

## IN THE NEWS

## Jewish Dems hail Senate takeover

The National Jewish Democratic Council welcomed the wholly Democratic Congress. "A large number of Jewish organizations will have tremendous access to the Democratic leadership," Ira Forman, the NJDC's executive director said, citing the strong Jewish turnout for Democrats.

"People will appreciate that Jewish Americans and African Americans are the party's two strongest constituencies." Republican Sen. George Allen conceded Thursday, sealing the Democratic victory; Democrats won the House of Representatives in Tuesday's election.

Allen's race was marred by a number of mishaps, including his denial and his subsequent acknowledgment of his mother's Jewish roots.

## Arsonists attack Paris Jewish school

Arsonists reportedly set fire to a Jewish school near Paris. The Associated Press reported that no one was hurt in the overnight fire Thursday at the Merkaz Hatorah school in suburban Gagny.

The building was also attacked by arsonists in 2003 just before its opening, causing extensive damage. Police are investigating the arson.

## Warrant issued for ex-Iranian president

An Argentine judge ordered the arrest of Iran's former president in the 1994 AMIA Jewish center bombing in Buenos Aires.

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was one of seven former Iranian government officials and one Hezbollah operative named as accomplices in the attack, which killed 85 people and wounded more than 300.

Judge Rodolfo Canicoba-Corral issued warrants for their arrests and declared the bombing a crime against humanity, which means the case has no statute of limitations.

# WORLD REPORT

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Robert A. Cumins

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, expected to be the next Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, has strong ties to the Jewish community.

## Pelosi's support for Israel is heartfelt, supporters say

By JENNIFER JACOBSON

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Before a packed meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee three years ago, U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) connected her political support for the Jewish state with her personal life.

"My daughter is Catholic. My son-in-law is Jewish," she said. "Last week I celebrated my birthday and my grandchildren — ages 4 and 6 — called to sing 'Happy Birthday.' And the surprise, the real gift, was that they sang it in Hebrew."

Now that the Democrats have taken control of the U.S. House of Representatives, the party is expected to install Pelosi, 66, as speaker, making her the first woman to hold the position that is two heartbeats away from the presidency.

Political observers say it's no surprise that

the congresswoman from San Francisco considers herself close to the Jews.

The daughter of Thomas D'Alesandro Jr., a former mayor of Baltimore, Pelosi grew up in a Democratic family with Jewish neighbors and friends.

"She likes to say that, growing up in Baltimore, she went to a bar or bat mitzvah every Saturday," Amy Friedkin, a former president of AIPAC and a friend of Pelosi's for 25 years, wrote in an e-mail message to JTA.

Friedkin noted that there's even a soccer field the Haifa named after the lawmaker's family.

While the Republicans had campaigned partly on the premise that support for Israel among Democrats has waned, exit polls from Tuesday's voting show that Democrats won an overwhelming majority of the Jewish vote.

With Pelosi as speaker, Jewish activists and

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BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ Supporters say Pelosi's commitment to Israel and Jewish domestic concerns are genuine

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officials are confident that the U.S. Congress will remain strongly pro-Israel.

"I've heard her say numerous times that the single greatest achievement of the 20th century" was the founding of the modern state of Israel, Friedkin wrote. "She has been a great friend of the U.S.-Israel relationship during her entire time in Congress and is deeply committed to strengthening that relationship."

Sam Lauter, a pro-Israel activist in San Francisco, has known Pelosi for nearly 40 years. He was 5 years old when the Pelosis moved into his San Francisco neighborhood, he recalls. The two families lived on the same street.

"She's one of the classiest," most "straightforward people you could ever meet," Lauter said. "She's incredibly loyal."

Lauter said the Pelosis used to attend the first night of the Passover seder at his parents' house.

"As far as the Jewish community is concerned, she feels our issues in her soul," he said.

To illustrate his point, Lauter told a Pelosi story that has become almost legendary in the Jewish community.

At an AIPAC members luncheon in San Francisco right after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, Pelosi was speaking when an alarm sounded.

"Everybody started getting nervous, scrambling toward the door," Lauter recalled. One person, though, was reading the words of Hatikvah, the Israeli national

anthem, above the din. It was Pelosi.

"It actually calmed the crowd," Lauter said. "You could see people actually smiling, saying, 'Wow.'"

This "wasn't something done purposefully to show everyone that Nancy Pelosi supports the Jewish community," he said. It "actually came from inside her."

Lauter and others say Pelosi will have to draw on that inner strength as speaker, since Lauter predicted that she will hear from those in the Jewish community who argue that Democrats no longer support Israel the way they used to.

Some Republicans questioned Pelosi's support for Israel this summer. The congresswoman ended up removing her name as a co-sponsor from a House resolution supporting the Jewish state during its war with Hezbollah because it did not address the protection of civilians.

While Pelosi's aides said she was not going to lend her name to a resolution that did not contain a word she had written, Republicans criticized the move.

"It highlights a real wave within the Democratic Party that wants a more 'even-handed' approach on these issues, and that wants to view Israel through the same prism as we do Hezbollah," Matt Brooks, the executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, said at the time. "Watering down is not acceptable right now."

Brooks could not be reached for comment this week.

For his part, Lauter believes the argument about the Democrats and Pelosi is false.

For instance, he noted Pelosi's quick response to former President Carter's description of Israel's settlement policies as "apartheid" in a forthcoming book.

Pelosi publicly announced that Carter does not speak for the Democratic Party on Israel.

Rabbi Doug Kahn, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council in San Francisco, also applauded Pelosi's repudiation of Carter's position.

He has known Pelosi since she started representing his district in 1987. Kahn

said his group has always had an excellent working relationship with her. And he praised her passion for issues that relate to equal opportunity, social justice and peace.

Kahn, echoing Lauter's point, said that Pelosi, coming from a city with such a liberal political reputation, will face challenges from the liberal segments of the Democratic Party that have criticized Israeli policies.

But he is confident that Pelosi, as speaker, will be effective in persuading people with a broad range of views on the Middle East, the importance of maintaining bipartisan support for Israel.

When it comes to Israel, "she truly gets it," said Matt Dorf, a consultant to the Democratic National Committee. She gets "Israel's value and asset to U.S. security"

and its "importance as the only democracy in the Middle East."

Jewish organizational officials also commend Pelosi's record on Jewish communal issues.

William Daroff, vice president for public policy for the United Jewish Communities, the federation system's umbrella group and a Republican himself, said the lawmaker has helped ensure federal funding of Jewish family service agencies and Jewish hospitals and has supported government programs and policies that Jewish organizations value, such as Medicare and Medicaid.

He also noted that Reva Price, Pelosi's liaison to the Jewish community for a year and a half, came from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella group of local community relations councils.

Bringing on board such an insider was "really a masterful stroke," Daroff said.

Price, he added, has done a wonderful job of playing "traffic cop" with Jewish organizations and in making sure that Pelosi's agenda is in tune with that of the Jewish community.

She's been "a real champion of making sure the Jewish community is well served," Daroff said of the lawmaker. "I'm sure she'll continue to be a champion." ■

**'She likes to say that, growing up in Baltimore, she went to a bar or bat mitzvah every Saturday.'**  
**Amy Friedkin**  
Former president, AIPAC

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# Ortega win worries Nicaraguan Jews

By BRIAN HARRIS

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (JTA) — The return of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega after his victory in Nicaragua's presidential election has the country's tiny Jewish community on edge.

During Ortega's last stint in power, as head of the left-wing revolutionary government from 1979-90, the entire Jewish community fled into exile while the Sandinistas built cozy relations with the PLO and other anti-Israel groups and allied themselves closely with Cuba.

Now, 16 years later, just as the community is on the verge of restoring itself to its pre-revolution levels, the Sandinistas appear to have narrowly won a new chance at heading this impoverished Central American nation.

"We have to accept the result and see how he's going to act," a disappointed Elena Pataky told JTA by telephone Tuesday. "We need to make sure that he doesn't again make Nicaragua a sanctuary for drug traffickers and terrorists."

Final counts from Sunday's election showed Ortega with 38 percent of the vote in the five-person race, ahead of chief rival Eduardo Montealegre, who won 29 percent. That was enough for Ortega to win on the first ballot under Nicaraguan law.

It marks Ortega's first victory in four tries since he was ousted out of office in a 1990 landslide.

The country's anti-Sandinista right split this year, with some supporting Jorge Rizo — the handpicked successor of Arnaldo Aleman, a far-right former president currently under house arrest on corruption charges. Others, including Pataky and the United States, supported Montealegre, a former banker who was dogged by charges of insider trading involving bond issues and embargos by his bank.

An expected split on the left between Ortega and Sandinista dissidents never materialized after the Sandinistas' preferred candidate, charismatic former Managua Mayor Herty Lewites, died of a heart attack in July. Lewites was the son of a Jewish immigrant who had helped supply the Sandinistas with arms when they were a guerrilla movement in the

1970s, but they slandered the father for his Jewish roots after he split from the group.

Lewites' replacement in the election, intellectual Augusto Jarquin, finished a distant fourth in Sunday's vote.

Nicaragua's Jews, never more than 100 strong, went into exile within two years after the Sandinistas overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. The country was possibly without a single resident Jew for the remainder of the Sandinista era, when the synagogue was converted to a secular school — it's now a funeral home — and a number of PLO members were given Nicaraguan passports.

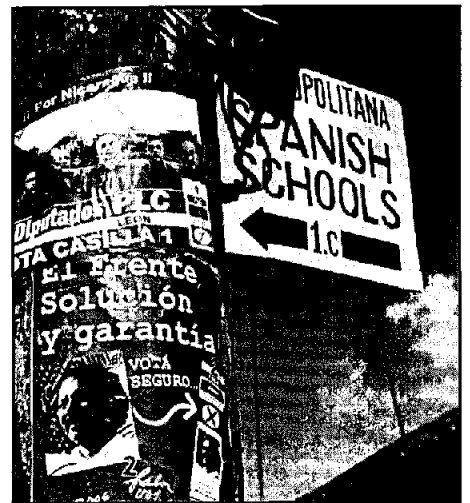
The Sandinista regime had hostile relations with the United States, which funded the "Contra" rebels in a bloody civil war that marred the 1980s and help send the Nicaraguan economy into a tailspin that continues to stunt development to this day.

After losing power, the Sandinistas changed their position on Israel, at least publicly, accepting diplomatic relations and abandoning their backing for rhetoric denigrating Zionism as racism. However, Sandinista leaders like the party's only surviving founder, Tomas Borge, continue to "deplore" Israeli policies in Gaza and the West Bank, and Ortega has expressed support for Iran's government, which threatens to annihilate Israel.

In recent years, Israel and Nicaragua have developed cordial relations. Israeli aid workers provide assistance to farmers in the country, but Israel has yet to open an embassy there, with the embassy in neighboring Costa Rica handling Nicaraguan affairs. Embassy officials could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Jews began returning to the country after Ortega lost the 1990 elections, although the community's Torah remains in Costa Rica. In recent weeks the community has been preparing to build a new synagogue.

AROUND  
THE JEWISH  
WORLD



Larry Luxner

A campaign poster for Daniel Ortega's Sandinista Party, in Leon, Nicaragua.

Those plans may be put on hold, Rafael Lipshitz, president of the Nicaraguan Jewish Association, told JTA. He said the group's board will meet next week to discuss its future and that a community assembly will be held by early December to make a decision.

Lipshitz called the election results "worrying," but added that he advocates a waiting period before any decisions are made on the synagogue project.

Pataky, who spent her exile in Miami and supported Montealegre in Sunday's election, laughed at the idea of fleeing again.

"The conditions of 1979 were totally different from today," she said. "Like

all of Nicaragua, I am observing with a keen interest."

Ortega's election marks a foreign policy setback for the Bush administration and a step forward for Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who helped boost the Sandinistas' chances in the final weeks of the campaign by sending the country a shipment of free urea for fertilizer to be distributed by the Sandinistas.

Ortega is to take office in January, though his ability to govern remains in doubt: The anti-Sandinista right is expected to hold a majority in the legislature, also elected Sunday.

**'We need to make sure that he doesn't again make Nicaragua a sanctuary for drug traffickers and terrorists.'**

**Elena Pataky**  
Nicaraguan Jew

# Who will lead Congress now?

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — New faces in the congressional leadership may mean new opportunities for American Jewish groups seeking legislative solutions to many of own concerns and those of the broader community.

Democrats garnered control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 1994 Tuesday, winning at least 27 seats, 12 beyond what was needed to wrest control from the Republicans.

The fate of the Senate remained undecided Wednesday morning, with the races in Virginia and Montana still too close to call.

It is too early to tell whether a Democratic Congress, swept into power over discontent with the Bush White House, will have the ability to effect much change on the legislative front, especially with such a divided Senate.

Still Jewish lobbyists in Washington expressed some optimism that they would be able to advance issues as diverse as raising the minimum wage, reforming immigration policy and finding a solution to the crisis in Darfur.

They also expressed confidence in the relations they have established with many of the incoming House Democratic leaders, especially the likely next Speaker of the House, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

Jewish groups have also established strong ties with Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the frontrunner for majority leader, and Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.), a Jewish lawmaker who led the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and is now considered a shoo-in for a leadership position.

Hoyer is close to Howard Friedman, the Baltimore-based president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and is considered one of Israel's best and most influential friends on Capitol Hill.

Hoyer makes it a point to educate freshmen lawmakers about Israel issues, and he has led delegations to the Jewish state multiple times. He prides himself on making Israel a bipartisan issue, vetting proposed legislation with his GOP counterpart, Rep. Roy Blunt of Missouri.

There are, however, some likely incoming committee chairmen who spark concern on certain issues, primarily because



Office of Nancy Pelosi

Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Steny Hoyer.

of their opposition to Israel's settlements policy. At the same time, these lawmakers often see eye-to-eye with the Jewish communal agenda on domestic issues.

These include Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), the likely new chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and Rep. David Obey, the likely incoming chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

In general, said Richard Foltin, legislative director of the American Jewish Committee, "Among the new leaders, there will be people we have a longstanding relationship with and others we will have to build it with."

William Daroff, vice president for public policy at United Jewish Communities, the umbrella of the North American federation system,

said of Conyers: "He's always had an open ear to the concerns of the Jewish community, particularly as it relates to its domestic agenda."

The Jewish leaders point to the Republican control of Congress as a key example — Jews, who largely disagreed with the GOP on domestic issues, were still able to garner robust support for common-ground issues, mainly Israel.

On the domestic front, some Jewish organizational leaders expressed optimism about focusing on longtime domestic priorities.

"One of the first pieces I expect them to bring up is a clean increase of the mini-

mum wage," said Hadar Susskind, Washington director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. By clean, he meant the bill would not be lumped in with other Republican-sponsored, tax-cut initiatives.

The initiative would be led by Conyers. Conyers' committee is also expected to play a large role in the continuing debate over immigration debate. Jewish groups and their allies have had a hard time pushing comprehensive immigration reform in recent years, due to strong opposition from House Republican leaders.

A lot will depend on what happens in the Senate, and whether it turns over to the Democrats or stays Republican.

Democratic initiatives will have a much easier time if they do not have to be approved by a Republican Senate.

But the Senate is considered a

more deliberative body, with lawmakers more likely to work in a bipartisan matter and to cross party lines. Indeed, 60 votes are needed to bring most initiatives to the floor. So even if the Republicans maintain their majority — Vice President Dick Cheney would hold the tie-breaking vote — Jewish officials said they could work in that environment.

"There's a benefit from having a balance," Foltin said. "You'll have different views emanating from both houses, and that can lead to a more constructive conversation."

Matthew E. Berger is a reporter for Congressional Quarterly.

AMERICA  
VOTES  
2006

Hoyer makes it a point to educate freshmen lawmakers about Israel issues.

# Klein takes tight Florida race

By LARRY LUXNER

BOCA RATON, Fla. (JTA) — Nearly 1,000 Democrats — at least half of them Jews — went wild when the Ike and Val Woods Band launched into a spirited, jazzy rendition of “I Feel Good.”

Indeed, it was impossible to find anyone attending Ron Klein’s victory celebration at the Embassy Suites Hotel late Tuesday night who didn’t feel good.

And they had reason: The Jewish attorney from Boca Raton had just defeated Republican incumbent E. Clay Shaw Jr. for control of Florida’s 22nd Congressional District in a bitter, down-to-the-wire election that had Democrats and Republicans on the edges of their seats until Election Day.

The final tally gave Klein 51.1 percent of the total, compared to 46.9 percent for Shaw and 2 percent for Neil Evangelista, the Libertarian candidate.

The victory makes Klein the Sunshine State’s third Jewish member of Congress, in addition to Democratic incumbents Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Robert Wexler — both of whom represent heavily Jewish districts in South Florida.

■  
Klein’s victory was part of a rout that saw Democrats pick up at least 27 seats nationwide Tuesday night, winning control of the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time since 1994.

“Tonight, for the first time in a very long time, we can say that we have taken our country back,” Wexler told the cheering crowd. “Tonight, Ron Klein has done

the impossible: He has beaten Clay Shaw in Broward County.”

Local demographer Ira Sheskin, commenting on the election results, told JTA that “the fact that Klein is identifiably Jewish in a county like Broward, where Jews make up 20 percent to 25 percent of the population, definitely helped him.”

That’s also the case in Palm Beach County, parts of which also belong to the 22nd District.

Alex Schultz, a West Palm Beach lawyer who supported Shaw in 2000, was among those rooting for Klein last night.

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“I’ve known Clay Shaw for 26 years. Some of my friends were fund-raisers for him,” he told JTA. “But I felt it was time for a change, and Ron Klein has always impressed me because he represents the average person. Clay Shaw always seems to go with the wind.”

Eight satellite TV trucks were parked outside the Embassy Suites, a testament to the national importance of this race, one of the nastiest and most expensive in the nation. The two candidates spent close to \$9 million in a campaign marked largely by negative advertising and voter dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq.

“None of us should underestimate the task that Ron Klein was up against,” Wexler said. “Ron ran the most credible, genuine

campaign for Congress that I have ever seen. Ron will have a lot to teach those of us who have watched the Democrats lose election after election.”

Joyce Wernick Jacobs, a Boca Raton resident who’s on the board of directors of the American Jewish Committee and is chairwoman of its Darfur Relief campaign, said so many issues were important this time around.

“Energy, immigration, church-state relations, terrorism — all are crucial,” she said. “From a Jewish perspective, Ron Klein will be very supportive of stem-cell research and pro-choice, and will enable immigrants to have the opportunities our ancestors had.”

One of those cheering loudest for Klein on Tuesday night was Danny Halpert of Pompano Beach.

“I think the country needs a huge change of direction,” said Halpert, 66, a retired Jewish schoolteacher from New York who volunteered for the

The candidates spent close to \$9 million in a campaign marked largely by negative advertising and voter dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq.

Klein campaign.

“I think it’s important to send a message to the president to get his act together, and to understand that he’s in deep trouble,” Halpert said. “Otherwise, if he doesn’t cooperate with Congress, the last two years of his presidency will be as disgraceful as the first six.”

Another New York transplant, Bruce Levy of Delray Beach, booed Shaw loudly and cheered when Klein’s name flashed across the TV monitor.

“I think the main thing here is stem-cell research,” said Levy, sporting a large “Proud To Be Democrat” pin on his shirt. “My father died from Lou Gehrig’s disease, and my mother-in-law died of Alzheimer’s. And I think it’s important that we have stem-cell research. Ron Klein will support that.”

Not all local Jewish candidates were as successful.

In Tampa, Jewish Democrat Phyllis Busansky, a former Hillsborough County commissioner, lost her bid to represent Florida’s 9th Congressional District. That race was won by Gus Bilirakis, son of the retiring Republican incumbent, Mike Bilirakis. ■



Larry Luxner

Ron Klein speaks to supporters in Boca Raton, Fla., following his narrow victory over the Republican incumbent, Clay Shaw, Nov. 7.

# Doctor in Ethiopia takes work home

By URIEL HEILMAN

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (JTA) — The door to Mother Teresa's Mission in Addis Ababa cracks open and a nun pokes her head out. When she sees the doctor, her face breaks into a broad smile and she swings the door wide open.

"Come in, come in," she beckons, grabbing Rick Hodes' hand.

Inside, the nun and the doctor — an Orthodox Jew originally from Long Island, N.Y. — quickly are overwhelmed by the clinic's masses of sick and dying.

Every three paces, Hodes is stopped by another patient. They come to him limping, clutching their bellies, hobbling on elephantine legs rendered virtually useless by cancerous growths or mysterious tumors.

Hodes, 53, is the only doctor most of these people will ever see. As the lone Western-trained physician to conduct regular rounds here, Hodes represents the best hope at this palliative-care clinic for Ethiopia's neglected legions of malaria patients, cancer victims, AIDS orphans and tuberculosis sufferers.

Without X-rays, lab tests or MRIs, Hodes does what he can, making diagnoses on the fly, recommending medication and moving from patient to patient with an urgency that bespeaks his mission.

Often he pays out of his own pocket to send the more hopeful cases for tests or treatment at private hospitals.

"It doesn't matter what religion he is; he is doing this for humanity," says Monica Thonen-Bartet, a Maltese volunteer at the mission. "This is the most beautiful man I have ever seen."

This is not Hodes' day job: As medical director for Ethiopia for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Hodes is responsible for the medical welfare of some 10,000 Ethiopians known as Falash Mura.

The Falash Mura live in shantytowns in the Ethiopian cities of Addis Ababa and Gondar while they wait for permission to emigrate to Israel, and the JDC provides them with medical care at a series of private clinics, where Hodes has implemented Western-style vaccination programs and preventative medical care, with great success.

Hodes' real passion, however, seems to be caring for the severely ill at Mother

Theresa's Mission. He does not get paid for this work.

The fortunate ones at the mission get drugs or treatment Hodes obtains by convincing colleagues, drug companies and hospitals in the United States to donate portions of their stocks — or their time — to some of Africa's poor.

"I see my role at that place as taking care of people who have no one else to take care of them," Hodes told JTA in a recent follow-up interview in Jerusalem.

The luckiest ones get taken to Hodes' house, which has become a foster home for some of the doctor's erstwhile patients. Ranging in age from 10 to their mid-20s, the boys are nursed back to health in his living room, in private hospitals in Ethiopia and, when possible, at medical facilities in the United States.

At last count, Hodes had more than a dozen youths living in his home, and he has placed three more at boarding schools in Ohio and a cancer clinic in Washington. Hodes picked most of them up at the mission, where they had diseases ranging from polio to bone cancer.

Many were abandoned by their families; some were orphans. Mostly healthy now, these boys no longer are Hodes' patients; they're his children. Hodes has paid for the boys' private schooling in Addis Ababa and has officially adopted five of them.

There are no girls; Hodes says having orphaned teenage girls and boys under the same roof would be a recipe for trouble.

Though he's a religiously observant Jew, Hodes does not impose his religion on the children. Most are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. There is also one Muslim and a Jew.

He does keep the household kosher, and on Shabbat eve, Hodes' kids don head coverings, join hands and sing Woody Guthrie's "If I had a Hammer," followed by the more traditional "Shalom Aleichem" prayer.

Hodes then recites kiddush, makes the blessing over bread and has the kids serve soup while they banter with him and an ever-changing assemblage of guests in a mixture of Amharic and English.

Hodes' kids unflinchingly lobby guests to

help find a wife for him. He dates when he can during visits to Israel and New York, but it's not easy finding a woman willing to marry this most unorthodox single father.

Educated at the University of Rochester Medical School and trained in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins, Hodes says he always was interested in becoming a pioneering doctor.

"When I was in junior high school, the stuff I would read was about doctors in weird places. These were my heroes," he told JTA.

Hodes spent time working in Alaska, Bangladesh, India and Sudan before going to Ethiopia in 1985 on a Fulbright professorship. He returned to Addis Ababa several years later for a six-week stint in 1990. Six weeks quickly turned into six months and, now, 16 years.

With all his medical experience in Africa, Dr. Rick — as he is affectionately called here — has developed some unusual areas of medical expertise. Well-versed in treating common African diseases like malaria, trachoma and tuberculosis, Hodes also has developed special expertise treating ailments rarely seen in Western countries, such as spinal tuberculosis, osteogenesis imperfecta and new cases of rheumatic heart disease. Lately he has been focusing on pediatric oncology, where Hodes believes western drugs can make a big difference saving lives.

One night not too long ago, Hodes returned home late and checked in with his newest patient, a 12-year-old with cancer named Temesgen who was getting chemotherapy on the living room sofa.

The youth vomited shortly after Hodes woke him up to administer his chemo, and the doctor peered into the soiled tin bowl to see whether he had regurgitated his pills. He peppered one of his older children with questions about what Temesgen had eaten that day. It was nearly midnight, but Hodes was still working.

Hodes says he doesn't see this as work: It's simply his life.

"I feel like my role on the planet has to do with caring about people nobody else cares about," Hodes said. "My work week is so long I sort of forget what it's like not to do this stuff."

## PROFILE

Hodes' house has become a foster home for some of his erstwhile patients.

## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

**'Borat' scores big at box office**

By TOM TUGEND

**L**OS ANGELES (JTA) — Judging from the early box-office returns and the howls of laughter coming from those watching, British Jewish comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's new "Borat" film scores a direct hit on the audience's funny bone.

Yet in all the glowing reviews of the film in major newspapers and magazines, only a couple of Jewish reporters got the supreme jest — that the Jew-bashing Borat frequently speaks in Hebrew.

Baron Cohen's Hebrew is excellent, thanks to an Israeli mother of Iranian descent, a year spent at Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra and his early membership in the Habonim Dror youth movement.

There are some real knee-slappers as Borat Sagdiyev, a faux Kazakhstani television reporter, makes his way across America in an ice cream truck. But the biggest laugh must be reserved for Baron Cohen and the folks at 20th Century Fox as they schlep the box office receipts to the bank.

"Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" earned an astonishing weekend gross of \$26.4 million.

In his travels across the United States, the wide-eyed, mustachioed Borat encounters, and generally makes fools of, a cross-section of unsuspecting natives. His hapless foils include humor and etiquette coaches, Washington politicians, feminists, gays, Pentecostal revivalists, drunken frat boys, blacks, rednecks at a rodeo, a car salesman and the owner of an antiques store.

But Borat's favorite targets are Jews, and he plays the true believer of Jewish conspiracy theories to the hilt. He refuses to fly from New York to Los Angeles, for instance, for fear the Jews will hijack his plane, "as they did on 9/11."

His Jew-phobia is so over the top, so wacky, that it's doubtful that even an assembly of ayatollahs would take it at face value.

There's a bit more shock value in some pretty gross scenes, including a highly graphic nude wrestling match between the hairy Borat and his obscenely fat producer. In another, Borat presents a bag of feces to a Southern society lady. ■

**New Encyclopaedia Judaica**

By PETER EPHROSS

NEW YORK (JTA) — The editors of the Encyclopaedia Judaica's new edition confronted a whole new world.

In the more than 30 years since the first edition was published, Jewish life has been revitalized in the former Communist world, Las Vegas and Atlanta have become fast-growing Jewish communities and women have taken a much more active role in Jewish life — and their contributions have been increasingly recognized.

"The original edition did not take into account that 50 percent of Jews are women," said Judith Baskin, the director of the Jewish studies program at the University of Oregon and the encyclopedia's assistant editor for women and gender.

The new edition, the encyclopedia's second, attempts to rectify that oversight with more than 300 new entries on Jewish women, including biographical entries on well-known figures such as former U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) and entries on lesser-known women like Beatrice Alexander — founder of the Madame Alexander doll collection — and Asenath Barzani, an Iraqi woman trained by her father in the 1600s as a Torah scholar.

These are among roughly 2,700 new entries in the new edition, to be published Dec. 8 by Macmillan Reference USA and Israel's Keter Publishing. The 22 volumes contain more than 21,000 entries on Jewish life.

A licensed, online version also will be available but the hope is that institutions, and some individuals, will be willing to fork over \$1,995 — the online version will cost a few hundred dollars more — to have everything they wanted to know about the Jews printed, and at their fingertips.

The comprehensiveness offered by the collection is not available in any one online source, says Jay Flynn, a publisher with Thomson Gale, which owns Macmillan Reference USA.

"Certainly you can go out and find a biography of Billy Crystal and you can read it. What we're really trying to deliver" is

accessibility and authority, Flynn says.

Plus, Jews buy books out of proportion to their numbers, says Michael Berenbaum, the encyclopedia's executive editor.

"It's the smell of leather and all that stuff," says Berenbaum, a Holocaust scholar known for his work in creating the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

It took a lot of effort to create that "stuff." Several years in the making, the encyclopedia relied on a worldwide team of scholars, including some 1,200 new contributors. Luckily, the field of Jewish studies has experienced

exponential growth in recent years.

"You're going to a man or woman who has devoted his or her entire life to a topic and you say, 'Give me 500 words,'" Berenbaum says.

Those scholars pored over all the entries — from Aachen to Zyrardow — and updated 11,000 of them.

Overall, the new edition has more entries

covering Jewish life in the Southern Hemisphere — Australia and South America, for example — and the sections on American Jewish life and the Holocaust have been strengthened.

The dilemmas Berenbaum and his team faced about how to cover certain topics are well, almost, talmudic. For example, how do you describe Jewish

life in New York City? Their answer: Give a portrait of several neighborhoods, such as the historic German Jewish neighborhood of Washington Heights and the contemporary, heavily Orthodox neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Borough Park.

"We gave it a lot of flavor, something that the first encyclopedia was much less interested in," Berenbaum says, though he's quick to praise the editors of the first encyclopedia for their prodigious efforts in the pre-Internet era.

Also adding contemporary flavor to the new edition are entries discussing baseball player Shawn Green and the recent popularization of Kabbalah.

Not surprisingly, Israel is the largest single "entry," with an entire volume devoted to the Jewish state. ■

ARTS &amp; CULTURE

**'The original edition did not take into account that 50 percent of Jews are women.'**

**Judith Baskin**  
Assistant editor  
Encyclopaedia Judaica

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### Bush resubmits Bolton

President Bush renominated John Bolton, a strong supporter of Israel, as ambassador to the United Nations.

Bush submitted the nomination to the Senate on Thursday, two days after Bolton's most serious opponent, Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-R.I.), lost his re-election bid.

The nomination would have to be considered during the Senate's lame duck session in December, when Chafee — a Republican who was strongly opposed to Israeli settlement policy and opposed Bolton because of the ambassador's closeness to Israel — is still in the Senate.

Additionally, the Senate rarely considers nominations during lame duck sessions. The opposition of Democrats and some Republicans killed Bolton's earlier chances, and Bush used his prerogative to make him a recess appointment, which expires Jan. 1.

### Mehlman to step down?

Ken Mehlman, the Jewish chairman of the Republican Party, reportedly is stepping down.

Mehlman, who has served in the post for two years, is exhausted after the midterm elections, according to media reports. Republicans lost both houses of Congress in this week's election, but Mehlman is not blamed, according to the reports.

Mehlman, the second Jewish chairman of the GOP, focused on outreach to minorities that have traditionally favored Democrats, including Jews, blacks and Hispanics.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Olmert blames technical failure in Gaza barrage

An Israeli artillery barrage that killed 18 Palestinian civilians was misaimed because of a technical failure, Ehud Olmert said. "It was a technical failure of the Israeli artillery.

I checked it, and I verified it," the prime minister said Thursday at an economic conference in Tel Aviv, in what was a de facto announcement of the army's investigation of the incident in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun.

Olmert said he was "very distressed" by Wednesday's carnage, but said that such accidents could happen again given Israel's need to combat Palestinian terrorists in Gaza.

### Hamas rocket chief killed

The Israeli air force killed the commander of Hamas' rocket units in the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian fugitive, long on Israel's wanted list, died in a missile strike on his car in Gaza City on Wednesday night. Another Hamas member who was in the vehicle also died.

Security sources said the operation aimed to curb Hamas' efforts to expand the range and lethality of its homemade Kassam rockets, hundreds of which have been fired into the Jewish state.

### Gay rally, not parade, gets go-ahead

Organizers of a planned gay parade in Jerusalem decided to hold a rally instead, in a compromise aimed at preventing violent confrontations with religious protesters.

The decision was made Thursday during a High Court of Justice discussion of petitions, lodged by fervently Orthodox activists, to cancel the event outright.

Rather than march through Jerusalem in Friday's event, gay activists will instead hold a four-hour rally in a sports stadium on the city's western outskirts, well away from religious neighborhoods. In

return, fervently Orthodox leaders have called on their followers to desist from violent protests against the event.

The compromise was reached after police said that because of alerts of impending Palestinian terrorist attacks they might not have the personnel necessary to protect the gay activists from harassment by fervently Orthodox protesters.

### Olmert calls for Abbas talks

Ehud Olmert said he would meet Mahmoud Abbas "any time, any place." The Israeli prime minister said in a Tel Aviv speech Thursday that the Palestinian Authority president would be surprised "how far we are prepared to go.

I can offer him a lot." Olmert has spoken previously of his willingness to meet Abbas, but the talks have been held up given the latter's demands that Israel release Palestinian prisoners en masse as a goodwill gesture.

### Report: Katsav indictment imminent

Israeli state prosecutors are reportedly preparing to charge President Moshe Katsav this month with sex crimes.

Yediot Achronot reported Thursday that Israel's Justice Ministry is drafting an indictment against Katsav, who has been accused of raping and molesting several former female employees.

He denies wrongdoing. According to the report, the indictment is to be served by Nov. 27, the date set for a High Court of Justice ruling on whether Katsav should suspend himself in light of the scandal.

### France: We almost fired on Israeli planes

France said its peacekeepers in southern Lebanon recently came close to firing on Israeli warplanes.

French Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie disclosed the incident in a briefing Wednesday to the Parliament in Paris. According to Alliot-Marie, a French contingent with the UNIFIL peacekeepers was "moments away" from firing at Israeli warplanes patrolling Lebanese skies. Israeli media said the incident took place late last month when the air force overflew a Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut.

### No airlift for Indian Jews

A planned airlift of Indian Jews to Israel was canceled out of concern that diplomatic relations between India and Israel could be harmed.

A group of 218 members of the Bnei Menashe, a community from northeastern India that claims descent from the tribe of Menashe, will still be immigrating to Israel but in smaller, staggered groups, immigration officials told JTA.

The officials said the Indian government had been wary of a major media focus on the previously scheduled airlift for Nov. 21.

## WORLD

### Munich shul opening marks Kristallnacht

A Munich synagogue was inaugurated on the 68th anniversary of Kristallnacht. President Horst Koehler, Bavarian Governor Edmund Stoiber and Rabbi Israel Singer from the World Jewish Congress attended the opening of the synagogue, built a few blocks from the site of one torn down on Adolf Hitler's orders in 1938.

The ceremony coincided with the anniversary of "the night of broken glass," when Nazis looted and burned synagogues as well as Jewish-owned stores and houses in Germany and Austria.

The building and adjoining community center, which will open in spring, cost \$73 million, supplied by the Jewish community and Bavarian government.