

the Jewish Observer

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Building Jerusalem, one Lego at a time



Akiva students build the Jaffa gate with coaching from Stephen Schwartz, an architect and creator of the Building Blocks workshops. Photos: Kathy Carlson



David Hanchrow (from top left, clockwise), Leah Hanchrow and Sydney Fobare help pack away some of the 50,000 or so Lego pieces used to build a model of the Old City of Jerusalem at Congregation Micah. The Legos Building Blocks workshop came to Congregation Micah and Akiva School through a grant from the Jewish Federation of Nashville under the Best Jewish Nashville priority-setting program.

NEWS ANALYSIS

In U.N. speeches, Abbas, Netanyahu trade charges of 'ethnic cleansing'

By Ron Kampeas
and Uriel Heilman

NEW YORK (JTA) — Mahmoud Abbas outlined a vision for an independent Palestine that hewed to the two-state formula but also revived rhetoric that hearkened back to an era of Palestinian belligerence.

Shortly after concluding his speech to the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 23, the Palestinian Authority president was followed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who laid out a very different vision of the two-state solution that underscored the depth of the gulf between the two leaders.

While Netanyahu spoke of the need for Israel to maintain a "long-term Israeli military presence in the West Bank," Abbas argued that the Palestinians had already made their compromises.

"We agree to establish the state of Palestine on only 22 percent of historical Palestine on all of the territories of Palestine occupied by Israel in 1967," Abbas said. He added, "Our efforts are not aimed at isolating Israel or delegitimizing it, we only aim to delegitimize the settlement activity."

Abbas' emphatic endorsement of two states, and his repeated calls for peaceful support from Palestinians

who were watching him were signals that he was still committed to the two-state solution. "I do not believe anyone of conscience can reject our application for full membership in the United Nations and our admission as a member state," he said.

But Abbas also had harsh rhetoric for the Israelis, accusing Israel of "ethnic cleansing," targeting Palestinians for assassination, strengthening its

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Federation's 75th Annual Meeting set for Oct. 6

Keep the evening of Thurs., Oct. 6, open so you can learn what Jewish Nashville has been doing in recent months and where we're going in the future. That's the date for the Jewish Federation of Nashville's 75th Annual Meeting, set for 7 p.m. at the Gordon Jewish Community Center.

Attendees will receive an update on the Federation's new initiatives, created as a result of the Best Jewish Nashville priority-setting project, said outgoing Interim Executive Director Leon Tonelson. Initiatives include the recent Building Blocks event at Congregation Micah and Akiva School, which brought together more than 200 students who used

Legos to build the Old City of Jerusalem and other sites of Jewish interest.

Mark Freedman, the Federation's new executive director, will speak; Federation officers and board members will be elected; and community members will speak on visiting Israel and helping Jews in Moldova through new Federation programs. For information on the meeting, contact Events Coordinator Barbara Schwarcz at 354-1630 or barbara@jewishnashville.org.

Correction: In the Sept. 9 issue of the *Observer* and in the postcard sent to the community about the Annual Meeting, the titles for Federation Board officer nominees Adam Landa and Jan Liff were switched. Liff is nominated for secretary and Landa for treasurer. □

To our readers:

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Summer '12 Israel mission aims to engage all age groups

By Kathy Carlson

Savor the shuk, feel the heartbeat of kabbalah, see lush mountains and stark desert. All that and more await participants in next summer's community mission to Israel sponsored and organized by the Jewish Federation of Nashville.

This multigenerational program is set for June 3-13, 2012, and welcomes families, couples, singles and kids. The exact itinerary can include separate tracks for children, organizers said, and will be tailored to the interests of those who decide to participate.

"I've been to Israel multiple times and the itinerary is great," said Bobbie Limor, mission chair. "You get a taste of

the really important sites and highlights that everybody would want to experience," along with new exciting venues never before included in a Jewish Federation mission."

A brief informational meeting will be held at the Gordon Jewish Community Center on Sun., Oct. 30, at 10:30 a.m. for anyone who wants to know more about the trip. A brochure outlining the mission is included in this issue of The Observer.

"Israel is a vibrant place in the summer months," said Federation Campaign Director Naomi Limor Sedek. "By traveling to Israel as a community we show our support for Israel."

"Taking your family to Israel is an investment in the future," she continued, "but this is a big investment in the

future for a very reasonable price."

The goal is to fill a bus – meaning to have about 50 people on the trip – to keep the land-only fees to a minimum. To ensure flexibility, participants are free to make their own arrangements to fly to Tel Aviv, where the mission begins.

Activities will include visiting Tel Aviv's cafes, shopping in the Nachalat Binyamin Market, spending time at Independence Hall and touring Jaffa. Participants will head north to Caesarea, the Golan Heights and Tzfat before spending several days in Jerusalem, including Shabbat. Participants can explore the Old City, see the Kotel tunnels, taste the delicious offerings of the Mahane Yehuda shuk, become archeologists in a Dig for a Day program.

No trip to Israel is complete with-

out a visit to the world-renowned Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum, Masada, Ein Gedi and the Dead Sea. B'nai mitzvah events may be included, depending on who decides to participate, Sedek said.

"With a Federation mission, you get to see up front who and what in Israel is affected by our support," said Sandy Averbuch, the Federation's 2012 Annual Campaign chair.

This community mission is "appropriate for first-timers and for repeat visitors who want to take their family," Averbuch said. "It's a great way to introduce your family to Israel with you and to share that experience as a family."

For more information, attend the Oct. 30 meeting or contact Bobbie Limor at bobbie@jfed.org. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

In U.N. speeches, Abbas, Netanyahu trade charges of 'ethnic cleansing'

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"racist annexation wall" and carrying out excavations that, he alleged, threaten Islamic holy places.

Abbas repeatedly invoked 63 years of "Nakba," or catastrophe, and repeated his commitment to unity with Hamas, a terrorist group committed to Israel's destruction. He made reference to Muslim and Christian ties to the holy land — the site of Jesus' birth and where Muslims believed Muhammad ascended to the heavens — but omitted any reference to Jewish claims.

For his part, Netanyahu accused the Palestinians of racism and ethnic cleansing in their call for a state with no Jewish

settlers — "Judenrein," in Netanyahu's words, using the Nazi-era term.

"That's ethnic cleansing," he said.

He accused the Palestinians of wanting statehood but not peace. "The truth is, so far the Palestinians have refused to negotiate," he said. "The truth is the Palestinians want a state without peace."

Abbas called for a timeline for peace negotiations culminating in an agreement — but did not set one out himself. That, and his commitment to prior agreements with Israel, seemed to be aimed at assuaging Israeli and U.S. concerns that he would follow up the application with unilateral actions. Israel and the United States have emphatically

opposed the Palestinians' statehood recognition bid at the U.N.

But if Abbas' bottom line was aimed at pushing back against charges that he was acting unilaterally, his rhetoric was bound to raise hackles — and seemingly did, given the walkouts by at least two members of the Israeli delegations, Cabinet ministers Avigdor Lieberman and Yuli Edelstein, and the refusal to applaud by Susan Rice, the U.S. envoy.

After the speech, Rice tweeted: "When the speeches end today, we must all recognize that the only way to create a state is through direct negotiations. No shortcuts."

Abbas also invoked, to vigorous applause, his predecessor Yasser Arafat's 1974 appearance before the same body. He cited Arafat's raising of an olive branch on that occasion, saying it was still held out — but did not mention the gun Arafat wore, against U.N. regulations and at his insistence. That pistol disgusted the United States and Israel at the time, and for years helped define Arafat in the West not as a man of peace, but as a blood-seeking grandstander.

Netanyahu called on Mahmoud

Abbas to launch talks immediately in New York and said he was ready to "move ahead" with U.S.-backed parameters. "I extend my hand, the hand of Israel in peace — I hope you will grasp that," Netanyahu said. "If we genuinely want peace, let us meet in this building."

Abbas had reiterated in his speech his precondition that Israel freeze all settlement building.

It was the first time Netanyahu publicly suggested that he was ready to negotiate on the basis of parameters President Obama laid out in a speech in May; at the time, Netanyahu had objected vigorously to Obama's call for negotiations based in 1967 lines, with mutually agreed land swaps.

"There were things in the ideas" Obama proposed "about borders that I didn't like, there were things about the Jewish state that I'm sure the Palestinians didn't like," Netanyahu said. "For all my reservations, I was willing to move ahead."

Netanyahu reportedly has in recent weeks privately told American interlocutors he is willing to work with Obama's parameters. □

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Every community event is listed
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CRC and Catholic Charities launch Food Stamp Challenge

The economy is in dismal shape. The number of unemployed is rising. More people are sinking into poverty. And more families are suffering from hunger and applying to the Federal government's SNAP program that provides Food Stamps.

As a meaningful way to understand hunger in America, the Jewish Federation's Community Relations

Committee (CRC) and Catholic Charities are asking Nashvillians to join the Food Stamp Challenge to put themselves in the shoes of those living on food stamp allotments.

For one week, from Mon., Oct. 24, to Sun., Oct. 30, participants will pledge to live on a weekly food budget of \$31.50, or \$4.50 a day. It doesn't sound like much — and it isn't.

CRC Director Judy Saks, who took the challenge four years ago with more

than 50 others from a broad spectrum of Nashvillians, said the main thing that resonated with all participants was the boring choice of food available within the budget. "My diet that week consisted of mostly carbohydrates," she said. "Lots of pasta, rice and canned vegetables. Fresh produce just costs too much and meat found on sale can be interspersed sparingly."

The Metro Human Relations Commission has signed on as a partner and other local organizations and faith

groups will be joining the effort urging their members to participate.

The Food Stamp Challenge is part of a national program, Fighting Poverty with Faith, sponsored by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), Catholic Charities and the National Council of Churches, to help people understand one aspect of poverty in America, today.

Anyone who would like to participate can sign up by sending an email to Judy Saks at judy@jewishnashville.org. Please put the words "Food Stamp Challenge" in the subject line. Those who sign up will receive additional information about the challenge, including the guidelines. Anyone who can't do a full week on the challenge is urged to sign up for as many days as possible.

Help spread the word among your Jewish and non-Jewish friends and colleagues in Nashville.

For additional information or questions, call Saks at 354-1637. □

Felson to address BDS movement in keynote at Oct. 30 Israel workshop

On Sun., Oct. 30, the Jewish community is invited to participate in an afternoon series of workshops as part of the Federation's Community Relations Committee (CRC) series, "Increase Your Israel IQ: From Argument to Advocacy."

Ethan Felson, vice president of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), will give the keynote address on BDS, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement that is aimed at delegitimizing Israel. He was a key negotiator with the Presbyterian Church USA two years ago when the organization attempted to divest from certain companies doing business with Israel. His efforts helped defeat the measure. However, it is slated to be on the church's general assembly agenda, again, in July 2012.

Felson will explain BDS and other assaults on Israel's legitimacy and discuss strategies that should be implemented to most effectively address key constituencies in the general community.

The JCPA is the public affairs arm of the organized American Jewish community, representing 14 national Jewish agencies and 125 local Jewish Community Relations Councils, including the Nashville CRC.

Felson will also lead a breakout session on "How to Talk about Israel (by Talking about Israel)." Another session will feature Nashville's Israeli shlicha Inbar Shaked who is helping to strengthen ties between our community and Israel over the next year. Julie Bernstein, associate managing director of the Israel Action Network (IAN), will also facilitate a session. The IAN is a joint project of the Jewish Federations of North America and the JCPA.

An added attraction is a special breakout session for Jewish teens being planned by the congregational educators.

The event, to be held at the Gordon Jewish Community Center, begins at 1:30 and will end by 4:30. Refreshments will be provided.

The program is made possible by a grant to the CRC from the Jewish

Federation's New Initiatives Fund. Shaked is in Nashville through the efforts of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Nashville Federation's Local Global Initiative of its Best Jewish Nashville project.

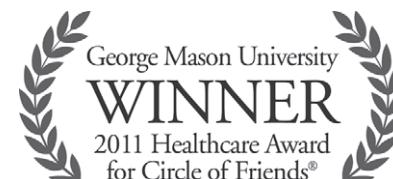
Look for more information about the workshops in the coming weeks. Contact Judy Saks, CRC director, at 354-1637 or judy@jewishnashville with any questions. □



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Taking seven steps to 'Sukkot happiness'

By Dasee Berkowitz

But are you happy? No, this isn't your mother wanting another update on your life. It's not Dr. Phil's provocative question through your TV/computer screen as you sit (safely) on your couch. And it isn't someone reading you the Declaration of Independence wondering if you have really pursued this inalienable right enough.

It's the holiday of Sukkot speaking.

The Rabbis nicknamed the harvest festival "Zman Simchateinu," the "time of our happiness." How, exactly, does a holiday that invites us to eat all of our meals in a small hut al fresco — often in the chilly, windy days of late fall — have to do with being happy?

"Sukkot happy" is a bit different from the kind of happy that our post-modern culture espouses. A quick search on Amazon.com reveals scores of books that aim to help readers embody this elusive ideal. The Buddhist variety extols striving for inner peace. Positive psychologists understand attaining happiness as a key component to mental health. And happiness in the self-help movement embraces happiness "plans" like Seven Steps to Being Happy.

The happiness that Sukkot encourages can be found when one peruses the pages of a book buried deep within the Amazon website. It is Ecclesiastes, which we read during Sukkot. The festival falls this year on the evening of Oct. 12.

Ecclesiastes wouldn't strike you as a get-happy-quick piece of literature. It is pessimistic and cynical — just count the number of times the word "vanity" is used. Nor is it the most popular book in the Bible. In fact, the Talmud relates that the Rabbis wanted to hide the work



in part because of how some statements contradict the Torah itself.

It does, however, contain deep wisdom about what gets in the way of true happiness. Ecclesiastes offers us perspective and manages our expectations. To the question "Am I rich enough?" Ecclesiastes answers, "A lover of money never has his fill of money, nor a lover of wealth his fill of income, that too is futile. As his substance increases, so do those who consume it. This also is vanity."

To the question "Am I smart/wise enough?" it comments, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh." And to the issue "Am I popular enough?" Ecclesiastes responds, "A good name is better than precious oil."

The book of Ecclesiastes is keenly aware that death will come in the end for all mortals, so it trumpets robust relationships, saying that "Enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of life that have been granted to you under the sun ... For that alone is what you can get out of life."

Ecclesiastes ends by offering an even greater perspective. What's most important is to "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

While all pursuits under the sun might be short-lived, the one thing that is enduring, according to Ecclesiastes, is that which exists above the sun. The book speaks about cultivating a relationship with God, but more generally it is the cultivation of relationships that lie

beyond the self, which endures and leads to happiness.

According to Ecclesiastes, being in service to God — and interpreted more broadly, being of service to others — might be a key to what leads us to joy.

I think to myself, when am I really happy? While I do love kicking back on the beach and reading a good book, I find this kind of activity relaxing — but I'm not sure it leads to deep happiness. A sense of joy surfaces when I reflect on ways that my life is in service to others, whether it is by nursing my child, teaching others, or volunteering my time and skills to an organization in the community.

For this Sukkot, consider what makes you happy. Try out this plan: Seven Steps to True Happiness: Sukkot Style.

* Enjoy the harvest. Wave the lulav and etrog (especially fun to do with kids!), symbols of the fall harvest. Learn about what produce is harvested in your area and even go to a farm stand or a farm. Speak to the farmers and ask them about when they are the most "happy" in the work they do.

thing we focus on greatly during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur — make time to share a meal together with a friend you haven't seen in awhile or from whom you have grown distant.

* Enjoy the harvest. Wave the lulav and etrog (especially fun to do with kids!), symbols of the fall harvest. Learn about what produce is harvested in your area and even go to a farm stand or a farm. Speak to the farmers and ask them about when they are the most "happy" in the work they do.

* Read the book of Ecclesiastes. Pick one or two phrases that strike you and consider how they might relate to your own life.

* Learn about homelessness in your community. While a sukkah is a makeshift dwelling place that will last seven days for us, there are others in our community, without homes, who live outdoors in makeshift dwellings year round.

* Help others. Think about a way that you can serve one person inside your intimate circle and one person outside of it, including a stranger.

The holiday of Sukkot falls immediately after the long process of introspection we engage in during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We move from the conceptual world of fasting and prayer to the practical one of harvested fruits and sukkah building. We have time to think about how to live a life of service — to God, Torah, friends, family and our communities).

If there is a "season set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven," then let this season be one of genuine rejoicing. □ — JTA

Dinner, anyone? Make plans now for the next Shabbat potlucks

By Kathy Carlson

For a great Friday night, take a few tiki torches, some tasty pasta dishes, and add people. Voila — you've got Shabbat dinner and, before you know it, new friends. And Federation is looking for ways to make sure anyone who wants to participate — that means all ages, married, single, divorced, with or without kids — can join others to welcome Shabbat with a casual, potluck meal at someone's home.

"Definitely, a lot of people got to meet new people," said Claire Bernstein, director of youth and camp at the Gordon Jewish Community Center. She hosted a Shabbat potluck dinner in her backyard (hence the tiki torches for light) on Sept. 16, one of two Shabbat dinners organized for that Friday through the Jewish Federation of Nashville.

While Federation's Young Adult Division (YAD) organized these dinners for people in their 20s through early 40s, plans are in the works to create in-home Shabbat dinner events for those in other age groups.

"With the resounding success of the YAD Potluck Shabbat model, we received inquiries from the older-than-40 set who were interested in hosting their own similar Shabbat experiences," said Federation Campaign Director Naomi Limor Sedek.

Anyone interested in participating in or hosting one of these Shabbat potluck dinners should contact Federation Events Coordinator Barbara Schwarcz, barbara@jewishnashville.org or 354-1630. Those interested in participating in or hosting a YAD potluck should contact Community Engagement Associate Joel Abramson, joel@jewishnashville.org.

The next potluck is set for Fri., Dec. 2. Organizers emphasize that the age brackets for the dinners are very flexible, and they encourage community members to join the group in which they will feel most comfortable.

Bernstein encourages people to consider hosting a dinner. "It's really, really fun," she said. She got the word out to friends and asked people to bring specific dishes.

"The dinner is a really great way to meet people if you've just moved here," she said. When she arrived in Nashville about a year ago, she attended a potluck dinner. "I felt like I got mixed in with people a lot better" than at other events geared toward singles, she said. And as a host, she got to meet people she hadn't met before.

"Not all communities have something that feels so welcoming," Bernstein said of the dinners. She said she has lived in 10 communities as a young adult and in some, it has been hard to get to know people. "Nashville is the complete polar opposite of that," she said. "I feel at home." □

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Presbyterians to reconsider issue of divestment from companies in Israel

By Dan Klein

NEW YORK (JTA) — A decision by a group within the Presbyterian Church USA to reintroduce a resolution calling for divestment from companies doing business with Israel is reopening a long-running controversy over the church's positions on Israel.

The church's Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment released a report Sept. 9 arguing that the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church divest from Motorola, Hewlett-Packard and Caterpillar.

"The General Assembly asked us to do everything we could to bring about change through dialogue," said committee chair the Rev. Brian Ellison, a pastor from Kansas City, Mo., in a statement. "Today we are sadly reporting that these efforts have not produced any substantive change in company policies or practices, and that there is little reason for hope they will do so in the future. According to the Assembly's prior directives and the church's ordinary engagement process, we have little choice but to recommend divestment."

The report already has sparked intense debate within the church and is likely to make more waves when it is introduced at the next biennial general assembly in July.

"There will be vigorous debate on this," Susan Andrews, the general presbyter of the Hudson Valley, in New York, told JTA. "The church has been split on this for years."

The call for divestment also has provoked angry reaction from some Jewish groups. The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League issued statements condemning the recommendation.

"This renewed effort by some within the Presbyterian Church to penalize Israel does not advance peace," said Rabbi Noam Marans, AJC's director of intergroup and interreligious relations. "On the contrary, threatening divestment undermines those who are truly committed to Israeli-Palestinian peace."

An organization called Presbyterians for Middle East Peace released a statement condemning the report's authors as giving a "friendly ear" to "a small group of activists within the Presbyterian Church that has relentlessly sought to punish Israel" and want "to find one party at fault in a conflict where all parties have engaged in positive or negative actions."

Pastor John Wimberly of the Western Presbyterian Church and a co-convenor of Presbyterians for Middle East Peace told JTA that the measure was unlikely to be adopted. He cited polls that show a gap between "specialized clergy" — clergy without pulpits — and other groups within the church, with the former more likely to support Israeli withdrawal from West Bank and eastern Jerusalem and less likely to support strong U.S.-Israel ties and relations between Jews and Presbyterians.

See what's happening in the community. Go to www.jewishnashville.org

In a statement, Presbyterians for Middle East Peace promised to fight the report from being adopted.

"The general assembly would have to go against the opinion of the majority of Presbyterians," Wimberly said. "It will be a struggle; they are determined although a very small group. We just have to make sure this small group can't do something very big."

In 2006, the church replaced a 2004 policy that called for "phased selective divestment" from multinational corporations operating in Israel with one that called for investment in Israel, the Gaza Strip, eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank "in only peaceful pursuits." In 2008, the church's general assembly instructed Presbyterians to avoid over-identifying with one side on the Israel-Palestine conflict. □

Ring in the New Year at Merchants party

It's not too late to get on board to party like it's 5772 at the second annual Rosh Hashanah New Year's Bash at Merchants Restaurant at 401 Broadway, downtown Nashville. It's the premier New Year's event for young professionals ages 22-40 and is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Nashville's Young Adults Division.

The event is set for Sun., Oct. 1 from 9:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Buy your advance tickets online at jewishnashville.org; it costs more at the door. Proceeds benefit the Birmingham Tornado Victims Fund. For more information email Joel Abramson, Federation community engagement associate, joel@jewishnashville.org. □



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Kosher BBQ competition is a hit among Jews — and some Muslims, too

By Martin Rosenberg

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (JTA) — If there's anything that can bring the Jews of Tennessee together, it would be barbecue.

This month, the 23rd annual Kosher BBQ Contest and Festival drew thousands of Jews from Tennessee and around the country.

It attracted a group of Muslims, too. Turns out they're not bad at cooking kosher brisket: The Memphis Islamic Center's team, the "Halal Smokers," won a third-place award for their brisket entry.

The commingling of Jews and Muslims among tables heaped with baked beans, hamburgers and ribs provided a counterpoint to anti-Muslim protests in Murfreesboro, Tenn., and death threats aimed recently at mosques elsewhere in this state.

"This is what America is all about," Adam Itayem, who manned the Halal Smokers' booth, said during the event. Itayem is also the owner of Tom's Bar-B-Q in Memphis.

"People from all over the community feel comfortable coming year after year," observed Rabbi Joel Finkelstein, the rabbi of Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth, the Orthodox synagogue that organizes the annual event and holds it in its parking lot.

Every May, this Mississippi River city hosts the famed World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest, held each year on a Saturday. That contest has an overwhelmingly porcine character.

The synagogue cooked up its contest more than two decades ago so that its Shabbat- and kosher-observant members could get in on the barbecue action.

"It is the only event I know that brings the entire Jewish community together," said Steve Kaplan, a longtime organizer of the event. He estimated that 3,000 people in all came to the festival.

The kosher barbecue contest has become so popular that attendees from far and wide are trying to copy the Memphis model.

Longtime participant Bruce Downs of Birmingham, Ala., said he has helped launch a similar kosher competition back home, sponsored in part by the Piggly Wiggly supermarket chain, whose local branch sells kosher meat.

Warren Binderman, an accountant whose "Grillin Tefillin" teams had baked beans bubbling on the grill in Memphis, said he's trying to start a similar contest in Atlanta.

Marvin Rembo, of Jericho, N.Y., a chemical wholesaler, was sent by his synagogue to scout out the Memphis competition. His mission, Rembo said, is to launch a Long Island-wide kosher barbecue competition next June that will be sanctioned by Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth. The winner will get to compete in Memphis — which can make the uncontested claim, at least for now, of hosting what has quickly evolved into North America's world series of kosher grilling.

"Eisenhower invaded Europe with less preparation than these guys did to get ready," Rembo said of the organizers of the Memphis barbecue.

For the crowds, Sunday was an opportunity not just to tantalize the taste buds, but also to pet goats, shoot some hoops and meet up with friends from around town. Some 45 teams participated in the cooking contest, with each paying

a \$125 entrance fee in addition to buying all the kosher meat and ingredients they needed. With smoke from the grills hovering over the parking lot, the scene had the air of a Civil War reenactment.

Stuart Lazarov, an anesthesiologist and past president of Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth, said sponsors of the event this year included a medical center, a property-management firm, a bank, a casino, law firms and a frozen yogurt store. In a humorous nod, a group of gastrointestinal specialists sponsored a pickle-eating contest.

The grand prize winners, and victors of the ribs competition, were the "Pickering Potchkers." The best brisket went to "Grills Gone Wild." The baked beans of the "Cow Towers" took first place in the beans category.

Continued on page 8

Photos From A Life-Changing Summer: Israel and Moldova



Join the young adults who were selected for Federation's Young Adult Mission Trips for reception at the opening of the photo exhibit documenting their travels to Israel and Beltsy, Moldova this past summer. The opening reception will be Wed., Oct. 5, from 7 – 9 p.m. at the GJCC. Wine, cheese and light refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact joel@jewishnashville.org.

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OF NASHVILLE AND MIDDLE TENNESSEE

WES hosts 14th Annual Read Hebrew America and Canada

Throughout the month of October and November 2011, members of Nashville's Jewish community will gather at West End Synagogue to participate in the only continent-wide campaign aimed at teaching North American Jews to read the Hebrew language. Conceived and orchestrated by the National Jewish Outreach Program (NJOP) in 1998, Read

Hebrew America and Canada is expected to reach 12,000 affiliated and unaffiliated Jews in the United States and Canada this year.

Opening its doors to all members of Nashville's Jewish community, West End Synagogue will be one of 600 Jewish institutions across the continent to host the event. Led by Miriam Halachmi and Ruthi Sacks, the five-week Hebrew Reading Crash Course will focus on teaching the Hebrew alphabet and basic

reading skills to Jews with little or no background in Hebrew. Classes will meet for five consecutive Sundays from 9:30 – 11 a.m. at the synagogue beginning on Oct. 23.

While no surveys or studies specifically report on the state of Hebrew literacy in North America, experts agree that, at an absolute minimum, 80 percent of all North American Jews do not know how to read Hebrew.

An essential component to the practice of Judaism, Hebrew is the primary language in which virtually all Jewish prayer books, holiday services,

and significant religious texts are written and read.

Designed for Jews with little or no background in Hebrew, the crash course program concentrates on teaching the Hebrew alphabet and basic reading skills. Follow-up programs are available to those who are interested in further advancing their Hebrew reading and comprehension skills.

For more information about Read Hebrew American and Canada or to register for classes, call West End Synagogue at 615/269-4592, ext. 11 or NJOP at 800-44-HEBRE(W). □

Buy Israel!



Throughout the United States and in many parts of the world, there is a concerted effort to delegitimize the State of Israel. One of the tactics being used is a boycott of Israeli products. This action has been seen in several locations in our country.

In an effort to counter that boycott and support Israel, many Jewish communities and organizations have urged Americans to buy Israeli products. The Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and The Observer want to make it easier for Nashvillians to find Israeli-made goods by publishing a list of the products and where to find them, locally.

We need your help. If you know of available products and the stores that carry them, email that information to judy@jewishnashville.org. Food, clothing, jewelry, wine, etc., whatever you have found, please share it with our community.

See the updated list, below and send your additions to judy@jewishnashville.org or call 354-1637.

Israeli silver jewelry - area TJMaxx stores
Geffen Pickles - Belle Meade Kroger
Sabra Hummus and dips - area grocery stores and Costco

Eden Feta Cheese - Trader Joe's
Dorot frozen garlic and herbs -
Trader Joe's
Telma products - Publix
Moroccan Hair Oil treatment -
Cosmetics Market
Sweet Clementines (oranges) -
Costco
Cedars Halva - Whole Foods
refrigerated section
Streit's Quinoa and Israeli
Couscous - Harris Teeter
Jaffa Oranges - Publix
Muscatine wine by Golan Wineries -
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Foods
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Naot shoes and sandals - Cute and
Comfy Shoes, Green Hills

More than 10,000 students travel to Israel on Birthright in summer

Nearly 20,000 young adults participated in the Taglit-Birthright Israel trip this summer, among them 10,526 registered students from over 712 colleges and universities across North America.

Students hailed from schools ranging from large universities with substantial Jewish populations to small colleges - representing approximately 20 percent of all colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

"Taglit-Birthright Israel is performing an amazing service for both the State of Israel and the Jewish people," said Israel's Ambassador to the US Michael Oren. "The opportunity to experience firsthand the energy, beauty, and spirit of Israel is one which will stay forever with all the participants, and dispel the anti-Israel myths they may encounter on college campuses."

"With Israel's reputation very much in jeopardy on many college campuses, the fact that so many students from so many schools were in Israel this summer - and are able relate from their personal experience of being there - will hopefully change the climate on North American college campuses," said Taglit-Birthright Israel International

CEO Gidi Mark.

Among student participants, 3,500 traveled together with students from their schools, on 89 campus-based buses. Some of these campus buses were affiliated with or sponsored by local Jewish Federations, donors and foundations, in an effort to increase the number of participants from their respective communities. Their efforts produced a record number of community trips, with 65 buses representing more than 30 communities.

This summer more than 40,000 Jewish young adults in North America had applied for nearly 15,000 summer trip spots, a record number of North American applicants, filling available openings in the shortest registration period ever.

By the year 2013, Taglit-Birthright Israel would like to send 51,000 young Jewish adults annually on the free, 10-day educational trip. This would mean that, at this participation rate, within a decade one in every two Jewish young adults worldwide would participate in a Taglit-Birthright Israel trip.

Registration for the Taglit-Birthright Israel winter trips began on Sept. 13 for young adults who have applied in the past and on Sept. 14 for new applicants. □

Kosher BBQ competition is a hit among Jews

Continued from page 7

The Memphis Islamic Center's

booth drew a lot of curious Jews who chatted with the cooks about the similarities and differences of the laws governing halal and kosher meat.

Aside from meat, the main draw of the day was a basketball tournament in which 40 teams competed for trophies in three-on-three competition. The power forward for the University of Memphis men's basketball team, Tariq Black, chatted with fans of his team.

Of the food, Black said, "They have the best salami I have ever tasted." □

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Akiva School announces Bar Mitzvah celebration

As the month of September draws to a close and the first month of school is completed, the hallways at Akiva are buzzing with activity and the sounds of children learning and having fun. Each Friday in assembly, one of the teachers gives a *D'var Torah* about the weekly *parashah*. As we near the end of *D'varim*, (Deuteronomy), *parashat Ki Tavo* presents some interesting parallels with our school.

In *Ki Tavo*, the Israelites have wandered in the desert for the last 40 years and they are about to enter the land of Israel. Moses talks to them about what they will need to do once they enter the land. He tells them that upon entering the land, they need to settle and cultivate it. When they harvest from it they should show their gratitude by bringing their *bikkurim* (first fruits) as an offering to G-d. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d's chosen people, and that they, in turn, have chosen G-d. And the *parasha* concludes with Moses telling the people that only today, 40 years after

their birth as a people, have they attained "a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear."

So what does this *parasha* have to do with Akiva? Over 50 years ago, the founders of Akiva together with Rabbi and Mrs. Posner (z'l) decided that Nashville needed a Jewish school to educate our children. They planted the first seeds of Akiva's journey. It has taken a long time to become the school we are today and over the years there have been many changes, but the foundation was there.

In 1998, the board of Akiva determined that it was the right time to cultivate the school in a new way, just like the Israelites did when they entered the land of Israel and in October of that year, they broke ground and the seeds they planted on that day, eventually grew into the Akiva School of today. Over the last 13 years, the school has grown and flourished. In Judaism, 13 is an important life milestone, commemorated by becoming a Bar Mitzvah. A Bar Mitzvah marks the change from a child to an adult and with that change comes responsibility.

On Aug. 21, 2011, a reception was

held at the school to honor the past presidents as well as the officers who served during the building of the school and the individuals who served on the building committee. At that reception, Akiva announced the celebration of this special year in the school's growth and history.

Throughout the year there will be several events as part of the "Look At Us Now" celebration. Each event is designed to allow as much participation from the Akiva and the Nashville Jewish community as possible and will include opportunities to toast, honor and celebrate Akiva. The 2012 calendar ad book will also be themed, "Look At Us Now," and will include new opportunities to honor alumni.

It's going to be a very special year for

BBYO teens explore and deepen Judaism at Regional Kallah

By Devo Hanai

Kallah 2011 was an experience to remember. Kallah is a regional program where BBYO teens from Tennessee, Alabama, and Louisiana come together and have a nice Jewish experience. Nearly 30 Nashville BBYO teens attended this year's convention, held at Camp Hillmont in White Bluff, Tenn.

Our Kallah teen coordinators this year were Baylee Less from River City BBG in Memphis and Brian Ringel from Peres AZA in Memphis. This year's theme was Hippies and the 60s Era. All weekend we learned about how being Jewish and hippies were alike and some similar struggles we went through.

The first night was Shabbat and we had a wonderful service and dinner. After the service we went around in groups and had really neat activities. Shabbat morning had a different twist to it. We had choices of the types of services

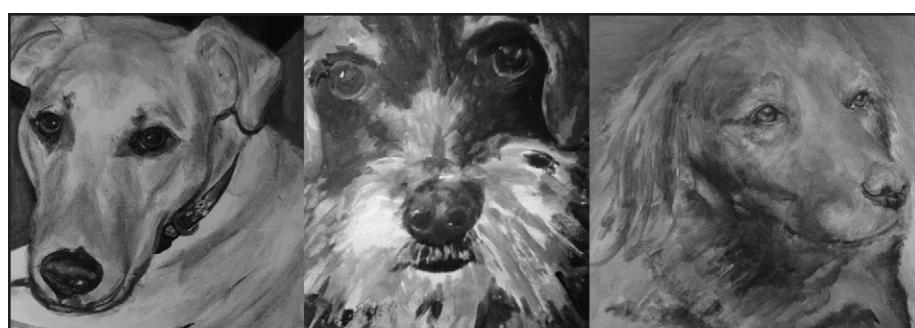
Akiva. Just like the Israelites had a responsibility to cultivate the land and show their gratitude; we all have a responsibility to continue to cultivate our school and to be grateful to those who founded the school and built the building. They planted the seeds for the future.

Just like the Israelites, it has been a long and transformative journey from where the school began to where it is today. We hope that like the Israelites after that long journey our school now has attained "a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear." We are so grateful for those who planted the seeds, grateful for the building we have and grateful for the amazing school we have today. This Bar Mitzvah celebration is just one way in which we can show our gratitude. □



Akiva past presidents gathered for the August celebration in their honor. Front, from left: Bobbie Limor, Gene Heller, Riva Heller, Edria Ragosin, Joan Melman, Ellen Levitt. Back: Alex Limor, David Lewis, Rodney Rosenblum, Stacy Hanai, David Steine

To access the Community Calendar,
go to www.jewishnashville.org
and click on "Calendar."
Every community event is listed
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SI break-fast

The community is invited to a special break-fast following Yom Kippur services on Sat., Oct. 8, at Congregation Sherith Israel, 3600 West End Avenue. The sponsors this year are Linda and Jay Amsel, Maria and Boris Garber, and Betsy and Richard Chalal. The event is free and open to the community. For more information, call the shul office at 292-6614 or check out the Sherith Israel website: www.sherithisrael.com.

See what's happening in the community.
Go to www.jewishnashville.org

Israeli dancing

The Nashville Israeli Folk Dancers meet every Monday evening at the Schulman Center for Jewish Life (across from Memorial Gym) at Vanderbilt University. Warm-up and beginners dances are 7:30-8:30 p.m. Intermediate-advanced dancing and requests are from 8:30-10. Stay for all or part of the time, and attend any or all of the sessions. No previous dance experience is required. Everyone is welcome to participate. For more information contact: Carol Rubin at 352-9447 (Carol.Rubin@vanderbilt.edu) or Sharon Morrow at 662-4881 (smorrow@wsccpasnashville.com) or visit our website at www.vanderbilt.edu/israeldance/.

Aliyah up 19 percent for Jewish year 5771

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Some 21,300 new immigrants have moved to Israel since last Rosh Hashanah, an increase of 19 percent over last year, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel.

"The choice of thousands of Jews to build their homes here is the deepest expression of a Diaspora Jew's identification with Israel," Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky said.

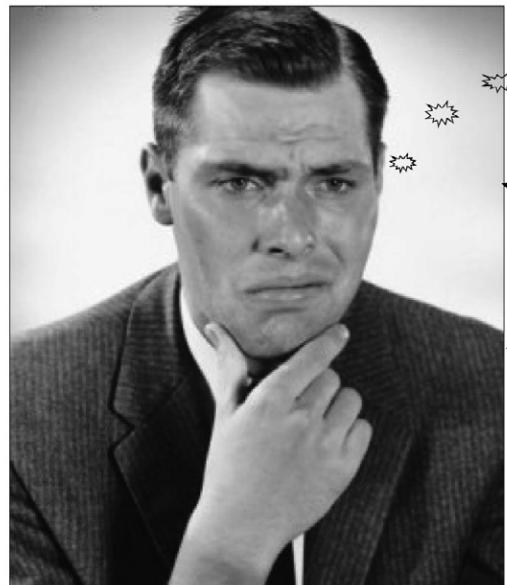
North American aliyah reached about 4,070, up from 3,720 the year before, an increase of nine percent.

About 8,290 immigrants arrived from the former Soviet Union, including from Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic states and Central Asian countries, an increase of 19 percent over last year. Immigration from France rose four percent to approximately 2,100 this year.

Some 2,780 immigrants from Ethiopia made aliyah in the waning Jewish year 5771, compared to about 1,320 the year before. The rate of immigration from Ethiopia is set by the government.

Over the past year, Israel has welcomed small numbers of olim from unexpected countries, including Hong Kong, Honduras, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Monaco, Suriname, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Angola, Japan, Malta, Congo, South Korea and Nicaragua.

The statistics also show that most of the immigrants are young: From January to July 2011, approximately 62 percent of the olim were younger than 34, of which about 36 percent are young adults from 18 to 34, according to the Jewish Agency. □



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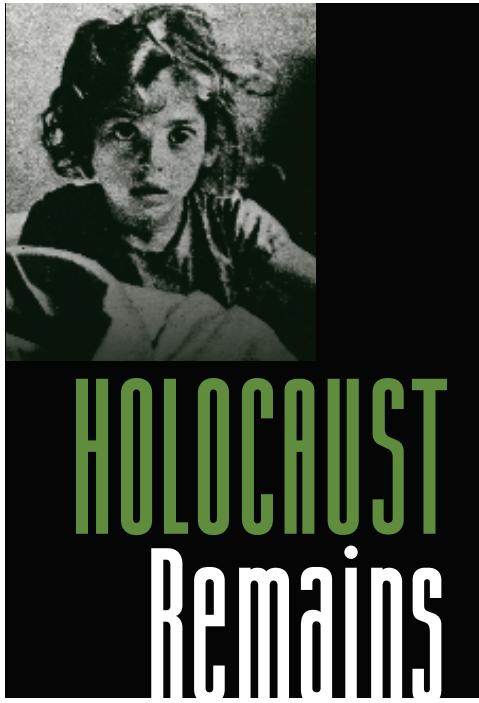
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Schedule of Events

Sunday, October 2 • 7 p.m.

"Darfur/Darfur" Projected Exhibit by Art Works Projects and Discussion of "Darfur Now" with Jen Marlowe Sarratt Cinema

A look through the lens of photographers to encounter the reality of Darfur today. Using a series of dramatic images and music, "Darfur/Darfur" places the brutal realities faced in Darfur in context with the region's vibrant culture and people. Seeing the human face of the continuing atrocities calls attention to our responsibilities as educated global citizens. The 15-minute screening is followed with a talk by Jen Marlowe regarding the current situation on the ground in Sudan.

Jen Marlowe is a Seattle-based author/documentary filmmaker/playwright and human rights advocate. In 2004, with colleagues Adam Shapiro and Aisha Bain, Jen traveled to Northern Darfur and Eastern Chad to make the award-winning documentary film *Darfur Diaries: Message from Home* and wrote the accompanying book *Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival*. *Darfur Diaries* was included in the 2007 edition of the Best American Non-Required Reading, edited by Dave Eggers.

Jen's second feature-length award-winning documentary is called *Rebuilding Hope*. *Rebuilding*

Hope follows three young Sudanese-American men on their first trip back to Sudan, to discover whether their homes and families survived the civil war and to build a school, drill wells, and bring medical supplies to their villages in Sudan.

October 25 • 7 p.m.

"The Future of the Holocaust" with Avraham Burg Student Life Center

Avraham Burg, former speaker of the Israeli parliament and son of a Holocaust survivor, is the author of *The Holocaust is Over*;



We Must Rise From Its Ashes. In his book, Burg argues that it is time to "rise from the ashes" of World War II. Jews, Israelis, and the world community at-large, must remember the Holocaust but not continue to identify Jews as victims for generations to come. Burg passionately writes that the oft-stated expression "never again" is not only a response to the genocidal calamity of the Nazi era but for any people who suffers around the globe today.

October 27 • 7 p.m.

The Last Survivor (2010) Directed by Michael Kleiman and Michael Pertnoy Sarratt Cinema

The Last Survivor presents the stories of genocide survivors and their struggle to make sense of tragedy. They work to educate, motivate, and promulgate a civic response to mass atrocity crimes, with a focus on awareness, prevention, and promoting social activism and civic engagement. Following the screening, two of the featured survivors, Jacqueline Murekatete and Justin Semahoro Kimenyewa, will share how they have moved forward with their lives.

Jacqueline Murekatete is internationally recognized for her work as a youth leader and humanitarian, speaking out for victims and survivors of genocide. Born in Rwanda in 1984, Jacqueline was not yet ten when she lost her immediate and extended family in the 1994 genocide.

Justin Semahoro Kimenyewa is a member of the Banyamulenge tribe of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was born in the small village of the Minembwe and lived there until 1996 when his village was attacked in the middle of the night. Separated from his family, Justin fled from Congo alone into neighboring Burundi before moving on to Rwanda and Kenya.

November 1 • 7 p.m.

Sephardi Jewry and the Holocaust with Dr. Aron Rodrigue Wilson 103

Much is known about what happened to the Ashkenazi Jews in Poland, Ukraine, Germany, Holland, and France during the Nazi period.



It has been also been erroneously assumed that few Sephardi Jews were impacted by the Holocaust. Popular Holocaust literature has done little to alter this view. Dr. Aron Rodrigue—director of the Stanford University Humanities Center, professor in Jewish Studies, and noted authority in Sephardi history—will speak on the Sephardim and the Holocaust in general.

November 13 • 7 p.m.

Isaac Nehama: Holocaust Survivor from Greece

The Commons Center Multipurpose Room (Second Floor), The Ingram Commons

Isaac Nehama was still in high school when Athens was occupied by the Axis powers in 1941. Because the Italians administered

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Athens, the Jewish population did not initially suffer. Yet, in September of 1943, when German troops began to occupy the area, the situation for the Jewish population took a turn for the worse. Aware of what had already happened to other Jews, Isaac's father, mother, brothers, and maternal grandmother went into hiding. Isaac fled to Thessaly and joined a partisan enclave. Upon returning to Athens in November 1944, Isaac learned that only his father had survived in hiding. His mother, brothers, and grandmother had been denounced by an informer and sent to Auschwitz. Only his brother Samuel survived after two concentration camps and a death march.



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