-Semitic nature.

Indeed, the man claimed to be the mysterious figure who had daubed the name "Phineas" on three of the damaged tombs, and who had earlier attacked a Muslim in a Lyon suburb.

# WORLD REPORT

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## North American doctors build new lives after moving to Israel

By DINA KRAFT

**B**EIT SHEMESH, Israel (JTA) — A week after the Benuck family made aliyah from New Jersey, lunchtime at their house is cheese sandwiches, fruit and yogurt on a wobbly card table in an empty living room.

The room's only decoration is a poster explaining the administrative steps for immigrating to the Jewish state.

But there is good news, Mitchell Benuck reports: Despite a strike by Israeli port workers, the shipment of the family's possessions has arrived in Ashdod. By next week they hope to be able to replace the card table, air mattresses and hot plate with their own furniture and appliances.

After all, this is his family's home now, says Benuck, 34, a pediatrician from Passaic, N.J.

"I feel my life will be most fulfilled practicing medicine in this country and raising my kids in this country," he says. "I would hate to miss out on this opportunity.

"For thousands of years people have risked their lives to get here. All I had to do was get on a plane."

Benuck is one of 15 North American physicians who have immigrated to Israel with their families as an Applebaum Fellow.

The program is in memory of Dr. David Applebaum, a U.S.-born Israeli doctor who served as head of emergency services at Jerusalem's Sha'arei Zedek Hospital until he and his daughter, Nava, were killed in a suicide bombing at a Jerusalem cafe in 2003, on the eve of her wedding.

As Applebaum Fellows of Nefesh

B'Nefesh — a North American organization funded by private, philanthropic sources — and the Jewish Agency for Israel, which helps provide financial and logistical support for olim, each family receives up to \$18,000 toward making a new life in Israel.

The Applebaum Fellows were honored at an airport ceremony Aug. 11 welcoming the arrival of the third plane of North American immigrants this summer sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Jewish Agency. Among the fellows are an emergency room specialist, a surgeon, a pediatric nephrologist and a pediatric gastroenterologist.

"Israel has a strong, equality-based health care system, a system of which we are proud," Health Minister Danny Naveh told the newcomers. "We look forward to integrating you into our hospitals, clinics and health care facilities

available around the country. The legacy of Dr. David Applebaum truly lives on, and we welcome you home."

Meanwhile, far from the festive welcomes and speeches, the Benucks are organizing their new lives in Beit Shemesh, a rapidly growing city of almost 60,000 people in the foothills of Jerusalem.

They are renting a two-story apartment in a building where they have bought a garden apartment that is under construction.

The neighborhood of brand new stone cottages and townhouse-style apartments is made up largely of American immigrants. Children who play in the quiet streets speak to each other in English, while the adults trade tips on adjusting to life in Israel.

Today is turning out to be a productive

*Continued on page 2*

### BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## ■ *A doctor's death in a terror attack prompts immigration to Israel*

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day: Aside from the news about the shipment's arrival, a phone technician has delivered a modem so the family will soon have high-speed Internet access, and they got a surprise Sabbath invitation from a family they have yet to meet in person.

The Benucks' eldest children, Eli, 9, and Sara, 7, spent the day studying Hebrew at a nearby Ulpan.

Marni Benuck, 33, is seven months pregnant with the couple's fourth child, and she sets out to register at Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem.

"Good luck," Mitchell Benuck calls out to his wife.

"Every trip is an adventure," he says with a smile.

Marni Benuck, who worked as a school psychologist in the United States, acknowledges it would have been easier to give birth in the familiar surroundings of the New Jersey hospital where her husband worked, but after years of planning, the couple felt now was the time to make the move to Israel.

Both Benucks come from Orthodox Zionist families and have planned to make aliyah since soon after they met and married 11 years ago. But first, they decided, they would finish their educations and get work experience in the United States.

"There's no practical reason to explain why we are here. I had a good job in the U.S., my husband had a good job in the U.S.," said Marni Benuck, who grew up in Los Angeles. "We could have made a

lot of money and been comfortable in the U.S. But you have to do what you think it's right to do."

The Benucks are among a growing number of North American Jews making aliyah despite the intifada and the country's economic challenges.

Nearly 1,500 North Americans are moving to Israel this summer. Israeli officials expect some 3,000 total in all of 2004.

The numbers have been rising steadily since 2001, when 1,600 Jews immigrated from North America.

Mitchell Benuck said that in some ways he feels safer here than in the United States because of the security precautions taken in Israel.

Benuck also feels there are risks involved no matter where you choose to live.

Mike Rosenberg, the Jewish Agency's

director general for immigration and absorption, said the increase in North American immigrants can be explained on two levels.

"You have a lot of identified Jews in a sense feeling a calling for the flag, to their homeland," he explains, and there also "is enlightened self-interest. People are beginning to realize if they want their kids and grandchildren to be Jewish, then the best place to bring them up is in Israel."

Eli, the Benuck's son, said he is happy to be in Israel.

The Hebrew classes, bus rides, hot weather — it's all good, he says.

Even the air mattress that he sleeps on in a room he shares with his brother, Yonatan, 3, isn't so bad.

"It's a chavaya," or an experience, he says, using the first Hebrew word his parents taught him. ■

**'There's no practical reason to explain why we are here.'**

**Marni Benuck**

Recent immigrant to Israel

## Palestinian prisoners go on hunger strike

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM, (JTA) — For once, it is the Palestinian terrorists already behind bars — rather than those still at large — who are giving Israel a headache.

At least 1,500 inmates at three security prisons in Israel declared a hunger strike Sunday, demanding improved conditions and threatening that the protest could spark violence at Israeli military detention centers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel was unmoved. "We will not relent," said Justice Minister Yosef Lapid.

The internal security minister was blunter still.

"As far as I am concerned, these terrorists can go on hunger strike for a day, a week, a month — or until death," Tzachi Hanegbi told reporters.

The Prisons Service has its own team for dealing with jailhouse disturbances, but the hunger strike was seen as more of a political than a tactical threat to the Jewish state.

"Whenever the Palestinians are at a loss for a new diplomatic maneuver, they

play the 'prisoner card,' " a source in Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office said.

After President Bush launched the peace "road map" last year, Israel released 330 Palestinian inmates as a goodwill gesture, although such amnesties were not meant to take place until the late stages of the plan's implementation.

Nonetheless, the Palestinian Authority cried foul at the relatively small number of prisoners who went free — some 7,500 are held in Israel overall — and complained that most had been jailed for minor crimes.

The striking inmates' demands include the removal of glass partitions in prison visitor sections and the installation of public telephones.

To Israel, this sounds too much like an attempt to facilitate easier communications with Palestinian terrorist groups on the outside.

Even the Palestinians make no secret of the fact that their most celebrated prisoner, Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, has frequently used cell phones smuggled into his jail cell to coordinate accord between the various armed factions. ■

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# In Ukraine, Jewish women want to be rabbis

By SUE FISHKOFF

ODESSA, Ukraine (JTA) — Julia Grischenko is facing a lot of nastiness in her quest to become Ukraine's first female rabbi.

First, there are the rumors that Grischenko, the leader of Odessa's Reform congregation for the past four years, is not Jewish — which she is. Then there are the whispers that she's an unwed mother — which she isn't.

But the most damning "defect" of all is undeniably true: Grischenko, 28, is a woman, and that's a serious hurdle to overcome in a country where Jews and non-Jews alike expect rabbis to be both Orthodox and male.

"It was a mistake to send a woman here," said Kira Verkhovskaya, chairman

of the board of Odessa's Jewish Community Center, a tough, chain-smoking woman one might not expect to come out with such a comment.

"You hear that in every city in the former Soviet Union," says Rabbi Nelly Shulman, who at 32 is chief rabbi of Russia's Reform movement and one of three native-born Reform rabbis working in the former Soviet Union.

Grischenko hopes to become the fourth. A graduate of the Reform movement's Machon, a two-year "para-rabbinic" training institute in Moscow, she will be entering rabbinical college this August in Berlin.

"I think it was davka the right decision to send me to Odessa," Grischenko says, using the word that loosely translates as "despite it all" in Hebrew.

"There are two 'chief' rabbis in this city, both fighting over who's the real chief.

"Because I'm a woman, they don't fight with me the same way. I work quietly, and I've been able to build up my congregation."

Grischenko was born in Bryansk, a city on the Ukrainian-Russian border, to a mother who fought with the Jewish partisans' brigade in World War II.

Her father's parents, Jews from Poland and the Uzbek region of Bukhara, handed out matzah once a year at a family dinner, although the young Julia never understood why.

In 1989, as Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of openness hit Bryansk full-force, a friend whispered to the 13-year-old girl that a Jewish Sunday school was being organized. Grischenko started going. By 15, she was teaching there; at 16, she was an activist and attending summer camp.

"The JCC director wrote a letter saying I was 18, since it was an adult camp," she recalled.

"He was leaving for Israel, and he told me he wanted to make sure there would be good leaders to take his place."

By 1995, when she was 19, Grischenko had become a regular at activities sponsored by Chabad-Lubavitch, the only Jewish religious organization in the city. She was already working for various other

Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Agency for Israel and Betar, and was teaching Jewish history and traditions.

"The Chabad rabbi liked me, and said I'd go far," she recalls. "I asked what he meant, and he said someday I'd be the wife of a rabbi.

"I told him, 'No, that's not enough for me.'"

Three years later, Grischenko applied to Machon, then located in Kiev; it moved to Moscow in 2000.

"That first year in Machon was the happiest of my life," she said. "I already had the basics

in Hebrew and Judaism, so I could study more in-depth and explore deeper questions. Each day I studied, I understood that I'd made the right choice."

After graduation, the Ukrainian Reform Association invited her to organize the fledgling Odessa congregation. She did so, and was soon eager to move on to rabbinical studies.

But the movement wanted her to wait.

"They said, it's not enough to plant a seed, you have to make sure it grows," she says.

So she waited. One year, two years, three years. The congregation moved three times, finally landing in the cramped quarters it now rents for \$510 a month, a hefty chunk of the \$880 monthly allowance it receives from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Reform headquarters in Kiev.

That budget also includes Grischenko's \$200 monthly salary.

This year she finally received permission to leave for Berlin.

It won't be an easy move. Her husband is "uncomfortable" with her decision, and hasn't decided whether to accompany her.

Hardest of all, she has to leave her 18-month-old daughter behind, at least temporarily. She's determined, however, to see it through.

"A rabbi is a teacher, and that's what I want to do," she says. "The young generation, my generation, is leading our parents back to Judaism. I'm very sure that my daughter will know even more than me, because she's growing up with it.

**'It was a mistake to send a woman here.'**

**Kira Verkhovskaya**  
Board chairman, Odessa JCC

## THIS WEEK

### TUESDAY

■ The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum reconvenes its "Committee of Conscience" on Tuesday for a briefing update on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. Jewish groups have been active in gathering money for refugees there and in pressuring the Sudanese government to end its support for Arab militias that have killed at least 30,000 Africans.

### THURSDAY

■ Eleven local defendants in the 1994 attack on an Argentine Jewish center are expected to give their final words at the last stage of their trial. But insiders say they might remain silent because they have a good chance of being released in connection with the AMIA attack, which killed 85 people. Also, a film about the attack is being released. Argentina's National Film Institute coordinated the project that is made up of 10 short films of 10 minutes each, on the bombing and its effects on relatives of the victims and on Argentine society.

■ A memorial is held in Athens to honor the memory of the 11 Israeli athletes killed by terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The event, held during this year's Olympics, is being organized by the central organization for Greek Jewry and the Israeli Olympics Committee.

### SUNDAY

A "summer university" for European Jewish students begins in Berlin. The university, which ends Aug. 29, aims to provide a week of events aimed at building Jewish identity for those younger than 35.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### McGreevey aide denies blackmail

A former Israeli aide to James McGreevey denied blackmailing the New Jersey governor.

"It does not bother me that they are saying I am gay, but I am really not. But to accuse me of blackmail? Someone here has lost his mind," Golan Cipel, who served as McGreevey's homeland security adviser, and later as liaison to the Jewish community of New Jersey, told Yediot Achronot on Sunday.

The twice-married McGreevey admitted having an affair with another man and announced his resignation Aug. 12. Media reports suggested that Cipel, an Israeli who obtained a six-figure salary job with McGreevey after meeting him in Israel in 2000, had blackmailed the governor.

But the 35-year-old aide said he had only defended himself against McGreevey's advances. "He came on to me again and again, to the point where I was afraid to be alone with him," Cipel told the Israeli newspaper.

### Bush: Iraq will inspire Palestinians

A free Iraq will prove to Palestinians that coexistence with Israel is possible, President Bush said.

Speaking Aug. 12 at a California fund-raiser, Bush outlined how he believes a free Iraq will inspire others in the region toward democracy. "When Iraq is free, it will say to the Palestinians, who have been subjected to leadership that has not led in their interest, that it's possible to live at peace with our close friend, Israel," Bush said. "Freedom will change the habits of people so that peace prevails in this world."

### Tony Kushner writes for Spielberg

Pulitzer Prize-winner Tony Kushner is writing a new screenplay for Steven Spielberg's film on the aftermath of the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Kushner won his Pulitzer for "Angels in America," a work about the AIDS crisis.

The new film focuses on the hunt for the Palestinian terrorists who took the Israeli team hostage at the Munich Games. Production of the film has been postponed to June 2005.

Marvin Levy, Spielberg's spokesman, denied a New York Post report that the delay was based on fears that Muslim extremists might target the locations to be used in the movie.

Instead, the delay is mainly due to Spielberg's dissatisfaction with the first draft of the script, Levy said.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Jerusalem stabbing foiled

An Israeli policeman killed a Palestinian who stabbed him in Jerusalem's Old City.

The patrolman was moderately wounded in Sunday morning's attack outside the Damascus Gate, but managed to open fire on the assailant.

### Gandhi grandson to join Palestinians

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson will spearhead a Palestinian campaign of nonviolent protest against Israel.

Arun Gandhi was invited by a group of Palestinians from Ramallah interested in nonviolent protest against Israel's West Bank security barrier and Israel's military presence in Palestinian-populated areas, Ha'aretz reported.

The group is headed by Palestinian Authority Cabinet minister Ka-

dura Fares. Gandhi said he will promote his grandfather's philosophy of nonviolent conflict resolution. "I will tell the Palestinians that it is their responsibility to change. If the Israelis do not want to listen, it does not mean we cannot act," he said.

Organizers are planning to bring thousands of protesters to rallies, and donors in Switzerland and Norway already have begun supporting the effort.

### Haifa spared bombing

A Palestinian bomb that blew up at a West Bank checkpoint last week was intended for Haifa.

Terrorists captured in connection with the Aug. 11 blast, which killed two Palestinians at the Kalandia checkpoint, told interrogators that the bomb had been hidden in a baby carriage in hope of smuggling it into Israel, security sources said Sunday. But the bomber fled the scene and set off the device by remote control when it became clear that police had been tipped off to the operation.

The Al-Aksa Brigade, the terrorist wing of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the incident and "apologized" to the families of the Palestinians who were slain.

### Israeli Arab team advances

An Israeli Arab soccer team advanced in the European soccer championships.

Bnei Sakhnin, the first Israeli Arab team to compete in the European Cup, defeated an Albanian team Aug. 12 by a score of 3-0.

In May, Bnei Sakhnin became the first Israeli Arab team to win Israel's soccer championships.

### Paintball in Gaza

Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip have a paintball field.

The field for the game, in which participants wear camouflage fatigues and fire pellets at each other from paint-guns, opened recently near the settlement of Gush Katif, Yediot Achronot reported.

"This isn't an extremist game," Tzuriel Konaki, 16, told the Israeli newspaper. "It's a fun experience of shooting a gun that gives you an adrenaline rush."

## WORLD

### Israel complains at 'martyr' listing

Israel complained to the United Nations that Palestinians included a boy killed by Palestinian terrorists on a list of victims allegedly killed by Israel.

Nasser Al-Kidwa, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, periodically updates the number of Palestinian "martyrs" in letters to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

In his Aug. 9 letter, he included Hassan Jamil Al-Janeen, who was killed July 22 in the Gaza Strip.

Media reports at the time said Al-Janeen, a teenager, was shot dead by Palestinian terrorists because his family resisted the terrorists' effort to fire rockets into Israel from the family's yard.

### Paris cathedral defaced

A swastika and anti-Jewish graffiti were daubed on a wall in the grounds of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Church officials found the graffiti which included a swastika and the slogan "Death to the Jews" on a small outside wall of the church early Saturday morning.

The graffiti was removed the same afternoon. Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë said he was "saddened and disgusted" by the incident, adding that he hoped that those responsible would be "quickly identified and severely punished."