

## IN THE NEWS

## Condoleeza Rice to visit Israel, W. Bank

Condoleeza Rice will visit Israel and the West Bank next week.

The U.S. secretary of state will depart Nov. 10 to meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to advance the peace process now that Israel has completed its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Rice also will join former President Clinton and Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) at a 10th anniversary commemoration Nov. 12 of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination.

## AIPAC judge keeps evidence classified

The federal judge in the AIPAC classified-information case ruled that prosecutors may withhold evidence from the defense.

In a hearing Wednesday in the case against Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, two former staffers of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Judge T.S. Ellis of the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., ruled in favor of government arguments that recordings and transcripts of tapped conversations involving the defendants include material that would be harmful to the national interest if revealed.

Ellis said he would determine what material the defense can use and what material it cannot access.

Because the process of determining what material the defense may see is likely to be long and involved, Ellis pushed back the trial date from Jan. 2 to April 25.

## Lawsuit against Air Force expanded

Four U.S. Air Force officers joined a lawsuit alleging an overtly Christian atmosphere at the school.

The four 2004 graduates of the school joined a lawsuit filed by Mikey Weinstein, a graduate and father of a current cadet who has led charges that Jewish cadets and others were subject to pro-Christian harassment.

■ **MORE NEWS, Pg. 8**

# WORLD REPORT

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GPO/BP Images

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon lays a wreath on the grave of Yitzhak Rabin during a memorial service last year on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem commemorating the ninth anniversary of Rabin's assassination.

## Ten years after Rabin killing, Sharon has emerged as his heir

By **LESLIE SUSSER**

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — As world leaders gather in Israel to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, Israelis are asking to what extent the killer's bullet changed the course of Israeli-Palestinian history.

Had Rabin lived, would the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been resolved? Or would the peace process he started still have unraveled?

The latter possibility raises additional questions: If Rabin realized that the Oslo process was a debacle, would he have continued to insist on a negotiated peace deal? Or, like Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, would Rabin have concluded that without a credible

Palestinian peace partner, Israel should set its borders unilaterally?

The legacy Rabin left is not simple. His life as soldier and peacemaker underlined the Sisyphean struggle to keep Israel strong and, when possible, to cut peace deals with its neighbors. His death highlighted the need for greater tolerance in Israel's politically divided society.

A decade after the assassination, it's not clear how much of Rabin's legacy has been implemented. Though left-wing politicians such as Yossi Beilin, who sponsored the "Geneva Accord" peace initiative, try to present themselves as the successors to Rabin's legacy, a recent poll in the Yediot Achronot newspaper shows that 24 percent

*Continued on page 2*

**BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES**

## ■ *Ariel Sharon is seen as the heir to Yitzhak Rabin's legacy*

*Continued from page 1*

of Israelis see Sharon — the Likud Party leader who vehemently opposed Oslo during Rabin's lifetime — as Rabin's true heir.

Only Shimon Peres, with 27 percent, outpolled Sharon in that survey — but 73 percent hold that Rabin's and Peres' own Labor Party is doing little to promote the slain leader's legacy.

The poll also shows that nearly 70 percent believe another political assassination is likely in Israel.

Rabin wanted to be a water engineer, but his belief in the need for a strong army made him a general. He was always defense-minded, a man with limited faith in the goodwill of Israel's neighbors and a conviction that only a militarily strong Israel can survive in the Middle East.

For Rabin, the main strategic goal was to secure Israel's survival in a tough neighborhood. Peace was a means to that end, not an end in itself.

■  
In 1993, Rabin cautiously embraced the Oslo peace process with the Palestinians in the hope that it would lead to Israel's acceptance in the region, but he insisted that it be reversible: If the process threatened Israel's security instead of advancing it, he insisted, Israel would be able to revert to the pre-Oslo status quo. Some see that as a shocking bit of naivete from a man who at other times displayed keen strategic thinking.

Rabin called Oslo "an experiment in laboratory conditions," which he believed could be stopped at the first signs of failure. It's not clear whether Rabin would have stuck to that principle had he lived, since many Is-

raeli politicians who initially were skeptical of the peace process felt constrained to see it through, even as evidence that the process was failing became overwhelming.

Five years after Rabin's death, the Oslo concept was put to the test at Camp David in July 2000. It failed: Then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak was unable to reach agreement with then-Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The result was nearly five years of Palestinian terrorism. Yet Barak, and many in Labor and parties further to the left, insist that if negotiators do get back to work one day they should pick up roughly from where Barak's team left off.

Some speculate that Rabin might have succeeded where Barak failed, arguing that he would not have labored under the burden of the three-year interruption under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which Palestinians claim eroded their confidence in the Oslo process.

■  
Moreover, unlike Barak, Rabin was trusted and even liked by Palestinian leaders — though it's not clear if Arafat's protestations of affection for Rabin after his death were anything more than crocodile tears.

And no one will ever know whether, by force of his personality, Rabin could have overcome the huge differences between Israel and the Palestinians on basic issues such as refugees, Jerusalem and borders.

Many believe that if Rabin had failed to bridge those gaps, he would have called an end to the Oslo experiment and gone down the unilateral route — the way Sharon has done, and for much the same reasons.

Rabin's strategic outlook was very close to Sharon's: Like Sharon, he put a premium on close ties with the United States, prioritized the achievement of a state of non-belligerency with potential adversaries and recognized the long-term demographic problem caused by Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

That in itself probably would have been enough to lead Rabin down the unilateral road.

The fact that so many Israelis see Sharon as Rabin's heir is one of the most significant facts in Israeli politics today: It's symptomatic of the blurring between security-minded peacemaking in Labor and Likud

and the creation of a new ideological center in Israeli politics, in which both Rabin and Sharon are iconic leadership figures.

Sharon's image as a security-minded peacemaker in the Rabin tradition wins him the support of large segments of Labor's right wing, one of the main reasons for his enormous cross-party popularity in Israel.

Even if Rabin's legacy continues to dominate the political scene through Sharon, however, the drive for tolerance and reconciliation in the wake of the

assassination has been far less successful. The Yediot Achronot poll shows a disturbing degree of support on the far right for Rabin's jailed assassin, Yigal Amir.

Some 20 percent of those polled believe Amir should be eligible for parole. Carmi Gillon, head of the Shin Bet security service at the time of the assassination, says the findings show that the chances for another political assassination in Israel are high.

"There is a group of hundreds of thousands of people, not all of whom are killers but who all think the Rabin assassination achieved its purpose by stopping the Oslo process," Gillon said in a recent interview. "They think today that if Sharon were to disappear, the moves in the West Bank would disappear/evaporate too."

Amir's family feels confident enough to make inflammatory remarks and demand his early release. In a television documentary, Amir's mother declared that she would like to see all the politicians who supported Sharon's withdrawal plan "hanged in the city square."

One of Amir's brothers, Amitai, said Amir had served a long enough sentence because the man he killed was "a criminal." Amir himself is said to want a retrial because of "new ballistic evidence."

The chances of Amir being paroled or retried are negligible, and the danger posed by his family's rhetoric isn't great. But Gillon and other experts say another potential assassin could be lurking somewhere in the extremist, religious milieu that produced Yigal Amir.

On the 10th anniversary of Rabin's assassination, they reiterate a chilly warning: Israel's brittle democracy withstood one assassination, but may not be able to withstand another. ■

**Rabin was trusted and even liked by Palestinian leaders.**

### **JTA** WORLD REPORT

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# Hurricane Wilma's ravages still haunt Florida

By AVI FRIER  
Florida Jewish News

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (JTA) — Thousands of elderly Florida residents, including many elderly Jews, were still without power this week as a result of Hurricane Wilma.

Last Friday, most Florida Power and Light customers were still without electricity, rendering hurricane cleanup and Shabbat preparations arduous.

The disruptions from Wilma, which swept through the region on Oct. 24, were just the latest from a storm that hindered Sukkot celebrations through South Florida, a region densely populated with Jews.

On Monday, even as power returned to more and more residents, thousands of elderly Floridians were still in the dark. Chabad volunteers mobilized, distributing hot kosher meals to residents of Century Village of Pembroke Pines and other retirement communities in the area.

"We couldn't be any more grateful," said Leah Weingarten, a Century Village resident who had been without power for more than a week. Weingarten loaded meals into the trunk of her car and coordinated their distribution throughout the community.

"It's not even about the food anymore," said Rabbi Pinny Andrusier of Chabad of Southwest Broward, returning to his car after delivering meals to an elderly widower. "It's about the human contact. Some of these people haven't seen a friendly face in over a week."

Other Jewish organizations also mobilized to help those in need, however many of them faced the same challenges as the people they were hoping to assist.

"We just got our phone service back yesterday," Scott Benarde of the Jewish Community Center of the Greater Palm Beaches told the Florida Jewish News on Tuesday. "But that hasn't stopped us from helping the community."

Benarde said that since the beginning of the week, the JCC has been running an impromptu day camp for children who are still unable to return to school due to extensive closures.

FPL, the power company, estimates that all power in the area will be restored by Nov. 8, up from an early Nov. 22 estimate.

While South Florida is an area usually

immune to Sukkot's inclement weather, this year's holiday was interrupted by Wilma, a Category 3 hurricane that rattled even the most permanent of structures.

On the sixth day of the festival, rabbis throughout the region advised congregants to take down their Sukkahs as they prepared for the storm. The next morning, Wilma's 120-mph winds destroyed any sukkahs not taken down by their owners, and damaged many of the trees, power lines, homes and buildings in the hurricane's path.

Temple Beth El of Hollywood, Fla., lost a third of its roof, allowing driving rain to leave an inch of standing water in the sanctuary and social hall, and soak Rabbi Allan Tuffs' library of more than 1,000 books.

Wilma also blew out the windows, caved in the ceiling and damaged the furnishings inside Chabad of Downtown Ft. Lauderdale, rendering the building uninhabitable. The synagogue's Torah scrolls were undamaged and have been moved to the safety of Rabbi Schneur Kaplan's home, where services are currently being held until a more suitable location can be found.

Brauser Maimonides Academy in Hollywood suffered an estimated \$100,000 in wind damage to the school's roof and awnings, and water damage to a classroom whose door blew in during the storm. Even after enough repairs were made to render the building inhabitable, students

were prevented from returning to class by the presence of downed power lines in the parking lot, some of which were believed to be live.

Once the storm passed, 98 percent of FPL's customers in South Florida were left without electricity. Even the synagogues that did not suffer extensive damage faced challenges of their own, with Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah following Wilma by mere hours.

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg of Boca Raton

Synagogue scheduled an early afternoon service to allow Simchat Torah celebrations to end early, enabling congregants to return home while there was still some light in the sky.

"We began Ma'ariv at 5:33 PM, after Plag Haminchah," said Rabbi Goldberg, explaining Plag Haminchah as a time late in the afternoon which, in extreme circumstances, can be used to denote the end of the day.

Ordinarily, it is forbidden by Jewish law to begin the second day of a holiday before the first has ended.

Other synagogues, such as Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale, opted for the use of candles and generator-powered lights to illuminate their dances with the Torah, which occurred at their regularly scheduled times.

"There was something special in the air tonight," said one congregant leaving Young Israel after the service. "It was like we were all celebrating both Simchat Torah and surviving the hurricane all at once."

'Some of these people haven't seen a friendly face in over a week.'

Rabbi Pinny Andrusier  
Chabad of Southwest Broward

## Jewish teacher bets on future

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Washington Jewish teacher would like to borrow upwards of \$100,000 to support graduate studies, and is promising any lender 20 percent of his future earnings as a writer.

David Harris-Gershon, who teaches at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in suburban Rockville, Md., has yet to receive bids although his offer has ap-

peared on the ePier.com auction Web site for three weeks.

"I have a child and I have another one on the way, and I'm not really willing at this point to put my family in the type of financial debt that student loans for three years would incur without me working," Harris-Gershon, 31, told The Associated Press in an interview Monday.

# Training the teachers with distorted texts

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following are the final installments of a 4-part investigative series. For the rest of the series, visit [//www.jta.org/schools.asp](http://www.jta.org/schools.asp).

## JTA STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Chairs are lined up in neat rows. Coffee is brewing, muffins arrayed. The table is thick with handouts.

One of them is Saudi Aramco World, a magazine published by Aramco, the Saudi government-owned outfit that is the largest oil company in the world.

"The Arab World in the Classroom," published by Georgetown University, thanks Saudi Aramco on its back cover. Alongside it is the brochure of The Mosaic Foundation, an organization of spouses of Arab ambassadors in America, whose chairwoman and president of the board of trustees is Her Royal Highness Princess Haifa Al-Faisal of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

If you think this is a meeting of Saudi oil executives or Middle Eastern exporters or Saudi government officials, you are wrong: It's a social studies training seminar for American elementary and secondary teachers, held last year at Georgetown University.

It's paid for by U.S. tax dollars, as the organizer points out in her introduction.

"We are grateful to the grant we have under Title VI of the Department of Education that underwrites these programs," Zeina Azzam Seikaly, outreach coordinator of Georgetown's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, tells the more than three dozen current and former teachers at the seminar.

Georgetown's Middle East outreach program is one of 18 affiliated with federally designated national resource centers, each of which receives hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funds under Title VI of the Higher Education Act.

Much has been written about the biased nature of many Middle East studies programs at universities around the country.

Less known is that with public money and the designation as a national resource center, universities such as Georgetown, Harvard and Columbia are dramatically influencing the study of Islam, Israel and the Middle East far beyond the college campus.

As a condition of their funding, these centers are also required to engage in public

outreach, which includes schoolchildren in grades K-12. Through professional development workshops for teachers and resource libraries, they spread teaching materials that analysts say promote Islam and are critical of Israel and the West.

Professional development workshops like the one at Georgetown provide the most frequent paths for the dissemination of supplementary materials to history and social studies teachers, according to "The Stealth

Curriculum: Manipulating

America's History Teachers," a lengthy inquiry by educational expert Sandra Stotsky.

Stotsky is a former director of a professional development institute for teachers at Harvard and a former senior associate commissioner of Massachusetts' Department of Education. Her study was published last year by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, a Washington-based education think tank.

The problems with many of the supplemental materials, Stotsky said in her report, stem from "the ideological mission of the organizations that create them.

"Their ostensible goal is to combat intolerance, expand students' knowledge of other cultures, give them other 'points of view' on commonly studied historical phenomena and/or promote 'critical thinking,'" she wrote.

But an analysis of the materials convinced her that their real goal "is to influence how children come to understand and think about current social and political issues by bending historical content to those ends.

"They embed their political agendas in the instructional materials they create so subtly that apolitical teachers are unlikely to spot them."

Among the materials Stotsky cites is "The Arab World Studies Notebook," which has been widely criticized for bias, inaccuracies and proselytizing.

Audrey Shabbas, editor of the notebook, rejects the criticism.

"We're providing the Arab point of view," she said.

Responding to criticism that the mate-

rial paints an overly rosy picture of Islam, she said, "My task is not to defend what Muslims do in the world" but to focus on the

"difference between what people call themselves and what they do."

Experts say the materials are popular because they're recommended by the national resource centers of prestigious universities.

In an interview with JTA, Stotsky recounted that in the summer of 2002, after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the Massachusetts Department of Education decided to offer

a seminar on Islam and the Middle East for area teachers. They accepted a proposal from Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies that "looked very promising." One of the organizers of the seminar was Barbara Petzen, the center's outreach coordinator.

But when Stotsky and other officials saw the syllabus, which included the "Arab World Studies Notebook," they requested that the course present a more balanced view of Islam. Officials wanted at least to include a book by Bernard Lewis, a Princeton University professor emeritus who is considered one of the pre-eminent authorities on Islam.

But Petzen and her colleague "ducked recent history" by agreeing only to include one of Lewis' older books from the 1970s, rather than one of his more recent critical perspectives on Islam, Stotsky said.

Petzen could not be reached for comment.

Stotsky was further shocked when she saw the lesson plans created by some of the seminar participants. One, which required the students to learn an Islamic prayer and design a prayer rug to simulate a mosque in the classroom, crossed the line. "It's really indoctrination to have students do such religious things," she said.

While there is no way to know the extent to which the teachers, from 20 Massachusetts schools, ultimately incorporated their proposed lessons into the classroom, the assumption of the education department, which paid for the seminar, "is that the teachers use the material they learned," Stotsky said.

(JTA Editor Lisa Hostein was among the contributors to this report.)

Teaching materials stem from 'the ideological mission of the organizations that create them.'

Sandra Stotsky  
Educational expert

TAINTED  
TEACHINGS  
PART 3

# National resource centers at center of debate

## JTA STAFF REPORT

NEW YORK (JTA) — U.S. lawmakers and academics are engaged in fierce debate over the renewal of Title VI of the Higher Education Act.

Under Title VI, select universities get federal funding and prestigious designation as national resource centers for the study of places and languages the government deems vital for meeting global challenges.

The legislation was first enacted in 1958, during the height of the Cold War, as part of the National Defense Education Act. Its purpose, according to its framers, was to ensure “trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States.”

National defense, according to current Department of Education publications, “remains central to the programs forty years after their inception.”

Critics seeking to amend the legislation contend that universities often promote anti-American and anti-Israel biases and do not merit federal funds that were intended to serve American interests.

Many academics worry that restrictions will violate academic freedoms.

While Title VI may have had a noble purpose, it does not work in practice, according to Middle East scholar Martin Kramer. He analyzed Middle East studies centers and the work of the Title VI national resource centers in his 2001 book, “Ivory Towers on Sand — The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America.”

Kramer was the first to charge that, using Title VI monies as a base, many Middle East studies departments pushed an anti-American, anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic and pro-Palestinian agenda on students and faculty.

This “group think” required obeisance, Kramer said, to what he described as the anti-Western “post-colonialist” beliefs of people like Edward Said, the late Palestinian activist and Columbia University professor of comparative literature.

At the same time, these academics denigrated the work of prominent mainstream Middle East scholars, such as Bernard Lewis, the Princeton University professor emeritus, as too pro-Western.

Kramer wrote that these departments encouraged a worldview in which instruction about Israel is twisted and degraded, while instruction about the United States eliminates positive and patriotic references.

The negative emphasis often found in these departments is like “teaching about the United States through the lens of what happened at Abu Ghraib prison” in Baghdad, said Sarah Stern, director of the Washington office for governmental and public affairs of the American Jewish Congress, which formally protested Title VI educational practices to the U.S. Department of Education.

“And it’s teaching about Israel through the lens of Deir Yassin,” she said, referring to an infamous battle during Israel’s War of Independence in which Jewish militias allegedly murdered Arab civilians.

In written testimony submitted to Congress in 2003, the then-director of Georgetown’s national resource center on the Middle East, Barbara Stowasser, and a colleague, defended the work of Georgetown’s national resource centers.

“We have had scholars working at our centers who have come to differing conclusions on an array of issues, as one would expect in an academic setting which is premised on the principle of academic freedom and the belief that rigorous research and serious intellectual discussion are important to informing both our students and others who benefit from contact with the work of our centers.

“We would make the point, however; that in the process, our centers’ work has been balanced and reflective of diverse views,” they wrote.

Legislation introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives this session by Rep. Patrick Tiberi (R-Ohio) would create an advisory board to observe the workings of Title VI and report to Congress. Academic associations oppose the legislation as an attack on free speech and academic freedom.



Stan Barouh

Scholar Martin Kramer is the author of the book ‘Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America.’

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce recently passed the legislation as part of the Higher Education reauthorization bill, but it has yet to pass the full House.

In the Senate, Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.) attached a different version of the legislation to the Higher Education reauthorization bill. The Senate version does not include an advisory board provision, but it does require a survey of national and defense agencies to determine what they most need

from the university community, with the assumption being that it is Arabic speakers.

The Senate version also requires an objective grievance procedure if university students feel they’re being discriminated against. It also requires schools to show how many students who have studied in these resource centers actually go into national security and defense fields.

The House and the Senate are now slated to try to resolve the different versions of the legislation.

**TAINTED  
TEACHINGS  
PART 4**

**Title VI may  
have had a noble  
purpose, but it  
does not work in  
practice, one critic  
charges.**

# Gaza evacuees find community helping them

By DINA KRAFT

NITZAN, Israel (JTA) — Water sprinklers sputter over freshly laid lawns, boys chase soccer balls and residents drive on newly paved roads to their pre-fab houses in this temporary neighborhood built for Jewish settlers evacuated from the Gaza Strip.

Nitzan, a government project on the southern coast of Israel, was built hastily before the Gaza withdrawal began in August. Still unfinished, cranes dot its skyline and bulldozers clear away mounds of sandy dirt to make way for houses and tarred sidewalks.

"We are trying to act normal, to continue a regular routine life," said Karen Sarfati, 49, sitting on a new couch bought to fit her new living room. The house, like most here, is less than 1,000 square feet, much smaller than her previous home.

Sarfati and her family are among some 1,700 families who were forced to leave Gaza and four settlements in the northern West Bank.

Some already have resettled on their own or as communities. About 920 families are still in hotels awaiting housing. Others, unhappy with the government, have set up protest tent camps, leaving the government with the bill for dozens of empty hotel rooms they refuse to take.

The Sarfatis' house is small for a family of six, but Sarfati said that moving here together with the other families from her settlement of Gan Or has helped ease the transition. So has making the house feel like home by putting up curtains, displaying pewter candlesticks and baking cheesecakes.

Pre-fab homes for a total of 450 families are to be completed soon. Currently about 280 families are living here, planning to stay for the next two years while permanent homes are built.

Initially the idea to build in the area — proposed by a group of settlers — was met with controversy. The group wanted homes on the sand dunes in the area between the southern towns of Ashkelon and Ashdod.

Environmentalists and some government members protested, arguing it would endanger the delicate eco-system of the area, which contains one of Israel's only remaining stretches of unspoiled sand dunes.

A compromise was struck when the government approved the temporary neighbor-

hood on an area previously zoned for building. It's near, but not on, the sand dunes.

The government also approved the building of permanent homes in two locations: the adjacent religious community, also called Nitzan, and land north of Ashkelon.

Remaining together as a community was a priority for most. Within Nitzan, neighborhoods are clustered according to former settlements. The large wooden signs that once stood at the entrances of their communities are propped up on the new street corners.

The sign for the settlement of Gadid has been planted a few steps from the home of David Mor-Yosef, 53, one of the ambulance drivers for the Jewish settlements in Gaza. The house he shares with his wife and three of his children, including a 23-year-old pregnant daughter and her husband, is next to the home of another daughter.

Mor-Yosef's eldest daughter — whose first husband was killed in Gaza in 2001 by a Palestinian — lives diagonally across the street.

"It helps that the family is here, as well as the families we lived with," Mor-Yosef said. "Community always helps, especially the kind we had."

In Gadid, Mor-Yosef said, "whether it was a celebration or, God forbid a tragedy, we were always together."

Like many of his neighbors, he's not currently working, though he plans to join a local ambulance team soon. After more than four years of 19-hour days racing to the scene of mortar attacks and roadside shootings, Mor-Yosef said, he needs a rest.

Punctuating the family's departure from Gaza, a mortar shell fell on their roof the day before they left.

For now, the \$420 monthly rent for the Mor-Yosef's house is deducted from government compensation packages that average \$350,000 per family. Compensation is based on several factors, including the amount of land the families lived on, how large their homes were and how long each family member lived in Gaza.

Additional funds were provided for moving. Families who opt to move to the Negev or Galilee, regions in the periphery of the

country, are to receive a bonus of \$30,000.

"We are trying our best to meet their needs," Housing Minister Isaac Herzog said.

The government reversed an earlier decision after the withdrawal, and compensation now is being given as well to settlers who did not leave Gaza by the government deadline but did not offer violent resistance to security forces.

The price tag for Israel's withdrawal from Gaza is about \$2 billion,

Herzog said, including military involved such as dismantling army infrastructure and relocating bases inside Israel. About half of the money is going toward settler compensation and resettlement.

The cost of building the temporary neighborhood of Nitzan is \$44 million, the Defense Ministry said. Its dark yellow houses are topped with red-tiled roofs and have sliding glass doors that open onto narrow gardens.

Wooden signs engraved with family names have been transplanted to their new front yards, the orange ribbons tied to them to protest the withdrawal now faded by the sun.

There is a sense of a new beginning: The youngest children attend nursery schools built here, and freshly planted flower beds cover traffic circles.

"We have a variety of solutions. This is one solution and I hope it's OK," said Haim Altman, spokesman of SELA, the body created by the government to help resettle the settlers. "We have to remember it is a temporary solution. At the end of the day they have to build new homes, and we are working" on that, too.

Some in Nitzan have been surprised by the relative ease of the transition, while others find the adjustment more painful.

Gadi Hazan, 42, who lost his greenhouse business in the withdrawal, takes another drag from his cigarette and speaks of the government with bitterness. He and his wife ward off depression by focusing on getting settled.

"We were dealing with schools, the kids and the house, and did not have time for ourselves," Hazan said. "Now we have too much time." ■

**'We are trying to act normal, to continue a regular routine life.'**

**Karen Sarfati**

Gaza evacuee

**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

## COMMUNITY

## TRANSITIONS

■ The umbrella group for Jewish community relation councils hired a new Washington director. Hadar Susskind comes to the Jewish Council for Public Affairs from the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

■ Rabbi Eric Lankin was named the Jewish National Fund's chief of institutional advancement and education.

■ The American Jewish World Service appointed Leni Silverstein as director of service programs and promoted Julia Greenberg to director of the international programs department.

■ David Gross, a former writer for JTA and former editor of the New York Jewish Week, died at age 82.

## HONORS

■ Yiddish singer, poet and songwriter Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman received a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship.

■ Rabbi Arthur Schneier was appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the High-Level Group for an Alliance of Civilizations. The alliance aims to build bridges between the Islamic world and the West.

■ The Israeli-Palestinian organization OneVoice, a grass-roots peace initiative, received the King Hussein Humanitarian Leadership Prize.

■ The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation honored Sister Rose Thering for her work in interfaith relations and in fighting anti-Semitism.

■ Cardinal Karl Lehmann is to be honored by the rabbinical institution of Germany's Reform movement. Lehmann, president of the German Catholic Bishops Conference, will receive the 2006 Abraham Geiger Prize from the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam for his role in promoting tolerance and freedom of thought. Lehmann will be honored next March in Berlin.

■ Professors David Roskies of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Eugene Orenstein of McGill University received the first Joseph Mlotek Prize for Yiddish and Yiddish Culture. The award was presented at a memorial service marking the fifth anniversary of the death of Mlotek, a Yiddish writer, teacher and cultural activist.

■ B'nai B'rith International awarded its Excellence in Diplomacy award to Jose Miguel Insulza, the secretary-general of the Organization of American States.

■ The New York chapter of the Weizmann Institute of Science honored Stuart Eizenstat, the Clinton administration's point man on Holocaust issues, at its annual gala.

■ B'nai Brith Canada gave its Award of Merit to Frank Stronach, chairman of Magna International.

## Ancient language comes alive

By KARMEL MELAMED

NEW YORK (JTA) — It took Iranian Jews in the United States nearly three decades in exile from the land their ancestors called home for 2,700 years to appreciate the rich history and culture preserved in their literature.

Considered one of the oldest but least studied Jewish writings in the world, Judeo-Persian writings consist of the Persian language written in Hebrew characters by Jews living in what today are Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and some parts of India during the last 1,000 years.

"In Iran the Jewish community was not aware of the value of Judeo-Persian writings, but now that they are away from their home they feel more attached to their heritage and want to preserve it," says Nahid Pirnazar, founder and director of the non-profit Los Angeles-based House of Judeo-Persian Manuscripts foundation.

Pirnazar, who obtained her doctorate from UCLA in Iranian studies with an emphasis in Judeo-Persian writing, said she formed the House of Judeo-Persian Manuscripts in 2000 after a significant number of Iranian Jews in Southern California expressed their interest in learning more about these ancient texts.

"There are probably hundreds and hundreds of Judeo-Persian manuscripts in the possession of Iranian Jews," Pirnazar said. "Not knowing what they are, they think they're copies of Torahs."

Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution sparked a mass exodus of Jews; today approximately 30,000 to 35,000 Jews from Iran live in Southern California.

For the last five years, Pirnazar has spent her own money in addition to small donations from local Iranian Jews to acquire copies and even originals of Judeo-Persian manuscript collections owned by museums, libraries and individuals in the United States, Europe, Israel and Iran. Her ultimate objective is for the House of Judeo-Persian Manuscripts to amass the largest collection of Judeo-Persian works in the world.

"Our first goal is to collect and transliterate these manuscripts into the Persian script before the generation that can read them easily is gone," Pirnazar says. "The next step is to eventually publish and translate some into English and other languages."

According to "Padyavand," a series of books about Judeo-Iranian studies by professor Amnon Netzer of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Judeo-Persian literature consists not only of Jewish

biblical translations and commentaries but also secular poems, dictionaries, medical texts, scientific treatises, legends, calendars and translations of works by non-Jewish masters of classical Iranian literature.

The oldest Judeo-Persian manuscript — which is also the oldest extant example of Persian writing

— is a 37-line merchant's letter dating to the year 750 A.D. It was discovered in the early 20th century by archaeologists in eastern Afghanistan, according to "Padyavand."

Judeo-Persian came into being following the Arab-Islamic conquest of Persia in the seventh century, when the Jews of Persia, who then spoke what is known as Middle Persian, refused to write the Persian language in Arabic letters but instead wrote Persian with the Hebrew letters they were familiar with, Pirnazar said.

Nearly five years ago, interest in Judeo-Persian was rekindled in the Southern Californian community after the Habib Levy Foundation in Los Angeles began providing endowments for a class on Judeo-Persian that was initially taught by Netzer and now is taught by Pirnazar at UCLA.

"A lot of Iranian Jews still do not know that Judeo-Persian studies exists," says Tannaz Talasazan, 21, an Iranian Jewish student at UCLA. "I think this course on Judeo-Persian is a great opportunity for young Jewish people, especially Iranian Jews who grew up here in America, to learn more about who they are and where they came from." ■

'A lot of Iranian Jews still do not know that Judeo-Persian studies exists.'

Tannaz Talasazan  
UCLA student

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Mofaz to Rice: We won't stop elections

Israel's defense minister assured Condoleezza Rice that Israel would not interfere in Palestinian elections.

Shaul Mofaz met the U.S. secretary of state Wednesday ahead of her visit next week to the region.

Israeli leaders earlier had said they would not "facilitate" the elections if Hamas or other terrorist groups take part.

"We will not interfere in the Palestinian election, but we don't believe that Hamas should be part of the Palestinian Parliament," Mofaz told reporters. Still, he noted, "it's a Palestinian issue."

Mofaz also told Rice that Israel was satisfied with Egypt's performance manning the border with the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal.

### WORLD

#### U.S. praises UNRWA

The United States views the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians as a stabilizing force in the region.

Ambassador Margaret Scobey, addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday, noted that the U.S. contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency last year was \$108 million.

"We support UNRWA's mandate and view its humanitarian assistance as a stabilizing force in the region," Scobey said. "UNRWA has an important role to play in supporting the efforts of the Palestinian Authority" and international emissaries "to launch economic recovery and development in Gaza and the West Bank."

Some pro-Israel groups and some members of Congress have accused UNRWA of supporting an anti-Israel agenda and allowing terrorists to operate from refugee camps.

Its defenders say the agency has limited control over the camps.

#### Legislators ask Bush to press Argentina

A bipartisan slate of U.S. legislators asked President Bush to press Argentina to solve the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.

The letter, signed by Reps. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) and 23 colleagues, praises Argentine President Nestor Kirchner for removing obstacles earlier administrations had placed in the way of the investigation.

However, it notes with concern that Interpol, under Iranian pressure, recently withdrew 12 international warrants for Iranians believed to be involved in the attack, which killed 85 people.

#### Anti-Semitic books lead to probe

A district attorney in Germany launched a probe into charges that Iranian booksellers sold anti-Semitic literature at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Peter Ripken, director of the event's international department, learned from JTA and other media Oct. 23, the last day of the fair, that notorious anti-Semitic volumes had been purchased from an Iranian bookseller.

Fair organizers then contacted the district attorney's office.

Ripken said the incident could lead to Iran being banned from next year's fair.

#### Jewish job sinks British minister

A British Cabinet secretary resigned for failing to declare pay from an advisory position with a Jewish group.

David Blunkett quit Wednesday as Works and Pensions Secretary after information about his position with World ORT was disclosed.

Blunkett admitted that he had failed to consult an advisory committee on business ethics before taking the post with ORT, which supports education and vocational training around the world.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Bolton: Syria could face economic sanctions

Economic sanctions could be imposed on Syria if it doesn't comply with a recent U.N. Security Council resolution, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said.

If Syria doesn't comply "immediately and completely" with Monday's resolution, which demands that it cooperate with a U.N. investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, then "economic sanctions are on the table," John Bolton said at the Anti-Defamation League's annual National Commission meeting Thursday in New York.

Bolton also said that if Iran doesn't end its effort to attain nuclear weapons, "we're going to have to look at other steps in the Security Council that we can take."

He also said he's on the lookout for a successor to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose term ends in December 2006. Asked about Annan's credibility, Bolton said, "What I am spending a not insignificant portion of my time doing is searching for his successor."

Bolton said he supports the work Annan is doing at the world body, and is looking outside the U.N. system for a future replacement.

#### Poll: Americans favor Commandments in public

Sixty-four percent of Americans believe religious symbols like the 10 Commandments should be displayed in public buildings, a new study found.

The Anti-Defamation League's survey of American attitudes toward religion, scheduled for official release next week, also found that 56 percent of Americans think creationism should be taught alongside evolution, and 44 percent believe organized prayer has a place in public schools, while 47 percent favor individual prayer.

Sixty-four percent of respondents said religion is under attack in America.

Of those, 75 percent of respondents who go to church once a week think religion is under attack, and 53 percent of those who attend church less than once a week agree, along with 80 percent of evangelicals.

#### Reform wants food stamps

The Reform movement joined Christian leaders in speaking out against proposed cuts to food stamps and other social service programs.

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, expressed concern about proposed cuts of \$39 billion to \$50 billion in social programs, including \$844 million in food stamps.

"We are told to deal thy bread to the hungry, not steal thy bread from the hungry," Saperstein said.

The religious leaders ran into and briefly spoke with Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), speaker of the House of Representatives, who defended the cuts and suggested they were intended to make the programs more efficient.

#### O.U. commends aid for parochial schools

The Orthodox Union praised the Senate for approving aid for public and religious schools that have taken in students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Under the legislation, which passed Thursday, schools can receive up to \$6,000 per student they accept.

Nonpublic schools would receive the aid through accounts set up for the students.