

IN THE NEWS
Rice to stump for peace in Mideast

Condoleezza Rice will canvas for Israeli-Palestinian peace during a Middle East tour. The U.S. secretary of state departs Sunday on a five-day trip with stops in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, the Palestinian areas and Saudi Arabia, a State Department statement said.

Rice will "lead a diplomatic effort to engage moderate leaders across the region to help Palestinians reform their security services and support Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort to come together to solve their differences," the statement said.

Olmert sees Abbas talks soon

Ehud Olmert said his first peace summit with Mahmoud Abbas could be imminent. The Israeli prime minister told Israel Radio on Thursday that he hoped to hold face-to-face talks with the Palestinian Authority president within the next few days. "I want to meet with him," Olmert said.

Olmert previously had held off on meeting Abbas, saying an Israeli soldier held by Palestinian gunmen in the Gaza Strip since June 25, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, first should be released. But this condition appeared to have been shelved Thursday.

House approves sanctions on Iran

The U.S. House of Representatives approved new sanctions against Iran.

The Iran Freedom Support Act, approved in a voice vote Thursday, would extend existing sanctions, scheduled to lapse Friday, and expand them to include overseas companies that deal with Iran.

Reminder:

The JTA World Report will not be published on Tuesday, Oct. 3.

WORLD REPORT

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For European Jews, a year of cooperation and security fears



Alain Azria

A rally against hate in Paris on Feb. 26, in response to the murder of Ilan Halimi.

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) — European policies toward Israel, Iran and the Palestinian territories played a central role in the life of European Jewry in 5766.

These international issues, along with the continued growth of extremism in Europe's Islamic communities, were focal points for Jews — particularly in Western Europe, where a spate of anti-Semitic attacks against individuals and synagogues left Jews worried about their safety.

"In Western Europe the violence is related to Islamic radicalism. In Central and Eastern Europe, it's the rise of nationalistic movements,"

said Serge Cwajgenbaum, secretary-general of the European Jewish Congress. "There was a slight decrease in anti-Semitic violent attacks, but there was no reduction of anti-Semitism."

Perhaps the most dramatic anti-Semitic incident was the February murder in Paris of

Ilan Halimi, 23, by a gang who tortured him for several weeks in a suburban apartment building.

The suspects reportedly told police they targeted Halimi because "all Jews are rich" — although Halimi's family is not wealthy, the kidnappers demanded an exorbitant ransom — and they put out cigarettes on Halimi's face because, they said, "he was Jewish and we don't like Jews."

Most of the suspects are Muslims of North African or black African origin.

The number of Jews contacting the Jewish Agency for Israel's Paris office to inquire about aliyah reportedly doubled after the Halimi murder.

French aliyah soared to record levels after the incident, despite a drop in the overall number of anti-Semitic incidents in France in 5766.

In addition, anti-America and anti-Israel sentiment fed by the 2003 invasion of Iraq in-

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**A NEW
YEAR
DAWNS**

■ 5766 year saw continued growth of extremism in Europe's Islamic communities

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tensified when Israel and Hezbollah went to war over the summer.

"We are undoubtedly in the middle of a huge and growing problem of the radical Islamicization of many European countries," said Jonathan Joseph, president of the European Council of Jewish Communities. "The effect of this is increased anti-Semitism and attacks, but I believe that hides a much greater issue: Throughout many communities, groups of radical Islamists are succeeding in de-legitimizing Jewish people among governments."

In Great Britain, where a crisis over Muslim integration was highlighted by July 2005 subway bombings carried out by Islamic extremists, concern over security is at an all-time high.

Mark Gardner, spokesman for British Jewry's Community Security Trust, estimated that anti-Jewish incidents rose 25 percent after the Israel-Hezbollah war began in July.

European Jewish communities are not sitting idly by in the wake of anti-Semitic activities; in fact, 5766 may be a record year for European Jewish political activism.

The European Jewish Congress is ensuring that its 41 member communities keep up the pressure on their European Union representatives to combat anti-Semitism, maintain positive attitudes toward Israel and take a tough stance on Hamas and toward Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The congress has had its greatest success on international issues. At its annual meeting in February, President Pierre

Besnainou had the rare chance to lecture Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European commissioner for external affairs, before a packed room of Jewish leaders.

"I just saw a woman from the Hamas election list on Israeli television saying that she was proud that her son killed Jews," he said. "Should we imagine you will have discussions with such terrorists?"

The European Union eventually found a way to keep sending massive amounts of humanitarian aid to Palestinians without engaging in talks with Hamas, which took over the Palestinian Authority after winning parliamentary elections in January.

On the community-development level, one landmark was an April meeting in Paris among the 10 largest pan-European Jewish organizations, chaired by the EJC, the ECJC and the Conference of European Rabbis.

It was not only the first time such a meeting took place, but the first time the groups pledged to actively work together to so that their agendas did not conflict, as was often the case in the past.

"It has been a year of unprecedented cooperation between the pan-European organizations," said Joseph of the ECJC. He said new initiative, like joint mailing lists and a committee to review progress on key issues, will make their work more transparent to Europe's 1.6 million Jews.

On the national level, there were some memorable milestones, celebrations and memorials: British Jews and politicians marked the 350th anniversary in 2006 of the readmission of Jews to Britain, following their mass expulsion several centuries earlier.

The Czech Republic and Poland held several unique commemorations, with a memorial to Holocaust victims in the Czech Republic's Usti Nad Labem unveiled in October.

The Prague Jewish community, which had been immersed in political upheaval for two years, settled down: A November election for the Jewish community council brought new leadership and saw the reappointment of Karel Sidon as chief rabbi.

In Poland, German-born Pope Benedict XVI paid his first visit to Auschwitz-Birke-

nau in May to memorialize its victims.

Poland was perhaps one of Europe's most politically colorful countries this year, and its struggle to form a majority in Parliament spilled over into Jewish-related events.

In April, the League of Polish Families, an extreme-right Catholic party, joined the governing coalition. The party has its roots in the pre-World War II national democratic movement, which urged members to assault Jews and throw them out of universities.

Compound- ing concerns over the coalition was an April program by the Catholic broadcaster Radio Maryja in which a commentator excoriated Jews for "humiliating Poland" and engaging in "Holocaust business."

In May, just prior to the pope's visit, Poland's chief rabbi was hit on the shoulder as he was leaving the Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw by a man yelling "Poland for the Poles." But amid all of these highly visible events, the Polish president and prime minister repeatedly pledged that anti-Semitism had no place in Poland.

Progress continued on the government-funded Museum of the History of Polish Jews — slated to open in 2008.

On the religious front, Poland welcomed four new rabbis in August in time for High Holidays celebrations in Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw.

Germany also experienced a revolution: Most of the country's 20 Progressive congregations were finally welcomed into the Central Council of Jews' state branches.

Germany also saw a strengthening of its government's relationship with Israel and perhaps with Jews in general when Angela Merkel became Germany's first female chancellor in November. Merkel made a deep impression on Jews in Israel, Germany and elsewhere in the Diaspora with her commitment to the Jewish state.

Merkel's government also has made combating anti-Semitism part of its political platform.

Also in Germany, 5766 ended on a high note: The Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, Germany's progressive Jewish seminary, ordained four rabbis, the first ordained in Germany since 1942.

The year 5766 may be a record year for European Jewish political activism.



WORLD REPORT

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Babi Yar killings remembered

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — Babi Yar, a ravine on the outskirts of Kiev, symbolizes one of the worst massacres to take place during World War II.

But some young Ukrainians have never heard about the tragedy.

"I know nothing about that ravine. Probably some people were killed there but I'm not sure who, by whom and when," said Anna, 21, when asked this week near the site where some 33,000 were killed between Sept. 29-30, 1941 — and an estimated 100,000 were shot and their bodies burnt during the 1941-1943 Nazi occupation of Ukraine.

This week's high-profile commemoration in Kiev, marking the 65th anniversary of the Babi Yar tragedy, was aimed at educating young Ukrainians like Anna.

At the invitation of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, international leaders and Jewish officials and activists from 41 countries attended Tuesday and Wednesday's events, which included an exhibition, a memorial ceremony at the site and a conference titled "Let My People Live."

At these events, Yushchenko was joined by Israeli President Moshe Katsav and his Croatian and Montenegrin counterparts, as well as rabbis and Christian clerics, senior government delegations from Europe and North America, and members of the Ukrainian political elite.

Most speakers at the ceremony and the conference spoke about how to turn the memory of Babi Yar into an educational lesson.

"The Holocaust and Babi Yar killings wounded our nations. Babi Yar should be that injection preventing aggressive bloody xenophobia," Yushchenko said Tuesday at the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

And speaking at the conference on Wednesday he added: "I clearly and straightforwardly promise that there will never be ethnic intolerance and religious hatred in Ukraine. Like all Ukrainians, I refuse to accept and tolerate the slightest manifestation of xenophobia and anti-Semitism."

Moshe Katsav also said people must never forget the Holocaust.

"We must pass on the memory of the Holocaust to the young for the sake of

posterity and to preserve kindness and human values," said Katsav.

On Wednesday, Yushchenko, joined by Ukrainian officials and the leaders of foreign delegations, placed candles at the memorial. This was followed by prayers conducted by rabbis and Christian clerics and Jewish rabbis.

Hundreds of mourners — many of them Jews from around the world — watched, some holding red and white carnations. Others carried small stones, which Jews traditionally leave at gravesites.

This week's events in Kiev are the brainchild of Russian Jewish leader and business magnate Vyacheslav "Moshe" Kantor.

Kantor said the idea came to him a few years ago when on a visit to Kiev he noticed young boys playing soccer near the site of the Babi Yar massacre.

"Most people today simply don't know what happened there," said Kantor, who is the founder of the World Holocaust Forum, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress and the chairman of the Board of Governors of the European Jewish Congress.

Kantor and other organizers are hoping the widely covered events will help to overcome that ignorance, which is a legacy of the Soviet era, when any references to the specific Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust were avoided.

In the years since Ukrainian independence in 1991, no major government-sponsored events have ever taken place at Babi Yar — with the exception of a few state visits to Kiev by Israeli and U.S. leaders.

Even the main events this week took place at a monument to all of Babi Yar's victims and not near the Jewish one — a 10-foot menorah that Jewish groups erected at Babi Yar in 1991.

Some Ukrainian officials who attended the ceremony said tributes to victims of Babi Yar should take place regularly to educate Ukrainians, especially the younger generation.

"We must regularly commemorate the Babi Yar victims because people must remember this tragedy," Alexander Moroz, the speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, told JTA "This is a grave for the victims of different nationalities, but only Jews were killed only because they were Jews."

Thousands of Soviet prisoners of war, members of the Ukrainian national resistance movement, Communists, gypsies and mentally disabled persons were also killed at Babi Yar.

Responding to the concern that after independence Ukraine failed to remember and teach about the tragedy, Yushchenko announced a decision to turn the area into a state historical and cultural reserve.

"Babi Yar will get the status of a reserve and a museum to the Babi Yar victims will be built there," Yushchenko told JTA.

Four years ago, a protest staged by a group of Jewish and non-Jewish activists led the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to scrap its plan for a Jewish community center that was to be built near Babi Yar with funds raised with North American federations.

Those who objected to that plan have this year staged another protest campaign against a plan by a Ukrainian business magnate and Jewish leader, Vadim Rabinovich, to build a museum, a synagogue and a yeshiva at Babi Yar.

That group, known as the Babi Yar Public Committee, believes that perpetuating the memory of the victims should become a government concern and not a private or sectarian initiative that may undermine the importance of the tragedy for the entire nation.

"If Ukrainians are the united nation, they must have a common memory and a common memorial," said Vitaly Nakhmanovich, secretary of the Babi Yar Public Committee.

Tatiana Zelenskaya, 24 agrees:

"Babi Yar is our one common pain," she said. "This is a symbol of the tragedy of the whole Ukrainian people: Ukrainians, Jews, Russians and others." ■

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

Kantor said the idea for the memorial came to him a few years ago when on a visit to Kiev he noticed young boys playing soccer near the site of the massacre.

Alternative minyans springing up

By SUE FISHKOFF

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — In a second-story room of a downtown community building, a young, redheaded woman wearing a long skirt and sandals leads 80 worshippers in the prayer service that welcomes Shabbat.

Men and women are sitting together, but a few men — not comfortable sitting with women during services — pray off to the side.

As Kabbalat Shabbat moves into Ma'ariv, the evening prayer, the woman leading the group steps aside and a young man takes over, in deference to some worshippers who hold that only a man can discharge a time-bound obligation on behalf of the congregation.

The davening, or praying, is all in Hebrew. Nose rings and dreadlocks mix with knitted yarmulkes and tzitzit, or ritual fringes. Except for a couple of visiting parents, no one looks older than 35.

This is Friday night at the Mission Minyan, a three-year-old, lay-led minyan, or prayer community, in San Francisco's hip Mission district. It's one of more than a dozen such independent minyans nationwide all founded by Jews in their 20s and early 30s.

Even as the organized Jewish community wracks its collective brain for ways to lure unaffiliated youth into synagogues and federations, hundreds of these Jewishly literate, spiritually driven young professionals are gathering regularly in living rooms and rented halls around the country for innovative Shabbat services they create by and for themselves.

"We are seeing more ferment among young Jews today than at any time since the havurah movement of the '70s," says Jonathan Sarna, a professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University.

These minyans don't follow the rules. Eschewing movement affiliation, operating without rabbis and on shoestring budgets, they differ in their approach to halachah, or Jewish law, but are united by a highly participatory style of worship.

"It's not about latke-eating contests or sending us to Israel, it's about creating authentic Judaism," says Julia Appel, a



Joelle Novey

Washington congregations - Tikkun Leil Shabbat and DC Reform Chavurah a takeoff on the traditional mechitza members, from left, Eli Staub, Jacob Feinspan, Suzanne Feinspan and MeLena Hessel look over donated prayer books.

founder of the Tikkun Leil Shabbat minyan in Washington.

These are not beginners' services: The davening is fast and proficient, led by people with strong Jewish backgrounds who went to day schools or Jewish summer camps, were active in their college Hillels and may have spent time in Israel.

While their numbers may be small — Sarna estimates no more than 1,000 to 2,000 people nationwide — their impact on the greater Jewish community

will be significant, he predicts.

The phenomenon started seven years ago.

Today there are almost a dozen such minyans in New York, a handful in Boston, Washington and Philadelphia, and others in New Jersey, Denver, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New Haven.

For now, only a few of these minyans ask for dues; most raise the little money they need through volunteer donations. And they don't advertise; people find out about services through Web sites, e-mail and word of mouth.

They vary widely in practice, with halachic decisions made by self-appointed leadership committees.

Some offer only kosher food, while

others maintain a "two-table" system.

Some have separate seating for men and women, others are fully egalitarian.

A few have created their own norms.

The Mission Minyan has mixed seating on Friday night, but on Saturday uses a "trichitza" arrangement, with separate sections for men and women and mixed seating in the middle.

Men and women read from the Torah at the Mission Minyan and a prayer quorum requires 10 women and 10 men, instead of just the 10 men required by Orthodox Judaism or the 10 adults of either gender required by non-Orthodox congregations.

Many of the leaders grew up in the Conservative movement, a challenge that is not lost on movement officials.

"Right now they don't need

religious schools or life cycle events, but at a particular point they will turn to a religious institution to provide these things," predicts Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. "If we face the challenge appropriately and retool some of what we do, I believe many of these people may join Conservative synagogues, or these minyanim may become Conservative institutions." ■

FOCUS ON ISSUES

'It's not about latke-eating contests or sending us to Israel, it's about creating authentic Judaism.'

Julia Appel

Founder, Tikkun Leil Shabbat

An unorthodox approach by the Orthodox

By SUE FISHKOFF

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. (JTA) — When rabbis and educators from the liberal denominations discuss outreach and engagement, they often gripe that the Orthodox don't have to worry about such matters because they have a built-in constituency.

That's only partially correct, say Orthodox leaders.

"It's absolutely true we don't have some of the problems they have, but we have different problems, and on some level we share the same concerns," says Rabbi Shmuel Goldin of Congregation Ahavath Torah in Englewood, N.J.

While Reform and Conservative rabbis are worried about "getting people in the door," Goldin says that Orthodox congregations are concerned about what happens once people are already in Shul.

"On Shabbat morning we have thousands of people. But why are they there? And are they getting what they should?"

Ahavath Torah's 700 member families will spend the next two years davening, or praying, in a huge tent while they rebuild their synagogue. They're using the physical upheaval to examine who they are and where they want to go as a congregation.

"Change is good," Goldin says. "We'll consider the quality of our prayer. Are we addressing each population correctly? How do we increase learning? Can we be a large community and still be personal? We're a very Zionist community and we travel to Israel at least once a year as a congregation, but should we encourage aliyah?" Many Orthodox congregations

are going through this same self-examination. And they have fewer tools to help them. National synagogue revitalization programs like Synaplex, the Experiment in Congregational Education and even Synagogue 2000 are based on assumptions that many Orthodox Jews don't share. Who would schedule a yoga class during services? And how could you show a film or play music on Shabbat, when such activities, according to Jewish law, are forbidden?

Just two of the 100 synagogues that have participated in Synagogue 2000 are Orthodox. One is the Hebrew Institute of White Plains in White Plains, N.Y., which, after intensively re-examining itself and its relationship with its congregants, was able to change "the norms of how we do business," says Rabbi Chaim Marder.

As a result, the synagogue has sharpened its focus on being a warm, welcoming congregation that accepts people at various levels of observance. "We're getting people who aren't looking for the monolithic Orthodox synagogue," says Marder, who concedes that some of the innovations have worked and some have not.

In an effort to address the needs of different groups within the congregation, the Hebrew Institute has continued its women's prayer group and its "Leisure Thursday" program for older Jews, and has added a men's learning group that meets several times a year at a local Chinese restaurant.

Two of the 100 congregations that have taken part in Synaplex are Orthodox. One is Beth Israel Abraham and Voliner in Kansas City, Mo. The other is Baron Hirsch Congregation in Memphis. At least two more

Orthodox synagogues have signed up, according to Synaplex officials.

Although his Synaplex Shabbats have been "very popular," Beth Israel's Rabbi David Fine admits the idea of scheduling an event in one room while services are going on in another is problematic for him as an Orthodox rabbi. "Are we sending a message we don't want to be sending, that it's OK not

'We're in the middle of Kansas. These people aren't going to synagogue anyway; they're going to the mall. I'm willing to try things so long as I can defend them halachically.'

Rabbi David Fine

Beth Israel

to go to services?" he wonders. "We had to struggle with that issue."

Ultimately he decided to go with the program because of its outreach potential.

"We're in the middle of Kansas," he points out. "These people aren't going to synagogue anyway; they're going to the mall. I'm willing to try things so long as I can defend them halachically." Recognizing that Orthodox congregations such as Fine's are confronting a host of changing social realities, the movement's Rabbinical Council of America has come up with its first national program for synagogue transformation.

The S. Daniel Abraham Synagogue Leadership Renewal Program is designed to help Orthodox shuls grapple with such issues as new attitudes regarding the religious role of women, a growing thirst for spirituality among younger Jews, and the challenges posed by increasing involvement with the outside community around them.

The Abraham initiative will be tested-marketed for two years in a handful of northern New Jersey congregations, including Ahavath Torah, before it is rolled out nationally. ■



Sue Fishkoff

Rabbi Chaim Marder of the Hebrew Institute of White Plains, N.Y., talks to seniors enjoying lunch at the shul's Leisure Thursday program in June.

Marking Rosh Hashanah in Egypt

By BRENDA GAZZAR

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt (JTA) — During this year's Rosh Hashanah evening service at the grand Eliahou Hanabi Synagogue, a short walk from the Mediterranean Sea here, all eyes turn toward the three foreign visitors who are making their way quietly to the front.

Word spreads quickly in the women's half of the synagogue: "We have a minyan," a couple of elegantly dressed ladies whisper excitedly to one another.

Here in this coastal city known for its cosmopolitan flair, where only four Jewish men and 27 Jewish women remain, the prospect of having 10 males at a New Year's service is always a reason to celebrate.

The Jewish population is "getting lower and lower," said Max Salame, the 90-year-old president of Alexandria's Jewish community and a retired dentist, as he shared a festive New Year's meal of beans, fried fish and pomegranates with community members. "There aren't any more Jews."

A Cairo-born Israeli who happened to be visiting his native country over the holiday, Salame led last Friday night's service, which was attended by 10 Egyptian Jews, five tourists from France, three more Israelis and an American student living in Cairo. Another Israeli man, who makes the trip each year to lead the High Holiday services for the community, had to cancel after falling ill.

Following the wars with Israel in 1948, 1956 and 1973, many of Egypt's Jews were expelled by the government or left on their own because of an increasingly difficult political situation.

Today, Egypt's Jewish community numbers fewer than 100, some of whom are reluctant to discuss the political situation. Their names and the languages they speak — including French, Greek, Italian and Ladino — reflect a rich and diverse heritage that stems from various waves of immigration to the country over the years.

In Alexandria, the Eliahou Hanabi Synagogue — estimated to have been built between 1836 and 1850 by Italian architects — is testament to a once-vibrant Jewish community that boasted 16 synagogues and 35,000 to 40,000 Jews around 1950. To-

day, members say the youngest Egyptian Jew in the city is a single male in his 30s; most Jews here are older than 65.

Lina Mattatia, 82, who has recorded births, marriages and deaths for the community for three decades, remembers when the cathedral-like synagogue was full of upscale Egyptian Jews — the women high above on a second level and the men far below.

"Sometimes there were marriages inside the synagogue," said the blue-eyed, fair-skinned

and very petite Mattatia in slow, careful English. "Then, they were coming out, nice ladies, very chic, full of jewels."

Despite the obstacles, many Jews in Egypt made a name for themselves in business. Ben Gaon, the vice president of the Jewish community in Alexandria, says his father once served as the tailor for Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser.

"When they kicked out the Jews in 1956 and in 1967 and in 1973, he was always in good hands," said Gaon, 53, who wears a dark mustache and has a large portrait of Mubarak over his office desk. "Everyone liked him. They knew he was not in politics."

Mattatia, whose parents were born in Greece, said she has remained in Egypt because her second husband, a Jewish paper salesman 23 years her senior, became ill and that made it difficult to leave the country. But her heart has always been firmly planted in this coastal city.

"I love Alexandria. I was born here and it's my country," said Mattatia, who speaks five languages but is most comfortable in French. "And I love Egyptian people. I love them."

The two daughters of Victor Balassiano, 67, and his wife, Denise, left for America in 2001 at the urging of a Jewish professor at Northeastern University in Boston who visited the synagogue. Today, both daughters, 27 and 25, are graduates of Northeastern and the eldest has obtained a green card.

They also have a 23-year-old son, who left the country before his sisters and is living and working in Jerusalem.

"It's very difficult to find work, for marrying" in Egypt, said Victor Balassiano, the accountant for the community in Alexandria. "The Jewish became very few. There is no future for the Jewish here."

On a noisy street in downtown Cairo at the Shaar Hashamaim Synagogue, the armed security forces outside the synagogue outnumber the attendees by about three to one on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Among the six visitors who have come to pray Saturday, only two are Egyptian Jews. A larger crowd of mostly elderly Egyptian women, foreign visitors and members of the Israeli diplomatic corps in the country had commemorated the holiday the previous evening with a kosher meal from Israel.

During Saturday's service led by a French visitor, the ark was opened and an elderly Egyptian woman, who appeared to be in her 70s, made her way slowly to the front to touch the Torah.

A man with a Muslim name, who said he worked for the government to keep the synagogue

secure, questioned extensively this reporter about the article she was writing and whether she thought that Egyptian Jews are being treated well.

If someone has said there are problems with the community, "tell me and I will resolve it," said the man, who asked not to be identified.

On Sunday morning, the second day of the Jewish New Year, six Egyptian Jewish women came to the synagogue to hear the shofar.

Among them was Celine Curial, 75, who says that even though she is fighting to reclaim property sequestered from her wealthy husband's family by Nasser — a policy that affected all wealthy Egyptians — she loves Egypt and would never leave the country.

"My pupils used to love me, to tell me, 'You are our mother,'" the high school teacher of 35 years said.

AROUND
THE JEWISH
WORLD

Following the wars with Israel in 1948, 1956 and 1973, many of Egypt's Jews were expelled by the government or left on their own because of an increasingly difficult political situation.

BOOK EXCERPT

Saying sorry is messy, but necessary

By RABBI IRWIN KULA

NEW YORK (JTA) — “Love means never having to say you’re sorry,” are the words spoken by Ali McGraw in that classic 1970s movie, “Love Story.” This line captures a yearning so many of us have, even if we don’t want to admit it. We long for someone who understands us and accepts us so fully — despite all our faults and mistakes — that apologizing seems beside the point.

The ultimate relationship, we can’t help but think, is one in which forgiveness is easy, free-flowing and immediate; where it requires little or no effort from either party, even when the hurt may be deep.

Of course, it’s just the opposite. Our most loving relationships are those in which we say “sorry” continuously. Forgiveness is central to the workings of love. If we’re not seeking and receiving, being asked for and granting forgiveness on a regular basis, it’s most likely that our relationship is not as intimate, dynamic or alive as we think it is. And it’s likely that we’re holding in plenty of bitterness, resentment, guilt and shame.

Quite simply, things aren’t messy enough.

One could say that forgiveness is the glue of loving relationships, holding it all together and in need of constant renewal and repair. But there is no such thing as “an act” of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a process, a way of being in the world.

Few things make us as vulnerable as admitting our mistakes, especially to someone we have every reason to think will be angry at us or, even worse, unreceptive or shut down. When we ask for forgiveness, there’s no place for defenses, for justifications. We have to make ourselves naked. At the same time, to forgive is an act of faith and trust.

There’s little reason to expect that the transgression won’t happen again; once someone crosses a line, what’s the guarantee they won’t again? We live in a culture of avoidance; few of us have had models of forgiveness or were taught that feeling vulnerable and taking risks is a necessary part of intimacy. So, instead, we seek a kind of cheap grace. ■

Rabbi Irwin Kula is the president of CLAL.

Book targets young philanthropists

By JACOB BERKMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — For some parts of the established Jewish philanthropic world, organizations such as Interfaithfamily.com can be a tough sell.

“The reactions range from ambivalence at best to really hostile,” President Ed Case said of his group, which produces a biweekly print publication and provides other resources to bring interfaith families — there are as many as 1 million in the United States — closer to Judaism.

But thanks in part to his group’s inclusion last summer in a limited-circulation directory of niche Jewish organizations, Interfaithfamily.com has obtained grants in the past year from a number of venerable Jewish philanthropies, including the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, the Harvey and Lynn Meyerhoff Philanthropic Fund and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

Slingshot, which will present its second edition Sept. 20 at a Manhattan party, lists 50 organizations that the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies’ 21/64 division deems the most innovative in the organized Jewish world. Most are aimed at helping young Jews form Jewish identity.

Those organizations range from Ikar, a Los Angeles-based Jewish community that promotes social action through Jewish learning and spirituality, to the Jackson, Miss.-based Goldring Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, which is trying to keep alive the heritage of the Jewish South.

The list includes myriad niche organizations focused on everything from sexual identity to Jewish cultural revival to Jewish ritual.

The directory is an effort to map a creative new Jewish organizational world that lies off the radar of many major funders and to help those philanthropists decide where to give money by taking care of the due-diligence process, said Roger Bennett, the Bronfman Philanthropies’ senior vice president.

The division enlisted 25 foundation professionals to judge the organizations nominated for Slingshot based on four criteria: innovation, impact, leadership and organizational effectiveness, Bronfman Philanthropies’ Vice President Sharna Goldseker said.

Most importantly, Bennett said, the book aims to help the next generation of funders pair up with organizations that excite them.

“The vast majority of Jewish institutions have been serving the Jewish community since the ’30s, ’40s or ’50s and are doing a wonderful job of fighting anti-Semitism,

supporting Israel, developing minority-majority relations and providing social services,” he said. “But over the last 10 to 15 years, they have been augmented by new projects driven by younger talents that provide projects and programs that really reflect their interests and spiritual and cultural needs.”

The neophyte funding generation now in its 20s and 30s should inherit an estimated \$41 trillion from the baby boomers by 2052, according to Boston College’s 2003 Wealth Transfer Report. That makes Slingshot essential for people such as Scott Belsky.

Belsky, 26, sits on the board of his family’s Kaplan Family Foundation, a fund of more than \$30 million that gives away some \$1.6 million a year.

As a Kaplan Foundation trustee, Belsky has a budget that he can allocate at his discretion, and Slingshot help him learn about organizations with which he feels a close connection. The Slingshot list also helps him when the foundation’s board meets periodically to decide how to donate collaborative money.

“I’m by far the youngest person at the table. I’m the only one of my generation,” Belsky said. “For the foundation, Slingshot brings a new perspective with credibility. For me to go to the board and say that I went to this thing called Storahtelling and we should give money to it is much different than if I tell them that it is something that we have discussed and that has been researched.” ■

The directory includes myriad niche organizations focused on everything from sexual identity to Jewish cultural revival to Jewish ritual.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

House passes homeland security cooperation

The U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation that would formalize homeland security cooperation with Israel and four other allies.

The bill, passed Tuesday night, establishes an office in the Homeland Security Department that would foster legal and research cooperation with Israel, Britain, Australia, Singapore and Canada.

The office will be funded at \$25 million a year for three years. The Promoting Antiterrorism Capabilities Through International Cooperation Act now goes to the U.S. Senate.

U.S. releases \$25 million for homeland security

The U.S. Congress released \$25 million in homeland security funds to protect nonprofits.

The money, from the 2006 budget, had been held up because of ambiguities in earlier legislative language, but negotiators on the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives conference committee agreed this week to release the money.

Most of the \$25 million allocated in 2005 went to Jewish organizations for improving security.

The United Jewish Communities federation umbrella group, which together with the Orthodox Union had lobbied for the funds' release, welcomed the decision.

"The conference committee has taken critical steps to alleviate a particularly troublesome predicament given the elevated threats against Jewish community organizations as demonstrated by the July attack on the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle," said William Daroff, director of the UJC's Washington office.

The conference committee has not completed negotiations, but insiders told JTA that no funds were likely to be allocated for 2007.

The UJC and the Orthodox Union had lobbied for another \$25 million in next year's budget.

Court allows Hamas suit against bank

A federal court in New York allowed victims of Hamas terrorism to continue their lawsuit against a British bank.

Wednesday's District Court decision allows relatives of 15 victims of the terrorist group running the Palestinian Authority to sue NatWest, a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Scotland, for providing financial services to Interpal, an entity that allegedly transferred funds to Hamas.

California divests from Sudan

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill mandating divestment from Sudan.

The bipartisan legislation, signed Monday, allows the state's universities and employee pension funds to divest from Sudan until massacres by government-allied Arab militias in the Darfur region end. Jewish groups lobbied for the bill.

House approves funds for missile interceptor

The U.S. House of Representatives approved funds for joint U.S.-Israeli development of an interceptor for short-range missiles.

The mandate is part of the \$136 million appropriated this week for the Arrow program, the successful U.S.-Israeli interceptor of long-range missiles.

The Arrow appropriation, part of the wider defense appropriations bill passed Tuesday by the House and expected to gain Senate approval by Thursday, was \$58 million more than the \$78 million requested by the Bush administration.

MIDDLE EAST

Israel alarmed by Gaza arms

Israel's domestic security chief voiced alarm at the level of arms smuggling to Gaza.

Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin told the Cabinet on Wednesday that since Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last year around 20 tons of military-grade explosives and hundreds of rifles have reached Palestinian terrorists from neighboring Egypt.

He also said factions in Gaza were trying to bring in advanced anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, and accused Egyptian authorities of not doing enough to stop the flow.

The Shin Bet long has alleged that Palestinians in Gaza are arming themselves for a new round of conflict with Israel in which they hope to emulate the tactical success of Hezbollah during the recent Lebanon war.

AFL-CIO sues over Jordan-Israel businesses

A major U.S. trade federation and a business group sued Jordan, claiming it abuses foreign workers in industrial zones jointly run with Israel.

The AFL-CIO, together with the U.S. National Textile Association, filed the complaint last week under the Free Trade Agreement with the United States that arose from the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace agreement.

"This is the first time a business association has formally joined in filing a worker rights case under a trade agreement," the AFL-CIO and the textile association said in a news release quoted in Thursday's Jordan Times. The Qualified Industrial Zones, jointly run by Israeli and Jordanian businesses, arose out of the same agreement.

Goods manufactured in the zones are exempt from U.S. customs fees. Human rights groups reported earlier this year that foreign workers in the zones often are unpaid, have their travel documents withheld and may be forced to work 20-hour shifts. Jordan's government says it has launched reforms with the assistance of the International Labor Organization.

WORLD

Anti-Semitism up in Denmark

Denmark's Jewish community is alarmed over an increase in anti-Semitic attacks in the country.

Denmark's Kristeligt Dagblad newspaper reported that there were as many attacks on Danish Jews in the first half of 2006 as in all of 2005. According to the Eurotopics online newsletter, most attacks have been aimed at people going to synagogue or at children on their way to school.

Suspected war criminal in Hungary?

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has found that a suspected war criminal is living in Budapest. Sando Kepiro, 92, was sentenced in absentia by a Hungarian court to 14 years in prison for a massacre of 4,000 civilians, including 1,250 Jews.

The massacre in Serbia occurred while Kepiro was a police officer with the Nazi-allied Hungarian army. Kepiro also was accused of deporting Jews to concentration camps.

He recently denied the charges, saying that he witnessed the massacre but never shot anyone, and did not know about the concentration camps. The Wiesenthal Center alerted the Hungarian government to Kepiro's presence in August, but authorities said the 1946 court files had been lost, according to the DPA German news agency.