

## IN THE NEWS

**U.S. urges calm in Gaza**

The United States urged Palestinians and Israelis not to escalate violence in the Gaza Strip.

In recent days Hamas terrorists have resumed mortar attacks on Jewish settlements, and Israel retaliated with a missile attack on Hamas members preparing a mortar launch.

"We have been in touch with officials, both in Washington and in the region," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Thursday. "We have urged the parties to focus on how they can calm the situation and not to take any escalatory actions. We have, in particular I think, focused on measures to bring an end to violence and terror."

**U.S.: Iran support for terrorism an obstacle**

Iran's support of Palestinian terrorism is a central obstacle to normalized relations with the United States, a U.S. official said.

Outlining Iran's "threatening and often very irresponsible behavior," Nicholas Burns, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, listed three areas of central concern in Senate testimony on Thursday.

**Germany to help more survivors**

More Holocaust survivors around the world, including those who were imprisoned in North Africa, will receive benefits from Germany.

Following negotiations with the Claims Conference that ended Wednesday, Germany agreed to pay an additional \$11.4 million for home care for Holocaust survivors, on top of the sum agreed to after negotiations last year.

In addition, survivors of several slave labor camps were added to those who can receive pensions from Germany.

Survivors who were incarcerated for at least six months in certain camps in Hungary, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are eligible.

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# WORLD REPORT

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Rachel Pomerance

Meryle Mahrer Kaplan discusses professional choices that can help balance work, family and community during a May 11 conference in New York.

## How to balance career and family? Jewish groups grapple with dilemma

By RACHEL POMERANCE

**N**EW YORK (JTA) — As a young Boston politician, Marty Linsky would rush home to read his kids a bedtime story before dashing off again to an evening work meeting.

"The fact that that marriage and that family busted is no surprise to me," given the lack of time and care he devoted to them, Linsky told 80 people, mostly women, gathered recently at the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan to discuss the challenges Jewish communal workers face in balancing work and home life.

The discussion, called "24/7: Is it time to change the way we work?" marked the first

conference of Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community, a group that aims to promote gender equity in the Jewish community.

However, "it's not a women's issue," said Linsky, who teaches about leadership, the press and politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and is working with the group on creating a gender-equity guide for Jewish groups. "It's an issue about high performance."

Judging by the discussion at the conference, for many in the Jewish community, workloads have reached crisis proportions.

"For many people, work can really take over," said Meryle Mahrer Kaplan, a panelist

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**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

## ■ Jewish groups discuss the delicate balance of work, family and community

*Continued from page 1*

and vice president of advisory services for Catalyst, a consulting firm that helps companies build more inclusive work environments and tries to advance professional opportunities for women.

Staying competitive in the global economy often means keeping in touch with clients in different time zones, which can lead to long workdays, Kaplan said.

But there's a "window of opportunity" today to change working modes, since many people are concerned about work-life balance and will choose jobs based on those values, Kaplan told JTA.

"People want life sanity," she said. "Young men who saw their fathers work like crazy don't want to work the same way and are paying attention to that."

Jewish communal workers face the same struggle, according to Shifra Bronznick, Advancing Women Professionals' founding president. Top leadership positions require such long workdays that many now consider those jobs undesirable, she said.

"The Jewish community has lagged behind other spheres in looking at this issue, which is paradoxical given how powerfully we value family, community and volunteerism," Bronznick said.

At risk is Jewish organizations' ability to recruit and retain top professionals, particularly among the younger generation, some of whom demand a better work-life balance, panelists said.

Flexibility in the workplace — the option to telecommute or work less than

full-time, for example — is a key element in advancing professional opportunities for women and providing the life-work balance many people are seeking.

There are alternatives, Bronznick and others say.

For example, Advancing Women Professionals worked with the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services to produce a brochure on flexible work opportunities for its employees, and an internal public education program on the same subject.

At Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, Advancing Women Professionals coordinated a task force of diverse Hillel professionals who reported on ways to raise awareness of work-life balance.

The report was sent to Hillel employees and top volunteers, and Hillel updated its personnel code to encourage staff to "be responsive to their family, religious and personal commitments."

Kaplan says workplaces can focus on rewarding teamwork to "spread the load around." Employees need time off to revive themselves, which helps make them more efficient, she said.

While it's helpful for a company to have flexible policies on its books, there's still the issue of office culture, where a gap often exists between policy and practice.

For many employees, it's tough to summon the nerve to take advantage of company policies.

As head of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford from 1992 to 1999, Cindy Chazan was the first woman to lead a fairly large federation. She asked, and was granted, accommodation as a working mother — flexibility to go to her children's school or to work from home if necessary. But in the end she didn't take advantage of the flexible schedule.

"I was always worried that if I pushed the issue that they so generously offered,"

she would be shirking her responsibility, she told the conference.

"I never, ever wanted them to say, 'Why did we hire a woman for the job?'" said Chazan, now the director of alumni and community development for the Wexner Foundation.

Others say putting in long hours pays off.

"You can work as smart as you want but there's a certain level of connection you make by being places

and by being there for people and by being accessible to people," Barry Shrage, president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, told JTA in a phone interview.

Shrage, who begins his day at 4 a.m. with exercise, followed by paperwork and a breakfast meeting, often ends days at Jewish communal events and then sleeps just four hours.

He calls his schedule a personal choice. "It's not evil to work the way I work" and it's "not evil to work less," he said — but it could be important to his success.

"Most successful executives are working very, very hard," he said. "If they're doing it just for their businesses, how much more so should we do it for the Jewish community?"

Despite his hectic schedule, there is one day that Shrage rests. "I have Shabbat, which is a real lifesaver," he said.

Several audience members suggested that Jewish organizations that ask their professionals to compromise their family lives are in breach of Jewish values.

The "issue of hypocrisy comes up very quickly," said Nessa Rapoport, an author of Jewish books.

When interviewing people for Jewish organizational jobs, Carol Smokler, a board member of the Jewish Women's Archive, among other Jewish leadership positions, asks candidates whether they would take calls on Shabbat. That helps her determine "where their Jewish values are, not only where their mental health is," she said.

**'The Jewish community has lagged behind other spheres in looking at this issue, which is paradoxical given how powerfully we value family, community and volunteerism.'**

**Shifra Bronznick**

Founding president, Advancing Women Professionals

### JTA WORLD REPORT

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# Jews react to possibility of NPR monitoring

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Word that the head of the federal corporation overseeing public radio and television is mulling a proposal to begin monitoring National Public Radio's coverage of the Middle East for bias is being met with cautious optimism by Jewish officials and U.S. legislators.

"This is something we've been calling on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to do for years," said Alex Safian, associate director of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, a media watchdog group.

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) recommended the move to monitor NPR's Mideast reportage when the corporation met in Washington last fall. At the time, he told JTA on Monday, he suggested that about \$50,000 be earmarked for a study of NPR's Mideast coverage.

Long criticized by some as reflexively anti-Israel, NPR ought to be striving for a balance in its Mideast coverage where "half the story's comments are favorable to the Israeli government and half are opposed," Sherman said.

"Ethnic balance" — in which equal numbers of Arabs and Jews are interviewed — is insufficient, he insisted.

"Plenty of Jews are harshly critical of Israel," he said, adding that while there may be Palestinians who support Israeli policies, "they're all dead so you can't interview them."

A spokesman for the corporation told JTA that "no one was available" to comment on the NPR situation.

The spokesman did make available a small portion of congressional testimony about polls on perceptions of public broadcasting, including Middle East coverage, that the corporation had commissioned over the past few years.

Most recently, according to the corporation's testimony, its polling data demonstrated that nearly 80 percent of people who listen to public radio believe Middle East coverage is balanced. Eight percent think it has a pro-Israel bias, while 5 percent feel it favors the Arabs.

"Given its polling results, we are surprised that the corporation would be considering additional study on this subject," Andi Sporkin, NPR's vice president of communications, said.

In April, the corporation created two new

positions to independently assess public programming, but not necessarily related to the Middle East. Former NBC newsman Ken Bode and a former Reader's Digest executive editor, William Schulz, were named to the ombudsman posts.

According to a report in The New York Times, the corporation's chairman, Kenneth Tomlinson, believes public television programming is tainted by a liberal bias and is waging a campaign to correct it.

Late last year, the Times said, Tomlinson talked to S. Robert Lichter, president of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, about looking into the balance of NPR's Middle East reporting. The corporation has not yet gone ahead with the project, Lichter told the Times.

"I think there's a concern that the motivations are political as much as they may be journalistic," NPR's ombudsman, Jeffrey Dvorkin, told JTA.

"There are a lot of organizations that monitor NPR's coverage and not just on the Middle East, and CPB does have an obligation to make sure that the programing it supports is fair — so I don't think that looking into this is entirely unexpected," he said. "But CPB also has an obligation to be a firewall between broadcasters and the interest groups. That's the part that has people confused."

One shouldn't assume that all American Jews oppose NPR's coverage of Israel, said Martin Raffel, acting executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

"The community's not monolithic in its approach to NPR," he said. "There are some people who believe that NPR's coverage is just fine."

In 2003, Sherman, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) and nine other U.S. legislators asked that NPR assess its own coverage of the Middle East. What they got back, Sherman said, was a self-exonerating report with no data to back up its conclusions.

"We have concluded that we are fair and we refuse to give you the data underlying this report," was Sherman's characterization of NPR's response.

But in the past year or two, he said, he

believes NPR's coverage of the Middle East "may have been ameliorated just by them covering the Arab-Israeli conflict less."

"If one of your indicators is the number of times I hit the roof, the roof of my apartment and my office has been dented less in the last 12 months than during the 12 prior months," he said.

Jean Abinader, a member of the board of directors of the Washington-based Arab American Institute, said he'd like to believe the corporation

is attempting to ensure balance in NPR's reporting, but he's more inclined to see the consideration of a plan to monitor Mideast coverage as "political correctness."

"Balance in the United States in general means focusing on Israel's security needs," he said. "This is potentially another nail in the coffin on an open debate on what U.S. Middle East policy should be."

After intense criticism about its reporting on the Middle East, NPR hired a Washington-based public relations firm to reach out to Jewish and Arab groups in 2002, and hired its own ombudsman, Dvorkin, who began acting as a kind of in-house auditor for NPR News.

Dvorkin said that "NPR has done a lot to improve its coverage on the Middle East to make sure that the story is as fair as it can be when it is perceived in such an emotional way."

Still, he said, "I don't think that we'll ever make people completely happy on either side."

'This is something we've been calling on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to do for years.'

Alex Safian

Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Courtesy of Corporation for Public Broadcasting  
Kenneth Tomlinson, chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

# Aliyah from Canada is on the rise

By SUZANNE WINTROB

TORONTO (JTA) — It used to be that so few people made aliyah from Canada that almost no one paid attention to them when tallying immigration totals from North America. But times are changing.

With a wave of Canadians preparing to move to Israel, Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization that helps North American Jews make aliyah, has chartered an airplane to help take them to the Jewish state.

This summer a plane will leave Toronto for Israel with more than 250 new immigrants. They will represent a cross section of the Canadian Jewish community, including single people and families, college students and seniors, observant and secular Jews.

The Canadian plane is one of at least seven immigrant flights scheduled to leave North America during 2005. Another planeload may leave from Toronto in December.

“It’s a breakthrough, milestone event in Canadian Jewish history,” said Nefesh B'Nefesh spokesperson Charley Levine, who is based in Jerusalem. “Up until now, as with certain other things in life, Canadian aliyah has always been an afterthought or a postscript to what’s going on in the United States. It’s always, ‘These are the numbers. Oh yeah, plus Canada.’”

“We see the summer of 2005 as being a real watershed where that’s going to change,” he added.

According to the Jewish Agency for

Israel’s Toronto-based Israel Aliyah Center, which caters to Canadians and pushed for the Toronto flight, 3,000 people made aliyah from North America in 2004. Of them, 10 percent — or 312 people — came from Canada.

That’s a significant number, given that “there are only 300,000 Canadian Jews, versus 5 million American Jews,” said Dina Gidron, the center’s regional director for central and western Canada.

It’s expected that more than 400 Canadians will move to Israel by the end of 2005. Of Canadians making aliyah, two-thirds usually come from Toronto and another 30 percent from Montreal.

Gidron attributes the rising Canadian aliyah to birthright Israel, the free, 10-day Israel trip that was made available to young Canadian adults several years ago. Many who go on birthright get “bitten by the Israel bug” and consider moving there, Gidron says.

Another factor influencing aliyah is the Israeli government’s offer of free college tuition for up to three years. In addition, the aliyah figures include some people whose parents moved away from Israel, but who are now returning to their roots.

Nefesh B'Nefesh, which began in 2002, has made it easier for North Americans to make aliyah. The organization provides new olim with financial assistance, employment resources, social services and guidance through the bureaucratic maze.

The group helps to “knock down red tape, knock down bureaucracy and make lower hurdles for any North American Jew who wants to come on aliyah,” as Levine puts it.

Amir and Nicole Bem and their four young children plan to be on this summer’s flight from

Canada. The Bems, who live in Toronto and run several Internet portals related to women’s health issues, are moving to Ra’anana.

They can’t wait to get there.

“We feel that Israel can provide a stronger Jewish foundation for our children,” said Amir Bem, 42. “There is an inexplicable, deep sense of meaning to life in Israel if you are a practicing Jew.

“We are excited to be

living in a place where every child, from secular to religious, runs around excitedly in costumes on Purim and not on Halloween, and where the streets are hushed on Yom Kippur,” he said.

Bem, who trekked through the Himalayas and across Southeast Asia with his wife before they became parents, says he also welcomes Israelis’ focus on children and family.

He said he and his wife chose Ra’anana for several reasons: The many English speakers there will help reduce the anticipated culture shock, the weather is great and the beach is close by.

Immigrants from North America can have a positive impact on the Jewish state, he said.

“North Americans will exert some cultural influence in Israel with respect to such things as higher standards of customer service, a greater level of civility and maybe even improved driving etiquette,” Bem said.

Levine of Nefesh B'Nefesh thinks Canadian aliyah is about to enter its second phase. The first began at Israel’s birth, and the second, he said, is starting this summer with the flight from Toronto.

This new wave of immigration “represents a much higher awareness and enthusiasm” than organizations like his have seen until now, he said.

“There’s no better way to build a bridge between Israel and Canada than through this wonderful kind of newcomer who has so much to contribute in terms of education, contribution to the economy and contribution to the democratic values,” Levine adds. “And if you’re talking multiculturalism, Israel is the mother of all multiculturalism. The Canadian experience with that will resonate in Israel and have a wonderful role to play here.” ■

**‘It’s a breakthrough, milestone event in Canadian Jewish history.’**

**Charley Levine**  
Nefesh B'Nefesh

**AROUND  
THE JEWISH  
WORLD**



David Karp

Kids from North American families play at JFK International Airport while they wait for their flight to Israel, sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Jewish Agency for Israel, in August 2004.

# 'Handball in the desert': Olim and their dreams

By BRETT KLINE

NETANYA (JTA) — After taking the women's handball team in the multiethnic Parisian suburb of Bondy to the top, Lionel Levi had only one way to go — straight down.

His success as a coach and sports association official was chronicled in the French media and in an article in Newsweek. But that aroused the jealousy of local Socialist Party officials, including the mayor of Bondy, who fired Levi.

Now, as Levi, 47, sat at a beachfront cafe in Netanya with his wife Annie, 39, and a small group of recent French immigrants to Israel, he said he won't live in France again.

Unlike most olim, or immigrants, Levi came to Israel with a specific project in mind: He wanted to establish a girls handball association.

"This is my passion," he said.

"Sports for young people is a luxury in Israel," he said, but he thinks Israelis could benefit from it. Sports "can teach them respect, discipline and tolerance."

The Levis and their two daughters made aliyah last July as part of a group organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel. All moved to Netanya, which is a center for French-speaking olim. An Absorption Ministry employee is assigned to help ease their transition to life in Israel.

"Having the group we made aliyah with as friends has been important, because even though we were happy to leave, it still was not so easy," Annie Levi said.

"Here we all face the same major problems, learning the language and finding work," she said. "Only our six-year-old learned quickly. In six months, she was speaking fluent Hebrew."

The little girl laughed and said in French, "Me, I speak Hebrew better than you all."

"She is our translator," Annie Levi said. "In France, we all felt Jewish. Here, we all feel very French."

The new immigrants study Hebrew in an Ulpan program, most of which is paid for by JAFI.

The Levis live in a 1,440-square-foot apartment in a new seven-story building; the agency pays 40 percent of their \$800-a-month rent. The apartment's large balconies offer views of the Mediterranean, and high rises

are under construction in every direction.

The Levis have been surprised by the pace of Israeli life.

Israelis "live for today like there's no tomorrow," Annie Levi said. "At first it was very tough to let our 13-year-old daughter hang out with her friends in the *ki-kar*," the central square, "but young people do that here. It's not dangerous, and their parents trust them. In Bondy, only the kids going bad hang out like that."

Professionally, Lionel Levi has been happy with the speed at which decisions are made. He presented his project and met with many local officials.

Still, "there were moments of doubt," he said. "Not doubts like 'What am I doing here?' but more like 'Can I make this work?' After all, handball is unknown here. But at the agency in Paris they told me, 'Go for it, don't give up. We're backing you.' You've got to believe."

Levi's one temporary contract with a local sports association ended, and he couldn't interest anyone in handball. The Absorption Ministry suggested that he focus on activities for new immigrants, but Levi was interested only in handball.

Then the ministry offered him a full-time job establishing a women's handball association, to be based in Netanya and cover the country. Eventually, it could be a model for a countrywide league.

At the cafe, as the wind whipped sand around speakers blasting techno music onto the beach, Levi thought about his experiences as an immigrant.

"When you keep the faith, things do happen," he said. "The agency kept pushing me, and I didn't give up. In Paris, the agency had been pushing me to go look at the Negev area. After we get things going here, I could do that. We could play handball in the desert."

Though most French olim have not been as lucky as the Levis, they still hope for a big break.

Daniel Mayal, 35, was an accountant in Joinville le Pont, a quiet suburb of Paris, but hasn't yet found work in Netanya, where he lives with his wife and two children.

"I am optimistic, *baruch hashem*," he

said. "I had a good life in France, but I wanted a life based on the rhythm of my religion. For example, Pesach in Israel is like Christmas in France. Offices are closed. It feels like a holiday. The seder is real. We are here."

Mayal said absorption officials were proposing training programs to help immigrants from France find work.

"I am practical and humble," he said. "I have no dreams of glory here, but I trust

the Israelis. And as an accountant, I can say we are living within our budget."

Other French immigrants have made what is called *chetzi-chetzi* — or half and half — aliyah.

Olivier and Elise Mouret and their three children left a village near Paris for Netanya. While Elise Mouret goes to Hebrew classes and the children are in school, her husband still works 15 days a month as an industrial mechanic in France.

"We lived well in France," Olivier Mouret said. "It's a wonderful country, but our children have no future there. We believe that immigration from North Africa is making the country poorer. It is a difficult subject. Of course, there are good North Africans, but there are too many examples of very bad situations that the French don't know how to deal with, so they ignore them. For myself, I cannot give up my job. It's the only one I have."

The Mourets' children go to public religious schools in Israel, and Elise Mouret is looking for work as a medical secretary.

"I can't work yet because I don't speak the language well enough," she said. "The agency added extra hours for classes, and it's a good thing. The more the better. We need it."

One of the friends brings up the idea of using handball to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Why not propose a project to the Peres Center for Peace? They could get Arab and Jewish youth on the court together to learn about respect and tolerance.

Lionel Levi looked around at his friends on the beach.

"I never thought of that," he said, "but why not? I told you, I feel something big is going to happen. Go back to live in France? No way."

'In France, we all felt Jewish. Here, we all feel very French.'

Annie Levi

French immigrant to Israel

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

# Chabad of Thailand sponsors toy drive

By TIBOR KRAUSZ

BANGKOK (JTA) — The unrelenting drizzle turned clean-pressed shirts into sodden rags and transformed the potholed asphalt ground below the open-air festival into an archipelago of ankle-deep wading pools.

But no amount of water could dampen the spirits of the 500 or so children from southern Thailand's tsunami-ravaged villages who gathered one day in early May for fun and games at a festival sponsored by Chabad of Thailand on tsunami-devastated Phuket.

They clambered aboard carousels and zipped down slides. They cavorted with clowns, posed for photographs with cartoon mascots and tested their aim with popguns at shooting galleries. No matter what, they kept playing.

In the past six months, fun and games haven't been priorities for most of these children. On Dec. 26, towering waves triggered by a 9.3-magnitude underwater quake off Sumatra, in Indonesia, flooded shores along the rim of the Indian Ocean, obliterating seaside communities and killing an estimated 225,000 people in 11 countries.

More than 10,000 people died along Thailand's southwestern seaboard, and tens of thousands more lost their homes and possessions. About one-third of the dead were children.

In Khao Lak province, Thailand's worst-hit area, as many as 5,000 people died,

including both locals and tourists, and a whole fishing village was reduced to rubble.

Soon after the tsunami, Yosef Kantor, Chabad's head rabbi in Thailand, walked down the beach by a devastated Khao Lak fishing village called Baan Naam Khem. That's when the full scope of the disaster began to sink in for him.

"As I walked down Khao Lak beach, I was stunned by all the broken toys lying around," he said. "It breaks your heart to realize how many children must have died."

Kantor decided to try to help children who had survived. While Chabad volunteers were comforting Jewish survivors of the disaster and looking through makeshift morgues for Jewish victims, Kantor talked to Chabad headquarters in New York, asking officials to mount a toy drive in Jewish schools.

The headquarters called Mendel Druk, 23, a newly ordained rabbi from Detroit who was working at a camp in Arizona. Druk got in touch with Jewish and public schools across the United States and also responded to unaffiliated people who were offering their help through Jewish associations.

Soon, Chabad's [tsunamitoydrive.com](http://tsunamitoydrive.com) was coming up first on Google's list of

Web sites collecting toys for tsunami victims. Meanwhile, schools from around the world were organizing their own toy drives, and individual children did what they could to help.

"Children live in a sheltered environment, with their every need provided for by parents," Druk said. "Yet when children see a great tragedy like the tsunami, you can explain to them that they can help other children 10,000 miles away."

Chantal Keypour and Ayelet Hematian have discovered the joys of tzed-

kah. The girls, sixth-graders at the Chabad Academy of Science and Humanities in

Port Washington, N.Y., were chosen to go to Thailand to represent children who participated in the toy drive.

"When I heard about the tsunami I felt very bad about the children who lost their parents and their homes. I tried to imagine that if I was in their position, how would I feel," Chantal said.

"My mom, me, and my brothers, we went to buy crayons and coloring sets and other toys. I felt very bad for the Thai children that they had no parents to do it for them."

Ayelet searched drawers, closets and cubbyholes at home. "I went through the whole house and looked at everything I thought the Thai children would need," she said.

Helen Greenblatt, a teacher at the Chabad Academy who came to Phuket with Chantal and Ayelet, remembered her students' response to the tsunami as a "teachable moment."

"If there is a lesson from the Holocaust it's that we are all responsible for one another, regardless of race and religion," Greenblatt said. "That's why we teach our students that even a single person can change the world for another person by an act of kindness."

It's for children like Kwang that Chantal, Ayelet and other Jewish kids were collecting toys.

When the tsunami swept ashore in Baan Naam Khem, Kwang, 14, already had been an orphan for years. That morning she was away from her simple beachside home, so she survived.

But half of the 5,000 villagers died, including Kwang's grandfather, who had cared for her and her siblings. Her house was destroyed.

For a few hours at the Chabad festival, however, the children were able to forget and have fun.

"I'm so happy," one child said to a journalist as she hopped up and down in a rubberized castle. "It makes us feel so happy that foreigners care so much about us." ■

**'As I walked down Khao Lak beach, I was stunned by all the broken toys lying around. It breaks your heart to realize how many children must have died.'**

**Rabbi Yosef Kantor**  
Chabad of Thailand



Chabad.org

Rabbi Yosef Kantor passes out toys to Thai tsunami survivors during a festival sponsored by Chabad of Thailand.

## OP-ED

## Pro-Israel activists on campus are quietly successful

By BARRY SILVERMAN  
and RANDALL KAPLAN

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Parents are frightened, defense organizations are sounding the alarm, and community-based activists are in a state of near apoplexy over the alleged dominance of anti-Israel forces on American college campuses.

In the past few years, however, there has been a quiet revolution in pro-Israel campus advocacy — supported by such mainstream organizations as AIPAC, Hillel, and the Israel on Campus Coalition — and savvy pro-Israel students have made stunning inroads at colleges and universities across the country, including those frequently pointed to as the most hostile to Israel.

Some have come to believe that today's pro-Israel students are silent, apathetic, even fearful. From our experience, nothing could be further from the truth. This generation constitutes the most confident and competent community of pro-Israel student leaders America has ever seen. What accounts for this staggering discrepancy in perception? The problem may be an outmoded system of metrics ill equipped to gauge inroads made by sophisticated advocates in a radically transformed campus environment.

A national trend of more sophisticated pro-Israel campus activism is growing. If members of our community have missed this phenomenon, it is because much of today's most significant and effective advocacy takes place under the media's radar at countless student government meetings, campus political forums and quiet conversations at Starbucks. If pro-Israel students aren't marching anymore, it's because they've found a more effective way of getting the job done.

*Barry Silverman is chairman of AIPAC's leadership development committee and a member of Hillel's scholars council, and Randall Kaplan is chairman of the board of directors of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, and a member of AIPAC's board of directors.* ■

## Gay and lesbian parade postponed

By JOANNE PALMER

NEW YORK (JTA) — A controversial gay pride celebration, slated for Jerusalem this August, has been postponed for a year.

WorldPride 2005 was to be a 10-day international festival culminating in a gala parade celebrating the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community. It attracted the ire of Jewish, Christian and Muslim conservatives in Israel and around the world, who argued that it would defile the holy city.

The festival was put on hold because organizers didn't want it to coincide with Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank, which was recently rescheduled to begin in August. Jerusalem instead is slated to host the festival the following year, from Aug. 6-12, 2006.

"We in no way want to undermine the larger efforts in Israel to make the pullouts be as smooth and as successful as possible," said Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, senior rabbi at New York's City's gay and lesbian shul, congregation Beth Simchat Torah, and a national co-chair of WorldPride.

"We were in no way pressured to make the decision to postpone," Kleinbaum said, but it was important to the group that it not get in the way of the pullout. They also realized that most of Jerusalem's police force would be in Gaza for the evacuation.

It was a difficult choice to make, though, and rescheduling will be a logistical nightmare. The program included an academic conference cosponsored by Yale University, an international film festival and an interfaith conference that had drawn commitments from clergy members from around the world.

This June, Jerusalem will host a smaller, local gay pride parade, as it has for the past few years.

"Gay pride will be in Jerusalem," Kleinbaum said. "We are not caving into any kind of right-wing pressure. We are not capitulating.

"Jerusalem belongs to all of us," she continued. "It belongs to the gay and les-

bian world as much as to anyone else. We will not let right-wing religious bigots shut us down."

There's some irony in the need to reschedule, Kleinbaum said. At first, festival organizers had considered starting WorldPride in mid-August, but realized that would be just before Tisha B'Av, the day Jews mourn many disasters they have endured throughout history.

"Out of respect for Jewish religious sensitivities — including my own — we did not want to start it then," Kleinbaum said. Instead, the lesbian and gay group decided to wait until late August, when the calendar begins a period of consolation that precedes the High Holidays.

The Israeli government originally had scheduled the Gaza pullout to begin July 25. This year, though, that's the 17th of Tammuz, a fast day that punctuates the 30-day mourning period leading to Tisha B'Av.

"Why the Israelis did not consult a Jewish calendar, I cannot

even begin to speculate," Kleinbaum said. Eventually, in a bow to religious sensibilities, the pullout was pushed back.

The United Jewish Communities' Pride in Israel mission, also aimed at the gay and lesbian community, was set for early August. It has no formal ties to WorldPride, though it had been scheduled so participants could stay in Jerusalem for a few extra days to join the festival.

The mission will go on as planned.

"No doubt there will be a shift, as those who focus their attention on WorldPride may want to wait until next year to come, but what's remarkable is that people keep on joining the mission," said Rabbi Steve Greenberg, the gay, Orthodox rabbi in residence for the UJC tour.

"It's growing. People are continuing to join," Greenberg said, though he doesn't yet have a firm number of participants.

"It was always both connected to and independent from WorldPride, and there's always been a great willingness on the part of UJC to nourish and sponsor it," he said. "Support hasn't flagged, so we're going ahead, and I'm very excited about it." ■

**'We in no way want to undermine the larger efforts in Israel to make the pullouts be as smooth and as successful as possible.'**

**Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum**

Beth Simchat Torah

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### Committee refers anti-Semitism resolution to House

A congressional committee unanimously favored a resolution calling on the United Nations to rout out anti-Semitism in its ranks.

The U.S. House of Representatives' International Relations Committee referred the resolution on Wednesday for a full House vote, along with two other resolutions sponsored by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), chairwoman of the committee's Middle East subcommittee — one congratulating Israel on its 57th independence day and another urging Syria to remove its intelligence agents from Lebanon.

It's not yet clear when the resolutions will come up for a full vote.

The U.N. resolution "calls on the United Nations to officially and publicly condemn anti-Semitic statements in all U.N. meetings and hold accountable member states who make such statements."

### Report calls for new approach to Muslims

To reduce Arab anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism, the United States should better inform the Muslim world about how U.S. foreign policy is made, a new study says.

"Failure to challenge falsehoods about U.S. policymaking and Jewish influence in America promotes anti-Americanism," according to the report, *A New Beginning: Strategies for a More Fruitful Dialogue with the Muslim World*.

The study, produced by the Council on Foreign Relations, says focus groups in the Arab world wildly overestimated the number of Jews in the United States and indulged in anti-Semitic myths, including Jewish responsibility for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The report also suggests distributing films to debunk false theories on the American Jewish community and the Holocaust.

### University professor backed

A New Jersey Jewish man petitioned a Chicago university, asking it to rehire a professor suspended for making comments offensive to Muslims.

Larry Ramer is circulating a petition asking DePaul University to reinstate professor Thomas Klocek and provide him with a hearing in front of First Amendment experts.

"The harsh action against Klocek is another sign that universities will defend the most outrageous leftist, anti-American, anti-Israel comments, while giving extremely short shrift to the free-speech rights of conservatives and pro-Israel individuals," Ramer told JTA by e-mail.

### City of brotherly love

Members of a Philadelphia food cooperative overwhelmingly defeated a resolution to boycott Israeli products.

The resolution, brought Wednesday night, would have banned products grown or produced in Israel's West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements, as well as all produce from Israel.

More than 100 residents of West Mount Airy, a politically progressive, strongly Jewish section of Philadelphia, came out for the meeting.

Despite a "high level of antipathy" in the community toward Israeli settlements, "it felt wrong to single out Israel," said Steven Masters, a local resident who led opposition to the resolution.

### Milton Wolf, former JDC president, dies

Milton Wolf, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria and former president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, died Thursday at 80. Wolf died in Cleveland from lymphoma.

As U.S. ambassador to Austria from 1977 to 1980, Wolf hosted the SALT arms treaty talks.

He served as JDC president from 1992 to 1995. He also was active in the Cleveland Jewish federation and was a trustee of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, which merged to form the United Jewish Communities in 1999.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Israel wants aid for Negev, Galilee

Israeli officials are slated to visit Washington seeking aid for regions expected to absorb evacuated settlers.

Dov Weisglass, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Joseph Bachar, an official with Israel's Finance Ministry, are expected to ask for U.S. help with projects in the Galilee and Negev regions.

Israel is building up the areas, in part to house settlers being evacuated from the Gaza Strip this summer.

### Israeli, Palestinian universities to cooperate

An Israeli and a Palestinian university criticized a British academic boycott of Israel and agreed to continue cooperative projects.

The document was signed Thursday in London by Menachem Magidor, president of Hebrew University, and Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al-Quds University, both in Jerusalem.

The agreement comes in response to an academic boycott of two Israeli universities approved recently by a British teachers union.

In a related development, the American Federation of Teachers called on the Association of University Teachers to reverse its decision to boycott Bar-Ilan and Haifa universities.

### Soldier jailed for shooting

An Israeli soldier was sentenced to prison for shooting an unarmed Palestinian.

The conscript, who shot a Gaza Strip resident in the leg as he was installing a television antenna in 2003, was found guilty of grievous bodily harm Thursday and sentenced to 20 months in jail.

He also was found to have lied to investigators and was demoted from sergeant to private.

Also Thursday, two Israeli border policemen were jailed for eight months after being found guilty of abusing Palestinians at a checkpoint outside Jerusalem.

### Ruling delayed in Kenya bombing

A court in Kenya delayed a ruling on whether four men can be charged with murder for their alleged roles in a 2002 bombing at an Israeli-owned hotel.

Judge John Oseimo said the ruling would be issued June 9.

Under Kenyan law, a judge can dismiss a case after prosecutors finish their arguments if he thinks the evidence is insufficient, the Associated Press reported.

Prosecutors say the defendants orchestrated the suicide bombing at the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel, which killed 15 people, including three Israelis.

Nearly simultaneously, terrorists fired a missile at an Israeli passenger plane leaving a Kenyan airport, narrowly failing to hit it.

## WORLD

### Argentina removes controversial plaque

Argentina's Foreign Ministry removed a controversial plaque honoring 12 Argentine diplomats for helping Jews during World War II.

Jewish groups had protested that some of the diplomats named on the plaque not only didn't help Jews, but actually kept Jews out of Argentina during the war.

Other diplomats assisted Argentine Jews, but Holocaust groups noted that such actions were part of their jobs, not a special effort worthy of honor.