

COMMUNITY

FRIDAY VOL. 38, NO. 12 ■ 17 ELUL 5773 ■ AUGUST 23, 2013

SECTION B

CONNECTING WITH ISRAEL

About this Section

This year, many Louisvillians traveled to Israel. There were teens who traveled with their camp or youth group friends, young adults who went on Taglit-Birthright Israel trips or to spend time studying, an adult who made a trip to Belarus and Israel for professional development and families who enjoyed the Israel experience together. Each trip was unique and the experiences and stories the participants brought back with them were different.

In this special section, *Community* brings you many different facets of Israel as seen through the eyes of people who have been there recently, as well as some stories with strong Louisville and Kentucky connections from our Partnership with Israel region, the Western Galilee and a company that manufactures lifesaving backpacks.

We hope you enjoy this special section of *Community*. Additional photos can be found at www.jewishlouisville.org.

BBYO, NFTY, Camp Livingston and Beber Camp sent groups to Israel

BBYO trip adds leadership training to Israel trip

by Holly Hinson
Special to *Community*

For Maggie Rosen, going to Israel this July was the culmination of a long-held and much-anticipated dream.

The 17 year old, a senior at Kentucky Country Day, had been hearing about the trip for years. As the recipient of the Ellen and Milton Cantor Israel Scholarship Fund Award from the Jewish Foundation of Louisville in May, Maggie knew she was going on the BBYO ILSI (B'nai Brith Youth Organization International Leadership Seminar Israel) trip and had been eagerly awaiting the day of departure on July 2.

"Since I was a freshman, older girls have known and talked about this trip. It combined two of the things I love most – BBYO and the opportunity to go to Is-

rael," the teen said.

Indeed, Maggie has been heavily involved in BBYO since her freshman year, serving on the Regional Board KIO and holding the offices of both chapter communications officer and chapter president in 2012. In addition to the Cantor Award, Maggie also received the BBYO's Ellen Faye Garmon Award and was one of seven teens from the KIO (Kentucky-Indiana-Ohio) region participating in the three week Israel trip, including Louisville's Natania Lipp (See story, this page). Maggie also joined approximately 100 other youth from around the world on the trip that was for high school juniors, seniors and college freshmen.

Maggie said she expected to see the



Maggie and the rest of the Kentucky Indiana Ohio delegation of BBYO on Shabbat.

tourist spots and she knew the focus of the trip would be on leadership. The journey exceeded her expectations. "It was so inspiring. Every place we visited was so rich with history. We were really immersed in Judaism. We saw landmarks where my ancestors were 3,000 years ago, and they're still standing," she said.

"I always knew the importance of Israel and my Jewish identity, but to make that personal connection with our homeland really made me feel closer to my faith," she added.

The Israel trip also afforded the teen the opportunity to exercise her leadership skills – and learn new ones. "We had a real community experience and got to plan and lead Shabbat services. We connected our Jewish roots to our leadership theme and Torah readings. It was exciting," Maggie said.

Learning about the differences in the practice of Judaism in Israel and America was another aspect of the trip that Maggie found interesting.

"We learned how they do things differently," she said. "The Jewish traditions are just a huge part of their culture. They say Shema every night and don't drive during Shabbat. They keep kosher. Everything revolves around their religion. After Israel, these things seem even more important now – to see it first-hand and bring it back home. I feel a greater responsibility to lead other Jewish teens to make that deeper connection."

One outing that Maggie said she found very moving and educational was the group's trip to Masada, particularly once she learned the landmark's powerful history. "We got up very early in the morning to climb and they told us about how years ago the Jews were under the rule of the Roman Empire. They couldn't rebel and decided their only freedom was death, so they committed mass suicide on top of the mountain. When I was standing there, I realized I was seeing the same sights the Romans must have seen all those years ago, and

see BBYO page 2

Lipp discovers new sense of community

Editor's note: For most of the teens featured in this section, this summer's trip was the first time they went to Israel. A few had been before, but for short periods of time. Natania Lipp has spent a lot of time there and speaks Hebrew fluently. She's also an excellent writer and wanted to tell her own story. So, even though she and Maggie Rosen (see story, this page) traveled together on the same trip, their stories are presented separately here.

by Natania Lipp

Israel used to be a vacation spot. I felt at home because I could speak the language and many of the restaurants were kosher. I felt comfortable because we would stay there for months at a time and I'd grown accustomed to playing at the playground nearby. Israel was a home for me, but it wasn't yet a home for all of the Jewish people.

Israel was simply an experience I had already discovered. I had eaten the food, spoken the language, and even gone on tours. So when I signed up for ILSI (International Leadership Seminar in Israel) I figured it would be a fun place for me to meet new friends in BBYO.

In my Jewish youth group, BBYO, I am the Sh'lichah of my region, meaning part of my job is to incorporate Judaism and Social Action into the programs along with promoting Israel advocacy. By going to Israel with leaders from the same organization, I hoped to bring some of my knowledge back to the Kentucky-Indiana-Ohio Region. Meanwhile, I expected to discover a little more of my Jewish identity along the way and gain a new appreciation for Israel.

It wasn't until I climbed Masada with my group at the end of my first week that I discovered the true benefits I would get

from mixing my Israel journey with my BBYO one. I knew the story of Masada, and I recognized how pretty the land was. But the connection between the importance of the land and the importance of the Jewish people living in it didn't resonate with me until I went through it again with my peers. I was able to walk the same steps but see different things, to hear the same words but hear them in new ways.

Surrounded by 100 of my newfound friends, all of my low expectations of the land I had already been to disappeared. The energy at the top of Masada was contagious. People had waited their whole lives to set foot on this land and being there was a dream come true for so many that I couldn't help but feel the same way.

As we did services at the top of Masada, I realized that the connection I felt to my friends and the connection I felt towards Israel had come together to make both stronger. Finally, my Israel journey and my BBYO one had intertwined to strengthen my respect for the holy land.

Being able to share my experience with other teenagers was what made Masada so special. The mood that they set made me realize the true magic of Israel. Our history shapes the present in a way that makes everyone feel at home.

In BBYO, I interpret a big part of my job to be making Judaism relevant without force. I want members to be proud of their religion because it's what shapes our values, and because the traditions will stick with us forever, and because the holidays are fun and create memories.

It's difficult to try to get people to appreciate their religion without forcing



Maggie Rosen and Natania Lipp atop Masada

them into it. In Israel, Judaism just IS relevant. It's a part of their daily lives. From the discussions we had every night, to the passionate and opinionated speakers we heard, to the long treks we took through endless desserts, I was able to shape my own identity around the land I was re-discovering.

Before this trip, I was expected to be an advocate of Israel. The idea of a Jewish state sounded like a good idea and so I supported it.

After experiencing the sense of community first hand, and being educated on the past and present status of Israel as a Jewish state, I am now a proud advocate for Israel, remembering that it's always relevant.

The best part of Israel was finding a sense of community inside and outside of my group. The Jewish people are at home whenever they are together, but Israel is the only place where our past, present and future can all be recognized at once.

Beber Camp friends, old and new, explored Israel together

by Cynthia Canada
Special to *Community*

Three high school students from Louisville experienced Israel this summer from a new perspective – that of an adventure shared with friends.

Michael Schwartz, Henry Strull, and Emily Wolff spent four weeks at Beber Camp, developing team leadership skills and preparing for the trip, then traveled with a group of about 50 teenagers and staff members to explore Israel and connect with their Jewish heritage.

Emily, a rising junior at Louisville Collegiate School, had visited Israel twice before – once after her brother’s bar mitzvah and again after her bat mitzvah. “It’s sort of a family tradition,” she said. But she found touring with peers was different; she and her friends went farther afield than she had been before.

For Michael and Henry, both rising juniors at Kentucky Country Day School, this was the first trip to Israel. “I didn’t have a lot of expectations,” Michael said. He had friends whose experiences hadn’t met what they anticipated, so while he was open to whatever came of the trip, the power of his own experiences came as something of a surprise.

For three weeks, the group traveled together, becoming almost like family as they visited sites around the country. While many of them knew each other from camp sessions in previous summers, this adventure drew travelers from both sessions, so there were new friends as well. The four staff members who accompanied the teens became “kind of our parents,” as Emily said, watching out for the campers, but interacting on a more adult level in some ways. “We respected them,” Emily said, “and they respected us.”

For Henry, the visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem was the most moving. “Just to be there, to pray there,” he said,

“it was something I had really looked forward to.” That’s where the strength of community hit home for him, surrounded by hundreds of other worshippers, both friends and strangers, all of them praying.

And, he added, “You can’t tell how big it is from the pictures.” All three teenagers were impressed with the sheer size of the wall, as it extends not just up, but down into the earth. A trek through the tunnels brought home not just the religious significance but, as Michael pointed out, the amazing degree of engineering expertise required to construct the Temple.

Michael also was deeply moved by the sense of history, as well as the beauty, of Masada. The group ascended to the ancient fortress by way of the staircase, which they said took about five minutes. Coming back down the footpath took considerably longer. From the top, Michael said you could see all the way to the Dead Sea.

For Emily, it was the early morning hike in southern Israel during the last week of the trip that made the deepest impression. “We got up at about four a.m.,” she said, “and we climbed into the mountains to watch the sun rise.” Again, the range was breathtaking: a clear view into Saudi Arabia on one side, Egypt on the other, and the Red Sea in the middle.

But it was the companionship of friends – now very close friends – that she felt most strongly. “We knew we were getting to the end,” she said. “We’d been together almost all the time for three weeks, and it was like it was the last time we were going to be that close.” Time spent together on the mountaintop cemented bonds and locked the memory of this trip in place as a transformational experience.

In addition to exploration, the group met Israeli residents who gave them new perspectives, both on life in Israel and on choosing priorities and making com-



Jonas Gallinaitis, Hanna Parsons, Deborah Feldman, Jess Beris and Henry Strull in Jerusalem.

mitments. Among the people they met were several “Lone Soldiers,” Americans who volunteered for the Israeli Army even though they had no requirement to do so.

Unlike Israeli citizens, who have a service obligation, these soldiers chose to travel around the world and serve far away from friends and family. Unlike Israeli soldiers, who are close enough to travel home most weeks for Shabbat, these soldiers have to build community where they are; it’s not an easy life. The teens expressed respect for the level of commitment and the strong belief from which that commitment must come.

Between profound moments such as these, the group had plenty of time to play. After all, what is summer vacation without play? But while summer vacation may often include exploring and

shopping, it rarely involves riding camels in the desert.

When it was over, Henry, Emily and Michael all said this trip to Israel had affected them in unexpected ways. All three said without a second’s hesitation that they wanted to go back. And, as Emily said, all three were glad to come home. After almost a whole summer of constant companionship – traveling, praying, eating, napping, hiking, shopping, and camel-riding together – it was great to come back to their air-conditioned homes, their own rooms, and a little bit of privacy.

Henry and Michael received scholarships from the Jewish Federation of Louisville that were funded by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence.

For NFTY group, Israel creates sense of belonging

by Shiela Steinman Wallace
Editor

For Pamela Niren, Harrison Reines and Christina Stoler, summer usually means going to Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI), the Reform Movement’s camp in Zionsville, IN. This year, the three of them chose to participate in the North American Federation of Temple Youth’s (NFTY) Israel Adventure.

“Right off the bat, we went straight to the desert for four days of hiking in the mountains,” Christina said. “We slept and ate there, and it was a really different environment for everyone. We had this great tour guide who taught us about nature and the places we were.” After an hour or more of climbing, she enjoyed reaching the top and “being able to look out from a 2,000-foot mountain and see everything. It was a really cool experience.”

“The thing I enjoyed,” Harrison said, “is we were able to be immersed in a new culture for a month. We got to learn a different lifestyle than the one we live. ... It was a pretty cool experience.”

One big difference he noticed immediately was “the food was so different. We could go anywhere and get falafel and schwarma compared to here, where you just get cheeseburgers and sodas. It was a totally different experience.”

“It was really cool to be in a totally Jewish place,” Christina added, “everywhere you went, you were able to find a Star of David.” She also liked “hearing Hebrew everywhere and seeing in on signs.”

Just being surrounded by Jews was a new experience for her. “At school, I’m the only Jewish kid out of 2,000 kids,”



Christina Stoler, Harrison Reines and Pamela Niren

she stated. “So to be able to turn around and ask a random person on the street, and they would answer that they were Jewish” was an amazing experience.

“It felt a lot different,” Harrison agreed. “You felt accepted by everyone there because a lot of the people shared the same religion with you. Being able to relate with them is something very unique.”

Pamela, too appreciated being in the Jewish state, saying, “it felt natural to be there,” but she also felt that the closeness of the NFTY group was also important. She enjoyed “the experience of feeling loved in the community from everyone – feeling close and connecting. ... It was nice that we could have services without worrying about someone feeling left out.”

One difference Pamela observed was the Israelis’ perception of distance. Everything is so close there, she noted that “people thought an hour-long drive to see NFTY page 3



Michael Schwartz tackled some tough terrain in the Golan Heights.



Henry Strull at The Wall

BBYO

Continued from page 1

I could imagine everyone lying there. It sounds sad, but I thought it was amazing how the Jews sacrificed themselves for their faith and freedom,” she said.

These type of experiences led Maggie to an understanding of the importance of supporting Israel. “I am definitely more passionate about Jews in Israel and their right to exist as a Jewish state. I am proud to be Jewish and have a place to call home.”

Since the trip, Maggie said she sought out her rabbi to talk to him about her experiences. “I wanted to tell him how much it inspired me. I want to get more

involved with the synagogue and with JCC (Jewish Community Center),” she said. Maggie also wants to return to Israel at some point to spend a semester abroad and is considering Indiana University for college since it has a large population of Jewish students.

To the Cantor Family, the Jewish Foundation and BBYO, Maggie said she wants to say thank you for the opportunity to go to Israel. “It just means the world. I always knew Israel was important but I didn’t truly have a personal connection to it until the trip. I want to stay closely connected to my Jewish faith and I want to protect Israel – our Jewish homeland. The trip was amazing. It does make a life-changing difference.”

Six Louisvillians traveled Israel with their Camp Livingston friends

by Holly Hinson

Special to Community

Six local teenagers – Ben Bass, Amanda Berman, Daniela Reuter, Katie and Daniel Segal and Elana Wagner – participated in Camp Livingston's Solelim 2013 Israel trip this July. They joined more than 60 other youth from across the region to experience the wonder and history of Israel.

For years, these teens had heard about opportunities to take youth trips to Israel through friends or family, their synagogue or organizations like BBYO (B'nai Brith Youth Organization). Most had expectations about what the trip would be like – with a few fears, mostly unfounded.

"I did not expect to feel so safe in Israel," said Amanda Berman. "I thought it would be scary with a lot of soldiers around, but really I didn't have to think

once about my safety."

Katie Segal said she thought there would be more of a cultural boundary. "Most people spoke English and only occasionally would you meet someone you couldn't communicate with, but there was always someone there to translate."

Daniela Reuter agreed. "I was surprised by the amount of English I heard. I know everyone there learns English in school, but we learn Spanish here and I could never go to a Spanish-speaking country and be okay on my own. I was surprised by the amount of stores and signs all in English."

Daniel Segal said he was pleasantly surprised at the freedom they were given to roam freely around the markets and explore.

But whatever their initial misgivings or misperceptions, the teens all agreed it was a remarkable and transforming trip.

With a slate of activities encompassing everything from snorkeling, swimming and riding camels to sharing Shabbat with host families, the teens experienced the many cultural riches of Israel while learning more about their Jewish heritage and identity.

Daniel said he was amazed at the variety of activities that the group managed to squeeze into one day. "We slept in Bedouin tents and then got up at 3:30 in the morning and climbed Mt. Masada and then toured Masada and went to the Dead Sea."

"But wait, remember, before the Dead Sea, we swam in those natural springs,"

aren't doing anything that harms civilians. That shows that Israelis are very committed to their country and will do a lot for it, but they're also very caring about themselves and other people."

The Israelis are also very cognizant of the price they pay for security. For Pamela, hearing about how on Memorial Day "soldiers come to the graves and light candles and put rocks on the graves, even for people who might not have someone to come there for them" was very empowering.

When Memorial Day ends, she continued, "everyone transitions from learning about those who died and being sad into celebrating what they died for."

The teens also enjoyed getting together with a group of Israeli teens. "It was cool to talk with them and to get to learn about their lives and the kibbutzim and just growing up in Israel and how much they love their country," Christina said.

"They aren't that different from us," she added. "Everyone had a really great time together." She enjoyed talking about America and listening to them talk about Israel. Later, they enjoyed home hospitality on the kibbutz. "We got to look around and see how the kibbutz works," she said, "and be part of a regular Israeli family to see what that looks like and feels like."

The three talked about many more highlights, including visits to historical sites, Masada, the Western Wall, the water tunnels in the City of David and the shuk.

All three came home with stronger connections to Israel and the Jewish people and a different understanding of the Jewish State. They also encourage others to go to Israel.

Pamela received a scholarship from the Jewish Federation of Louisville that was funded by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence and expressed gratitude for the help.

Pamela and Christina are both Louisvillians. Every year, Harrison spends at least a month in Louisville visiting his grandparents, Irv and Sheila Steinberg. He and his family are moving to Australia.



Seeing an old Israeli counselor in Jaffa – back, Alex Rubin, Daniel Segal, Ben Bass, Raphael, Ilana Frankel, Katie Segal, Elana Wagner, Amanda Berman, Julia Mattis; front, Cassie Heldman, Mona Schieber, Sarah Wolf, Daniela Reuter

added Elana Wagner, with a laugh.

Amanda said some of the best moments of the trip were the unexpected ones, like rolling down the Kassui sand dunes in the middle of the desert. "I have to admit I was exhausted after we hiked up the dunes and not looking forward to it, but when we rolled down, it really turned out to be one of my favorite activities of my trip – because I thought where else in the world could you do something like that? It really made me think about everything Israel has to offer, what an interesting place it is. It's such a small country but it has it all – desert, mountains, beaches."

Beyond the recreational and fun activities, the trip afforded the group many opportunities to deepen their understanding of Jewish culture by being immersed in the land, language and customs of the country. One consensus among the teens was that they felt

changed by the things they learned, the people they met, the experiences they shared. These all have deepened their connection to their homeland – and their faith.

"I was impressed by the fact that in Israel you don't have to be religious, go to services, or do anything special. You were just Jewish no matter what. You didn't have to go out of your way to show it or believe in it, you were always, no matter where you were or what you were doing, 100 percent Jewish," said Daniela.

Elana said she felt more connected to her faith by seeing in person all the sites she had heard about for years. "When we were in the Old City and we did all these tours, I knew the history and heard some of the stories before," she said, "but being there seeing where it happened just made it more real."

see LIVINGSTON page 4



Amanda Berman and Elana Wagner planted a tree

NFTY

Continued from page 2

somewhere was long, where here, an eight-hour drive is long."

Christina Stoler also noticed how close everything is, particularly Israel's neighbors. "It was really interesting for me to go to the borders, like the Syrian border and the separation wall and the Lebanese border.

"Before coming to Israel," she explained, "we would watch the news and see all these things about conflict. To stand at these borders and look at them felt weird. We were standing at this place where there is supposed to be all this conflict, but it wasn't scary to be there and we felt safe."

"That's because of the Israeli military," she continued. "There's something about being in Israel. You know you're secure because you're surrounded by all these really strong people in this place that has persevered all this time."

For part of the trip, the group split up to pursue different options. "I spent four days in the IDF," Harrison said. It was really cool to see how the IDF is very committed to keeping Israel protected, but at the same time, keeping in mind human rights and making sure they

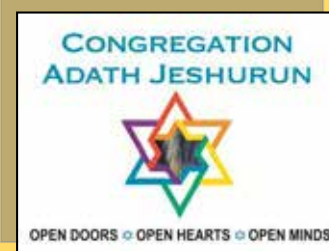


The NFTY group did a lot of hiking in the desert.

VISIT ISRAEL WITH ADATH JESHURUN! FEBRUARY 5 - 14, 2014

For those who prefer milder weather, February is the perfect time of year to visit Israel! Trip price including airfare is \$3,999* per person based on double occupancy. (Single room supplement is \$939.) Trip includes: Breakfast daily, four dinners, seven nights in hotels, and sight-seeing in an air-conditioned motor coach with tour guide. The trip will be led by Rabbi Robert Slosberg and is open to the community. Deposit of \$500 per person required. Full payment is due by October 24, 2013. To receive a trip packet including itinerary and reservation form, please contact Rabbi Slosberg at rabbi@adathjeshurun.com or 502-458-5359.

*\$3,999 price based on a minimum group of 22 travelers.



With NCSY group, Davis focuses on “Personal Displays of Positivity”

by Holly Hinson
Special to Community

The first time Jennifer Davis visited the Western Wall she was walking hand in hand with other young women. She didn't know who was beside her, however, because

she was blindfolded. As part of an exercise to learn trust and solidarity, the very first stop on Jennifer's trip to Israel was to go directly to Kotel, the Western Wall – “the first amazing thing in a surprising and amazing adventure,” she said. As part of The National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCYS): The Jeru-

salem Journey, Jennifer was one of hundreds of youth to embark on the three-week Israel trip on July 3. Jennifer, 16, a junior at DuPont Manual High School, attended with seven youths from Cincinnati as part of a regional NCYS group that she has been involved with for more than two years. “They know me as that kid from Louisville,” Jennifer joked. “I have been going to regional conventions at least three times a year since freshman year.”

This NCYS group is where Jennifer learned of the opportunity to go to Israel, a journey that literally began with the blindfolded exercise at the Western Wall. “When I opened my eyes after they took the blindfold off, it was amazing,” said the teen. “Here we are by something still standing strong after 4,000 years, and it will be here for another 4,000 after we leave,” she noted. “It is the same as we Jews still standing strong as a people. It was a deep personal experience; I felt like I finally found it, made it where I belong, at my home, at my homeland.”

Having the opportunity to worship in



Tori Shaw, Jennifer Freiman and Jennifer Davis

a different environment or in a different way was another highlight of the trip, said Jennifer. “We woke up at 4 a.m. and hiked through the Sinai Desert. We were split up in the dark and we sat on rocks and prayed to God. It was really one-on-one. In a synagogue, everyone is praying at once, and you are afraid you are not being heard, but here you know you are being heard. It was really personal. After that, we hiked up this mountain for over two hours, and I was beginning to wonder, but it was worth it. That sunrise was about the prettiest thing I've ever seen.” The group also made a trip to Masada.

For the youth participating in the trip – more than 300 in all – each busload was paired with a partner bus, sharing activities and staying at hostels together, “creating a sense of community,” said Jennifer. “We spent the first two weeks bonding and making connections with people we had never met before. Part of that was also learning more about ourselves. We were introduced to what the rabbi called PDP, or Personal Displays of Positivity,” she said.

“The idea behind PDP was that we are all connected,” she continued, “even before we know one another. The rabbi said, ‘this is my family – these are my sons and daughters.’ He told us we could respect and love even before we really know someone. We learned that we have to love ourselves before we can learn to love others and to grow.”

While the teens were involved in a veritable potpourri of activities during the three weeks – faith group activities, sightseeing, recreational activities, worship, even camel riding in the desert and tubing in the Red Sea – Jennifer said one of the tours that really made an impact was the visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust Memorial museum.

“At the Children's Memorial, they took us in this pitch-black room and we could hear a voice speaking all the names of the children under 18 who were murdered. Then it looked like hundreds of candles were lit, but it was really only five – all the rest were mirrors and reflections – that were meant to represent each child that had been killed. ...just hearing those names of all those 4-17 year olds, the names of some children my same age,” she said. “It was so sad to think of that many innocent children, thinking what they went through.”

For Jennifer, the idea of solidarity with other Jewish teens was a very appealing component of the trip to Israel. “I feel really changed by this trip. I feel like my faith is much stronger, and I'm more open about it. I now know Jewish teens just like me. They face the same things I do, and these people are always here for me even if they're far away. I just realized I'm not alone. I have the greatest sense of communion with the others who share my faith.”

As memorable as her first trip to the Wall was, Jennifer said the group's second visit to the Kotel tunnel near the end of her three weeks was even more so, marking it her favorite moment of the trip.

“We were there for our last Shabbat, and we were on one of the rooftops of one of the buildings,” she explained. “We could see every single person dancing see **NCSY** page 6



Jennifer and her group at The Wall

LIVINGSTON

Continued from page 3

“Going to Israel, where everyone is Jewish,” added Katie, “you feel a real sense of community – you just feel at home.”

Daniel agreed. “Here in America, as Jews, we are a minority, but there, we are the majority so there is never any anti-Semitism.” He explained how that was so different from an American Jewish teens' experience.

“We did a program before when we went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. We all started talking about the times where we faced anti-Semitism and everybody had two or three or even four stories about this, but our Israeli tour guides had never once faced anti-Semitism. I was shocked but I guess it makes sense because everyone there is Jewish.”

Amanda said she felt a greater tie to her ancestors after making the trip. “When I think of all the effort that everyone put in to make Israel a country, it just makes me so proud to call myself a Jew. It's so great knowing Israel will always be there for me and there is a place where everyone is like me.”

For most of the teens, one of the most impressive experiences in Israel was visiting Kotel – The Wall. Katie explained, “It's the only wall left standing from the original Temple – which is our biggest holy site. Other religions have more sites, but this is the one site that is the most important to us.”

Amanda said she believes The Wall represents all the struggles Jews have faced over time, but somehow managed to overcome. “We are still here and still standing strong and proud – just like The Wall. It is moving to me to see how so many types of people are still com-

ing to see it every day – even though it's a wall – it is still actually bringing people together.”

“This is something we've learned about and we've seen pictures of since we were little,” said Katie. Finally being there and touching it, “it's something you've only dreamed about or imagined. It was very spiritual and you feel very connected with your Judaism.”

Seeing firsthand how Jews in Israel live their lives and practice their faith offered interesting alternative perspective for the youths.

Katie and Daniel stayed with a host family who were their cousins and found that the military is a big part of life in Israel, since service is compulsory – girls are required to serve two years and boys, three years.

“We talked about the army and what's always surprising is whenever you ask anyone who is an Israeli about this they are never afraid of going in the army,” said Katie. “They already know what jobs they are going to do and they look forward to it.”

Another aspect of Israeli culture that seems very different to American teens is the different emphasis on their faith traditions. “We celebrated Shabbat with our host family and we did nothing at all on Saturday,” said Elana. “There were no cars at all on the street. In fact, one hotel had a special elevator where you didn't have to press buttons because on Shabbat no one is supposed to do any work. I thought that was so cool.”

Amanda recognized that Jewish teens in Israel lead a very different life.

“One thing that really changed me is the one weekend we stayed with host families and I met a girl my age. Hearing about her life in Israel – it was so different from mine,” she said, “even though

we're both Jewish and around the same age. It really made me look outside of what I'm used to – opened my mind up to Israeli culture and I feel a strong connection to Israel now.”

“I try very hard to not take things for granted because I learned my life in America is a lot easier than most in Israel,” added Daniela.

The teens all agreed the trip was a life-changing experience. Five of them received scholarships from the Jewish Federation of Louisville that were funded by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence – and they couldn't be more grateful for scholarships that made this trip possible for them. The Segals also received assistance from the Ellen and Milton Cantor Israel Scholarship Fund and the Camp Livingston Scholarship Fund.

“My view of Israel has definitely changed,” said Daniel. “I see what we all see on the news – all the violence. People think all of Israel is unsafe – but I did not feel that way. It was life-changing because it was like not being a minority anymore, being with people that are just like you. I am so grateful to my sponsor for being able to have this amazing experience with my friends. I would love to go back some day.”

Amanda said, “This was really a once in a lifetime opportunity. Israel is a wonderful country and I really consider it my homeland. Just knowing how old the land itself is and what's happened there it was very exciting for me to be a part of that history. I want to thank my sponsors for this great opportunity I was given.”

Katie said, “I've always been proud to be Jewish but I feel more connected to it now. I always thought I would live in Louisville, but I think living in Israel is a possibility now. I'd at least go back for a semester abroad. I definitely want to return.”

“It was one of the best experiences of my life,” said Elana. “I know it's something I'll never forget. I felt a real sense of belonging there. It means a lot that someone would help me out with that so I say thank you.”

Daniela said the trip changed her life. “I got to experience what so many Jews before me have or wanted to. And for my family, everyone who hasn't gone or died before they could go, I came for them and I touched and prayed to the wall for them. I say thank you very much to my sponsor for not only making me a better person because of this trip, but for connecting with my family and Israel.”



Maggie Rosen and friend Phoebe Rose riding camels in the Negev desert

Challenging the world in the Maccabiah Games

Peyton Greenberg brings home the gold in 200M breaststroke

by Shiela Steinman Wallace
Editor

When the 2013 Maccabiah Games opened in Netanya, Israel, this summer, 11,000 of the world's top Jewish athletes from 100 countries filed the arena for the opening ceremonies, prepared to compete in more than 70 different sports.

Louisville's Peyton Greenberg was a member of the 1,000-person United States delegation to the games and was one of 500 swimmers to compete in the games. In the 200-meter breaststroke, she brought home the gold – besting 50 competitors. She also won silver medals in the 100-meter breaststroke and a relay.

This outstanding performance in these highly competitive games brings Greenberg one step closer to achieving

her dream of competing in the Olympics. "It's a great thing to have for your resume," she said, "because it's an international competition and not a lot of kids my age are able to do that."

"It was cool to represent the United States of America," Greenberg observed. "It was a big honor."

It was also exciting. "The opening ceremony was just like the Olympic opening ceremony," she said. "Every athlete from around the world paraded around the stadium and there were thousands of people in the stands. There were shows and fireworks and the torch was lit."

"The megatron was showed the whole U.S.A. team," she continued, "and we took up the whole stadium walking around it. I felt like I was in the real Olympics when it started."

Greenberg was the favorite in the race she won, but when she got in the pool, she had doubts. There were a lot of good

swimmers both among her teammates and those from other countries. "I just thought I should just race and not think about it and give it all I have," she said. "Then, after I was done with the race, I just looked up and saw that I won and the whole crowd was cheering. I could hear the United States team cheering and screaming."

"One of the coolest experiences was when I was on the podium," she added. "I saw my parents crying and I had the biggest smile on my face."

She also enjoyed the closing ceremonies, which Greenberg described as a rave. "That was so cool," she said. "I was jumping up and down and the lights were flashing."

As in the Maccabi games stateside, the Maccabiah Games are much more than the competition. They are about meeting and getting to know other athletes, trading memorabilia and learning about



Olympic swimming gold medalist Lenny Krayzelberg and Maccabiah swimming gold medalist Peyton Greenberg

A year in Israel before college

Golding did Jewish studies at Midreshet Harova

by Phyllis Shaikun
Special to Community

Most American students go from high school to college with nary a break between the two, while students in many other parts of the world take a year off (a "gap" year) before entering college to help them grow up a bit. They frequently take advantage of academic and non-academic opportunities such as travel, voluntarism or internships to improve themselves before going to college.

Eighteen-year-old Louisvillian Rivka Golding, who will be a freshman at the University of Maryland in the fall, chose to spend a gap year studying in Israel at Midreshet Harova, a post-high school program for girls in Jerusalem.

This was not her first time living away from home. Golding and her family are members of Louisville's Orthodox community, and although she was able to attend Torah Academy for primary school, the lack of a Jewish high school here meant she had to leave town to continue her education. In her case, Golding lived with an aunt in New York City while she attended and graduated from an Orthodox high school in Teaneck, NJ.

Midreshet Harova was not a care-free coming-of-age experience. Classes ran from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. Rivka spent her time studying Torah, Talmud, Jewish law, and Jewish philosophy. Her favorite class was a class on the weekly Torah portion.

She says, "It gave me a new perspective on what it means to be Jewish." Celebrating the holidays with the rest of the country and having the opportunity to

pray at the Western Wall every day were among the experiences she will miss most. Along with her time at Midreshet Harova, Golding was accepted into a rigorous fellowship at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, where she explored the Israel-Arab conflict.

The fellowship was an integral part of her year.

As a religious Zionist, Golding believes Israel is God's answer to the promise made to Abraham that Israel would be an inheritance for his descendants. She is "consumed" with the knowledge that Israel is the land her forebears dreamt about – having their own country in which to create a moral and just society that serves God and shows the way for the rest of the world. Although the Jews were exiled from the area countless times, she cites the Book of Jeremiah that states Jews will ultimately come back to the Promised Land within Israel.

Golding hoped the non-credit public affairs course would provide the information she needed about the issues involved to enable her to defend, advocate for and promote Israel on the college campus. The class featured a variety of speakers from Palestinian students to people living in the disputed territories to professors, rabbis and members of the Knesset who presented their perspectives and then left it up to participants to form their own opinions.

While she believes it is the Jewish people's internationally recognized right to reestablish their homeland in Israel, the class made her question some of the practices taking place there.

On an organized trip to *Sheikh Jarrah*, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, she was conflicted over how the Palestinians are treated. Originally, the area was owned by two Jewish organizations, but in 1948 the Jewish residents were ordered to leave by the Hagana and the British Authority. In 1956, Jordan, in cooperation with the United Nations, housed 28 Palestinian refugee families in those vacant houses.

After Jerusalem's liberation in 1967, the Israeli Custodian General ordered the properties be released to the Jewish groups that owned them in 1948, with the understanding that Palestinian refugees living there could remain in their homes provided they continued paying a symbolic rent. Since the 1990s, however, these Jewish organizations have been fil-

ing legal petitions to evict the families, most often due to non-payment of rent.

As Palestinian families leave, they see Jews occupying their former homes. Prior to the establishment of the state, much of West Jerusalem was owned by Palestinians, but they do not have the right to take back these homes. "It just seems completely biased," she says. Golding finds it hard to understand how a country in which morality is supposed to guide every decision could allow this to happen. She asks: Does a Jewish country mean that Israel is a country only for the Jews?

By the same token, she is adamant that the Palestinians must stop terrorizing Israeli citizens. "Peace can only be achieved," she concludes, "through tolerance and compromise. Israel is not going anywhere, but neither are the Palestinians." The course helped her realize that she can still strongly support Israel, without supporting all of its policies.

After the trip, Golding wrote a final paper, which she shared with *Community*. It can be read in its entirety at www.jewishlouisville.org.

Another highlight of her year was a 10-day trip to Poland. For Golding, whose grandparents are Holocaust survivors, the trip was mentally and emotionally challenging.

"There were times when I doubted God and had trouble understanding how He could let this take place." She found standing in the gas chambers tremendously overwhelming, but says all in all the trip to Poland was ironically uplifting. "We saw Israel's strength by realizing how much was taken from us and how much we have been able to rebuild."

She declared it an "amazing year," one that gave her so much more than anything else could have. Golding returned home with a different perspective – one full of shared experiences that could not have happened elsewhere. She gained a deep respect for her teachers, an enhanced connection to the Jewish people, and the Jewish homeland. When asked if she could see herself living in Israel, she was quick to respond, "After my year, I could not see myself living anywhere else."

Editor's note: Golding's final essay on Zionism can be found online at www.jewishlouisville.org.

Israel.

"I got to meet people from around the world through the games," Greenberg said, "and competing against people from around the world was a whole new experience. They talk differently and they prepare differently. The Australians even swam opposite – we swim clockwise but they swim counterclockwise."

When it came trading for memorabilia, Greenberg said, "I got a British hat, an Australian shirt, an Israeli shirt, a French shirt, Brazilian shirt and an Israeli swim cap. ... I was not so good at trading, but I'm happy with what I got."

She also made a lot of new friends. "That was the best part about my trip," she said. "We're texting every day, and they love to talk." Most of her new friends were teammates who live "all over the country – California, New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Florida." She has a friend in St. Thomas, too.

The games lasted only one week, but Greenberg's Israel experience lasted for three. "I loved it, and I want to go back," she said. "It was the greatest summer ever. I loved the people, the things I did and the competition. It was fun."

"My top two favorite places," she continued, "were the beach at Tel Aviv and The Western Wall." In Tel Aviv, she enjoyed the dancing and meeting the Israelis. She described the visiting The Wall as breathtaking and emotional.

"I had to learn how to barter in the markets," she noted. "That was hard. I bartered for clothes and food."

Since she is an accomplished swimmer and was traveling with others with similar skills, Greenberg said that when they were in the Dead Sea, they tried to race to the Jordan River. "We didn't get that far, but was so much fun because when you try to go all the way under the water, the sea won't let you. You just bob right back up."

A lot of people made contributions that helped Greenberg realize this part of her dream, and she is grateful for the support. She also received help from The Temple and a scholarship from the Jewish Foundation of Louisville funded by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence.



Peyton on Masada



Angham Wattad and Rivka Golding were fellow students.

Taglit-Birthright Israel trips are for young adults

Experience includes a wide variety of activities all across Israel

by Shiela Steinman Wallace
Editor

Trips to Israel have long been recognized as important building blocks to Jewish identity, so through Taglit-Birthright Israel, the Jewish community offers a free trip to Israel to young adults who have not been there previously on a peer trip. This summer, three young adults from Israel, Heidi Bennett, Katie Moss and Ari Sabes visited Israel on Birthright trips.

“When I signed up to go on a Birthright trip to Israel, I wasn’t really sure what to expect,” said Moss. “As a recent convert to Judaism, I wasn’t sure if I would truly fit in with the others on the trip. I already knew that I love Judaism and support Israel, so I wasn’t sure if the trip’s main objective would really have an affect on me. Despite my fears, I still signed up and added my boyfriend, Ari Sabes, and my good friend Heidi Bennett as my trip companions.

Moss and Sabes wound up on the same trip and signed up for the “Search and Rescue” extension since Sabes has a background in firefighting. Bennett traveled with a different group.

“The closer we got to the trip, the more excited I got,” Moss said. “Israel has held a very special place in my heart since I started to become interested in Judaism. I am one of the founding members of the Cards for Israel group at the University of Louisville. So naturally as soon as our plane landed in Israel, I began to cry. I looked out the plane windows and felt overwhelmed with a sense that I was finally home.

“When we exited the plane, I was so excited to try and read all the Hebrew signs that surrounded me,” she continued. “I had taken 3 semesters of Hebrew at the university and I was anxious to show off my skills.”

Their first stop was a kibbutz in northern Israel. “There were a school, a grocery store, a cafeteria, a pool and many other buildings,” Moss said. “Everywhere you turned there were fruit trees and flowers. This was truly an oasis.”

“One of the most interesting parts,”

she added, “was going inside one of the many bomb shelters that were located on the kibbutz. This kibbutz was located very close to Lebanon and Syria, therefore they had experienced missile threats in the past.”

A stop in Tzfat to learn about Jewish mysticism was a mixed experience. A scheduling snafu kept the group from meeting with the rabbi and seeing the shul they had been scheduled; however, “we did get to see some really cool shops and some very interesting people,” Moss observed. “We encountered many people claiming to be poor or homeless asking for money. We also ran into many people asking the men on our trip if they had wrapped tefillin today.”

On Friday evening, the group led their own traditional Friday night service that Moss described as beautiful and fun, if somewhat confused. It was designed to accommodate the different levels of observance the group members practiced.

As a vegan, Moss had some difficulty finding appropriate food throughout the trip. She soon “made friends with the other vegan on the trip, so we pretty much stuck together for all food outings.”

A trip down the Jordan River on a raft was one of Moss’ favorite parts of the trip. “It was a perfect day and we had such a fun time trying to steer the raft and splashing each other with the water.

“After rafting, our tour guide took us to this huge underground crawling cave system,” she continued. “This scared me a lot, and there were a lot of girls on the trip that refused to go in the cave. I decided to go in anyways. It was one of the hardest and scariest things I had ever done in my life.

“It was almost a mile of me dragging myself through a dusty tunnel that was pitch black,” she added. “Luckily I had my new friend Stephanie in front of me, preparing me for every upcoming twist and turn. When I finally made it out of the cave, I was drenched in sweat, but I had a whole new respect for myself. I accomplished something I never thought I would be brave enough to do.”

Moss found a trip to S’derot unnerv-

ing. Located near the Gaza Strip, this small town often finds itself under attack. Graphic videos drove home the message that the “Tzeva Adom” (Code Red) warning gives residents only 15 seconds of warning to reach safety before the rockets hit. “I held onto my boyfriend’s hand and wouldn’t let go for the entire time that we were in Sderot,” she said.

“The Israeli government has done a lot to protect these people,” she noted. “They have required that all houses built in this area have a bomb shelter attached or very near to their home. They have also sanctioned the building of bus stops, playgrounds, restaurants, bathrooms, and many other structures that are designed to act as bomb shelters.”

The residents make the best of the situation, even crafting “beautiful metal flowers” and other works of art from the remains of the missiles.

The trip also included a stop at an “amazing farm in the middle of the desert,” Moss said. “We got to dig up carrots and pick tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers to eat. We also got to see some trained carrier pigeons used in aiding the army.”

A night in a Bedouin tent camp was a highlight for Sabes. “I liked sleeping in Bedouin tents then climbing Masada at sunrise,” he said. “I’ve never camped a day in my life,” so sleeping in a tent was new experience.

Both Moss and Bennett had a difficult time with the climb up Masada. For Bennett, her discomfort was increased because her group made the climb on Tisha B’Av and she was fasting.

As Sabes has had back surgery, he was also pleased that he was able to climb the rocks “all the way to the top and see the sunrise and take pictures. It was special.”

He also had the opportunity to speak with a young Israeli. “He explained to me a lot about how life is in Israel – being in the IDF, how he lives his life and how hard it is to live in Israel financially.”

Sabes said he is interested in returning to Israel in the near future, perhaps as a volunteer in the IDF while he learns and studies there.

“My trip to Israel was one I will never forget,” Moss said. “I have made friendships that will last a lifetime. I am very grateful to the people that made it possible for me to go, and I am very anxious to get back to Israel and explore on my own. I would even consider moving there someday. I am truly in love with Israel and I will continue to support Israel in any way that I can.”

“Birthright was right trip for me,” Sabes added. “I enjoyed it. I didn’t expect as much hiking as there was, but I enjoyed being able to do whitewater rafting, interacting with other people and making

new friends. I’m still in touch with other people. It reminded me of USY.”

Bennett found herself on a very secular trip designed for groups of families and friends. Since she considers herself a religious person and was not traveling with people she knew, the group wasn’t a good fit for her; however, she still had a positive experience and learned a lot.

“The Western Wall was quite meaningful and a very profound experience,” she said. “Being new to the Jewish community and newly Jewish, being at The Wall made me feel more connected to our ancestors.”

The same day, her group went to Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Memorial Museum. “It was a huge emotional experience that made me feel more connected to the Jewish people,” Bennett said.

“Israel is a gorgeous country,” she said, “and the Western Galilee is breathtaking.” She particularly enjoyed a stop at a lookout point, where the migrating birds pass.

Since she keeps kosher, Bennett enjoyed being able to eat meat wherever she went.

She also enjoyed visiting the shuk (open market) on Friday afternoon when people were getting ready for Shabbat. “That was a joyous feeling,” she said. “Kids were running around happy and everyone was buying challah. It was good.”

She described the Israelis who accompanied her group as “fun and very vibrant.”

Bennett, too, would like to return – next time with her boyfriend – and maybe to experience Israel on her own. Following the trip, she said, “I feel more connected to the global Jewish community,” she said.

The idea of providing the gift of a trip to Israel was initially endorsed by the philanthropists Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, who shared the belief that it was the birthright of all young Jews to be able to visit their ancestral homeland.

Since its inception in December 1999, Taglit-Birthright Israel has sent nearly 300,000 Jewish young adults to Israel. They come from 60 countries, all 50 U.S. states and Canadian provinces, and from nearly 1,000 North American colleges and universities.

The gift of a Taglit-Birthright Israel trip is made possible thanks to the generous support from many sources, including parents of trip participants, alumni of the program, the program’s founders and other philanthropists, the State of Israel, the Jewish Federation system and Keren Hayesod, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and thousands of individuals donors from around the world.

Central Area Consortium | Western Galilee

PARTNERSHIP

TRIP

2GETHER

CONNECT WITH
YOUR EXTENDED
P2G FAMILY
IN ISRAEL.

TRIP DATES & COST:
September 21 -
October 1

\$2,980 / per person
(Land Only & Double Occupancy)
Single Supplement is \$1240

Visiting
Jerusalem,
Akko, and
Tell Aviv

PARTNERSHIP
2GETHER
WESTERN GALILEE
CENTRAL AREA
CONSORTIUM

For more information
contact Jan Goldstein
at jan.israeljourneys@cox.net

הסוכנות היהודית
JEWISH AGENCY
FOR ISRAEL

Jewish Federation
OF LOUISVILLE

To register
contact Sara Wagner at
502-238-2779 or swagner@jewishlouisville.org

NCSY

Continued from page 4

and singing – even the Israeli soldiers. We could see the men on one side, praying and more serious but also dancing in their black and white hats. The women were on the other side – their outfits were more colorful – they were rejoicing and dancing in circles and singing, even though no one even knew each other. Just seeing so many people come to one place – all for the same reason, all for their religion.”

Jennifer said that when they visited the Cave of Machpelah, she witnessed an amazing sight when she saw spontaneous singing and dancing. “I assumed

that this kind of thing must happen all the time.” But the rabbi there told her that in his four years of taking trips to Israel, he had never seen that happen before. “It was random and it was amazing,” said Jennifer.

Jennifer said she is so grateful for the scholarship she received from the Jewish Foundation of Louisville funded by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence that allowed her to make this incredible life-changing journey.

“Israel is just this very special place that every Jew feels connected to – no matter how religious. If they are confused or lost, they have that connection. They can just go there and find themselves.”

Professional development mission includes Belarus, Israel

by Niki King,
Public Relations Specialist
and
Shiela Steinman Wallace
Editor

Each year, the Jewish Federations of North America takes Campaign leaders – both volunteers and professionals – on a mission to see real examples of how dollars raised by Annual Federation Campaigns are used abroad through partner agencies.

The Jewish Federations of North America includes 153 Jewish Federations member communities, including the Jewish Community of Louisville, and more than 300 network communities. Collectively, we raise and distribute \$1 billion through our Annual Campaigns to provide vital services for Jews-at-risk in Israel, in Jewish communities in 70 countries and at home.

This July, Stu Silberman, JCL's president and CEO, elected to go on the week-long, whirlwind mission trip to Belarus and Israel to see first-hand how campaign dollars are used and develop a better understanding of the extraordinary things we do together to change lives. It was his first professional mission.

He met individuals who receive needed services, participated in programs that build Jewish identity and community, toured education sites for Jewish youth and witnessed preservation efforts for Jewish history and heritage.

He returned inspired by the projects he witnessed and galvanized to share his experiences with our local community with a renewed commitment to the work we do as part of the worldwide Jewish community.

Question: Why was it important for you to go on this mission?

Silberman: When we allocate the money raised during our Annual Campaign, a portion supports critical work overseas. Last year, our community sent \$194,312 to JFNA to be distributed to the partner agencies: The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and World ORT. I want to be able to say I saw the money in action and to understand how it changes lives. The information I learned and the inspiration it provided will enable me to be a more effective advocate for our Campaign and to convey its importance more clearly and passionately.

Question: What experiences in Belarus moved you most?

Silberman: A group of five of us had the opportunity to go on a very inspiring home visit in Minsk. Diana, a high school student, and her mother, live in a two-bedroom apartment. Diana is creative and bright, but she is also severely vision-impaired.

To help fulfill its mission of caring for Jews-at-risk and helping them reach their full potential, the JDC purchased an oversized computer monitor which Diana uses for schoolwork, to write poetry and for other creative endeavors. She's a poet, an artist and an actress. Having the computer gave her a way to write down her poetry, study her lines and perform. She was very grateful for this gift and she and her mother understood that it was the Jewish community caring for them. We all left feeling the real impact of how something small had made such a big difference for her.

We also went to the town of Volozhin; saw its historic Yeshiva and sites where thousands of Jews were massacred during World War II. There, youth from former Soviet Union countries were cleaning and cataloguing derelict Jewish cemeteries, helping to ensure that Jewish history there is preserved.

Many of the Jewish children in Belarus and the other new Eastern European and Asian countries knew nothing of their Jewish heritage or identity until recently, so the JAFI helps them fill in the gaps and develop a strong connection to their roots through Jewish summer camps. Often they return home and encourage their parents to strengthen their own connections to Judaism.

We visited one of those camps near Minsk and found that it rivals any overnight Jewish camp we have in the United States with respect to both content and facilities. I spent the day with two young girls, one of whom had just learned she was Jewish before coming to camp. We sang Israeli songs, danced Israeli dances and ate Israeli food. The campers learned more about Israel as their counsellors helped them identify religious sites and cities on a large Styrofoam map of Israel. These children really connected with their heritage and culture.

Question: Didn't our community send goods? How were those received?

Silberman: I'd like to thank community members and the Louisville district branch of Walgreens for helping me fill a suitcase with school and medical supplies and arts and crafts. The Minsk Jewish Center received them with tremendous gratitude.

Question: How about Israel? You were there for about four days as part of the professional mission. What experiences resonated?

Silberman: We visited the town of Kiryat Yam to see a science and technology-based school and I was impressed with what youth there were learning. World ORT built this incredible complex in a relatively impoverished section of Israel so those children can benefit from first-rate math and science instruction. With the improved education they receive at this school, these children can be prepared to enter university on par with their peers from other parts of the country and they will become productive members of society.

We had lunch at one of the six absorption centers for the 8,400 Ethiopian residents who have relocated to Israel. We just reached a milestone. The entire community of Ethiopian Jews who wanted to come to Israel have now made that journey. The final airlift was completed in August. That doesn't mean the work is done. Now it's about helping them integrate. Much has been accomplished already. Today there are many Ethiopians who are productive members of Israeli society. There members of Knesset – even one Ethiopian woman MK – doctors and other professionals. We must continue to provide support through JAFI for those who have just arrived, so they, too, can make the transition and contribute to their new homeland.

And, we visited an organic farm where Masa youth were spending six months at a time learning sustainable farming practices and values. Masa is a next logical step for participants of the Taglit Birthright Israel program who want to return and spend more time exploring our homeland.

Question: Did the trip meet your expectations?

Silberman: It exceeded my expectations. I'm convinced we're making such a difference in so many ways overseas. I hope next year we have more volunteers from the campaign and community take advantage of this opportunity and undertake the mission as well.

Question: After the Campaign Chairs and Directors Mission, why did you choose to stay in Israel and have your family – your wife, Alison, and daughters Skylar and Rachel – join you?

Silberman: In order to be most effective in this position, I must be able to draw on both professional experiences and personal, familial experiences. Raising Jewish children really inspires me to be as effective as I can for the other families in the community.

This is the first time my wife and I visited State of Israel together and it was the first time for our girls. We experienced the excitement and passion that a mission to Israel brings. By sharing it, we hope to inspire others in the community to experience something similar so they'll return more committed to support Jewish people in need, not only in Israel, but around the world.

On the insistence of our younger daughter, Rachel, who is 11, we hiked the snake path up Masada, starting before dawn and arriving at the summit in time to see the sunrise. She had learned about it in Religious School, and she wanted to experience it for herself. For us, it became symbolic of our ability to take on the obstacles, whatever they may be, and be supportive as a family and of Israel's determination to address its issues. That was one of our most meaningful experiences.

Our older daughter, Skylar, is an equestrian, so we spent an afternoon riding horses in the Golan Heights, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. We were so close to the conflict in Syria we heard a large bomb explode, a relatively common occurrence these days. We also visited Yad Vashem, taking care to prepare Rachel, who as a rising sixth grader and has not yet had the Holocaust curriculum, for some of what she was going to see.

As it has been many years since Alison and I had visited, we were excited to see some of the more recent excavations. We toured the tunnels at Kotel (Western Wall), and visited the Davidson Center and City of David just outside the Old City where recent discoveries are being studied. In the Western Galilee, our Partnership 2Gether region, we saw the beautiful grottoes in Rosh Hanikra. We met some of our colleagues there and made a stop at Western Galilee Medical Center where they are treating some of the victims of the war in Syria. (See story, page B9.) We also saw the com-

mand bunker that provides security for the region. It was a very proud moment for me to see Louisville listed along with the other consortium communities on the plaque recognizing those who contributed to that building.

Question: Any final comments?

Silberman: This trip gave me a better understanding of the important work we do in Israel and around the world. It increased my passion for the Jewish community and my commitment to the work of tikkun olam – the repair of the world – that we accomplish with our Campaign.

I encourage everyone who has not been to Israel, to go; and those who have been to return to see and experience the extraordinary things we do together. Join the partnership mission to Israel in September (see ad, page B6) or contact me, at 238-2723 or ssilberman@jewishlouisville.org, and I'll help you start planning your trip to Israel.



Stu Silberman, center, with Rena and Shanna, two young girls establishing their Jewish identity



Diana with a mission participant, and in the background, Alexandra Shklar, Louisville's former sh'lich



Campers locate significant sites on a map of Israel



Celebrating Israel at the JAFI camp in Belarus

Families use summer vacation to visit Jewish State

Goldberg family trip gives Sophia a chance to practice Hebrew

by Phyllis Shaikun
Special to Community

This has been an exciting, enlightening and exhausting summer for Alyson and Jeffrey Goldberg and their 10-year-old daughter, Sophia. Their travel agenda has taken them through six different time zones in the United States and abroad since May, when they began their odyssey with a one-week trip to Israel.

There were several different reasons for their visit, Aly explained. She had always wanted to go to Israel, and Jeff, who had spent an eight-month-long residency at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem in 1986, was anxious to return. The trip was also an opportunity for them to catch up with some of the students who had stayed with them in past years through the Federation's Partnership programs.

And finally, it would provide a chance for Sophia, who has been home-schooled for the past few years and has been studying Hebrew as a second language, to have some hands-on practice with verbal communication.

Sophia also polished her Hebrew skills both before and after their trip when the Goldbergs hosted Dikla Alegra Levi, the Jewish Community Center's shlichah, in their home for five weeks. She and Sophia made signs and flash cards and worked together on her language development each afternoon.

When Aly initially contacted Alitalia Airlines to book their Israel flight, she was surprised to learn there was a unique opportunity to add another dimension to the family's travel and save money at the same time. If they booked a

layover of at least a few nights in Italy on their way home, their airfare cost would virtually be cut in half! They speedily and happily arranged for a week-long stay in Italy on the return trip.

As for the land portion of their trip, Aly sought advice from her friends, Faina and Ariel Kronenberg, and a local travel agent, Herlene Margulis. Once Jeff's cousins in Tel Aviv, Ze'ev and Irit Livnat, heard the Goldbergs were coming, they planned the itinerary and accompanied them to sites in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Ein Gedi. The Livnat's parents and grandparents actually helped to found Tel Aviv, so their personal knowledge added a wonderful dimension to the trip.

"We changed hotels four times in six days," Aly laughed, "it was amazing, but we were tired."

Sophia didn't miss a beat and enjoyed all of the activities including swimming in the Dead Sea and exploring the rain forest at Ein Gedi. Since their cousins knew the owners of a camel ranch, they were able to have tea with the Bedoin ranchers (which was very nice) and to drink camel's milk (which was not so nice!).

The family had a private tour of the underground tunnel that sits below Jerusalem's Western Wall. They entered on the Jewish side and reached a section closest to the Ark of the Covenant. As they exited through the Muslim area, two IDF members flanked their group, escorting them out and cautioning them that while they were under their watch, the group should talk to no one.

They quickly found themselves on the Via Dolorosa, the route believed to have been taken by Jesus on his way to Cal-

vary. Aly remarked they felt they had seen three of the world's great religions in just 10 minutes' time.

She emphasized that whether they were at the Wall or in Tel Aviv or in the south, they felt totally safe in Israel. They found the people welcoming, kind and grateful to have had tourists come to visit.

Their stay in Italy gave them time to relax a bit, to visit the Jewish district in Rome and to take in some tours of historical sites. Aly was particularly delighted to find so many different flavors of lactose-free gelato – a really unexpected treat!

Their summer travels continued with trips to Chicago to see Jeff receive a Master's degree from Northwestern University and to attend the wedding of their Hindu neighbor to a Chicago girl whose family is of the Sikh faith. (Aly says you can compare this to a Jew marrying a Catholic – doable, but a bit complicated.) They recently returned from an Alaskan cruise with Jeff's parents, Linda and Stuart Goldberg, and his siblings and their families.

Although Aly and Jeff have no specific



Sophia Goldberg enjoys some Hebrew ice cream at McDonald's



The Goldberg family at the Ein Gedy Resort

plans for a return trip to Israel, they and Sophia have no doubt they will be back. In fact, Sophia might well be ready to serve as their bilingual guide.

Three generations of Greenbergs visit Israel together

by Phyllis Shaikun
Special to Community

When Ruth and Ron Greenberg and their children and grandchildren traveled to Israel on July 20 for a 10-day stay, Ruth considered it a special occasion for many reasons. "When dealing with schedules for 11 people," she explained, "being able to be together at the same time in the same place is reason enough to celebrate."

Although she and Ron had visited Israel several times, they felt blessed to experience it once again with their family, Jennifer and Jeff Tuvlin and Craig and Rachel Greenberg and their grandchildren, Andrew, Ethan and Jared Tuvlin and Daniel and Ben Greenberg. "It was a phenomenal trip," she said, "and everyone loved every minute of it."

They initially contacted Rabbi Robert Slosberg and spoke with others who had traveled to Israel with young families to determine how best to arrange their own visit. Jennifer worked with the travel

agent and did much of the groundwork, Ron purchased the tickets and everyone had input as they worked for a year to plan their dream vacation.

They sought and found a family-centered guide who liked children (the boys range in age from seven to 12), could talk on their level and would be flexible to their needs. This was Rachel's first trip to Israel, so it was fun for the others to see and feel her unique excitement as they travelled together.

The children were engaged from the outset and peppered the guide with questions. Ruth compared them to little sponges absorbing all of the information they were given.

"I truly believe they will always remember this trip," she says. "Our hope is that they will establish a deep and committed relationship with the country and with their heritage. Standing in the Golan and watching and hearing bombing blasts in the Syrian valley below drove home the fact that the Middle East is a vulnerable place."

On the lighter side, Grandma Ruth arranged for the family to be together for "A Taste of Jerusalem" (*Cook in the Shuk* for short), which turned out to be one of the highlights of the trip. The cook, Ruth (Ruti) Yudekovitz, picked up the family on Friday morning and guided them through Mechane

Yehuda (the Shuk or Arab Market), where they divided into teams to purchase the foods they would need to cook for dinner.

They returned to her home in the Abu-Tor neighborhood, where the boys baked challah, Ruth prepared grape leaves and the others did their part for the meal. Late that afternoon, they paid a pre-Shabbat visit to the Wall before returning to Ruti's lovely home to enjoy the meal they had prepared.

The Greenbergs consider themselves lucky to have been part of a small group that had the services of a private guide and minivan. They spent long, exhausting days where they rose early and often stayed out sight-seeing until after 5 o'clock. Their visit began in Tel Aviv, where they spent two nights; they then spent two nights in the Hula Valley at Kibbutz K'far Blum and five nights in Jerusalem, which served as a base for day trips to explore Ein Ghedi, the Dead Sea, Massada and other sites. During the trip, they were on the borders with Lebanon and Syria and drove through the West Bank several times.

Although the desert was the hottest spot they encountered, the children loved the camel rides in Genesis Land, a place where they experienced life as it was in Abraham's time. The boys also enjoyed the interactive Palmach and Herschel Museums and particularly loved their archaeological dig, which included a tour of an unexcavated cave system.

If she had it to do all over again, Ruth thinks she might have added a stop in Petra or included an extra day at the end of the trip so they could have relaxed before heading home. All in all, however, the family felt Israel was the perfect place to experience together and they are delighted they made the trip.

Bar Mitzvah prompts Latts family trip

by Phyllis Shaikun

Kate and Allan Latts' recent trip to Israel was their second as a couple, but their first as a family. While their 13-year-old son Jake's upcoming bar mitzvah was a motivating factor in their decision to visit, they felt it was a good time to share the country and their heritage with Jake, 10-year-old daughter, Lindsey, and Kate's parents, Ellen and Max Shapira.



The Latts family overlooking the Old City in Jerusalem

"Our intimate family trip was great for us," said Kate Latts. "It was a fabulous family vacation, and since we knew what we wanted to get out of the trip, we planned accordingly."

The year-long preparation for the trip began with a call to Jewish Community of Louisville Senior Vice President/COO Sara Wagner, who suggested they get in touch with Da'at, a full-service travel agency the JCL often uses to plan Israel trips. Da'at representatives interviewed them to determine the type of trip they had in mind and the family worked with an agent in the United States and an on-



Craig Greenberg, Ruth Greenberg, Ron Greenberg, Jeff Tuvlin and Jennifer Tuvlin on a dig in Israel

Louisville connects to Western Galilee thru Partnership 2Gether

Israeli MDs save Ethiopian boy mauled by hyena

When Israeli doctors performed a CT scan on Abdulrazak, an eight-year-old Muslim boy from Ethiopia who was almost mauled to death by a wild hyena, they were surprised to find the rabid animal – that caused severe head, scalp and eye injuries to the young victim – had also taken a piece of his jaw bone.

So, doctors at the government-run Western Galilee Hospital in Nahariya added a bone graft operation to the list of planned life-saving surgeries already set up.



Abdulrazak, after being treated at Western Galilee Hospital. The eight-year-old went without proper treatment for five months before being brought to Israel for treatment.

"We're trying to perform all the surgeries we can. We're saving his life and we're taking him out of danger," Dr. Masad Barhoum, director-general of the Nahariya hospital, tells ISRAEL21c. "What the hyena did was catastrophic."

Abdulrazak is in Israel on a lifesaving cross-border humanitarian mission. His journey from a remote Ethiopian village called Enemur to Israel's northern coastal city is one of bad luck, good luck and a lot of goodwill.

In January of this year, a wild hyena raided Abdulrazak's village, killing six people and injuring 18. The eight-year-old was among those attacked – and though his father, Alawi, risked his life

to pull his son from the wild animal's jaws, Abdulrazak suffered severe head and eye injuries and also lost an ear.

He was transferred to Attat Hospital, a Catholic hospital 187 kilometers outside of Addis Ababa, and spent his first five days there clinging to life. Over the course of five months, Abdulrazak was bandaged and re-bandaged, but because of a lack of hospital equipment and technology he had no surgeries.

In mid-June, a nun from the Philippines who is also an anesthesiologist at Attat Hospital, called Dr. Rick Hodes, medical director of Ethiopia for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and asked him to come see Abdulrazak.

"When I examined him, I noted that he had literally been 'scalped' and was missing his right ear; he had a membrane over his right eye, and he had raw, exposed scalp on the top, back and right side of his head," Hodes wrote in his blog.

Hodes quickly understood that if Abdulrazak weren't treated properly, his wounds could become infected and he could die, so he set in motion a humanitarian operation that includes Bedouin-Israeli diplomat Ishmail Khaldi, Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia Belaynesh Zevadia, Friends of the Western Galilee Hospital, the United Jewish Communities, the Jewish Agency, the JDC and the Israeli ministries of foreign affairs and health to bring Abdulrazak to Israel for proper medical treatment.

"It's a humanitarian effort. We're helping a boy," Barhoum tells ISRAEL21c. "It is Israel's nature to help whoever can be helped. I'm proud to be a part of this healthcare system that acts without hesitation to provide humanitarian aid internationally when we are able. This is an all-embracing mitzvah."

Everyone gets equal treatment

Days after Abdulrazak and his father see **ETHIOPIAN** page 12



The Latts family at the Baniyas Falls in Upper Galilee

gave us a better understanding of the relationships between Israelis and Arabs and between Orthodox and secular Jews. It was amazing to think there were so many layers of culture and history in such a small place."

The family was impressed with modern day Israel's thriving, technologically-advanced business climate and pointed with pride at Google, Pfizer and many other high tech companies with massive facilities in Israel. They found it fascinating that after so many years of supporting Israel through philanthropic contributions, they could finally see a thriving, seemingly self-sufficient nation in their midst.

"There are so many ways to experience Israel," Kate concluded, "and each one is different. While our trip was great for us, other families have to figure out what they are looking for in order to achieve their goals. It is also important to find a guide whose skills can greatly enhance their entire experience."

Syrian victims receive care at Western Galilee Medical Center

Although there has been little reported about it, Israel is playing a role in the conflict in Syria – treating those injured in the fighting.

The youngest victim of Syrian violence to be transferred to Israel for treatment was moved directly to Western Galilee Medical Center (WGMC – formerly Western Galilee Hospital), Nahariya, with serious injuries to her face and limbs.

On Saturday, June 22, IDF medical teams moved the young girl into Israel for treatment, bringing her to WGMC's shock room. Her condition has been defined as moderate to severe as she suffered various injuries.

Immediately upon arrival, the extent and nature of her internal injuries were assessed. Dr. Michael Weiss, director of trauma at the medical center, said, "The girl arrived with an open leg fracture and damage to blood vessels, which requires a complex surgery. In addition a penetration wound has caused damage to her eye area and cheek and there is damage to her left hand, as a result of shrapnel, requiring surgery and rehabilitation."

Since the beginning of the fighting in Syria, WGMC has treated 20 casualties from Syria in the departments of neurosurgery, ophthalmology, oral and maxillofacial, ENT, surgery and orthopedics.

The Western Galilee Medical Center, located on the northern front of the State of Israel, is constantly preparing for emergency and conflict to provide the necessary complex care required by a variety of emergency situations such as

war and mass casualty events. It serves both the civilian population of some 600,000 people of the region and the IDF forces who serve along the northern border.



Israeli doctors treat a Syrian girl after she was injured in the fighting. The girl is one of 20 casualties from Syria the Israeli hospital has treated since the beginning of fighting.

The staff and administration provide quality care to all victims of violence, including those transferred by the IDF, fulfilling their strong desire to save lives regardless of the diplomatic tensions between Israel and Syria.

WGMC is part of the Western Galilee Partnership 2Gether region that is paired with the Midwest Consortium of Communities, including Louisville. A number of Louisville doctors and other medical personnel have received training in handling mass casualty events at WGMC, and several WGMC doctors have come to Louisville for specialized training.

LATTS

Continued from page 8

the-ground person in Israel to work out the details.

For the Latts, it would need to be a kid-oriented, outdoorsy and experiential trip led by a guide with a sense of humor and the ability to adjust the itinerary to suit the mood of the crowd at any one time. Da'at provided the information they needed – even down to restaurant recommendations – to make their visit a memorable one, and they appreciated Da'at's service and attention to detail.

The family arrived in Tel Aviv and spent the first part of their vacation in the north of Israel. They met Kate's parents in Jerusalem for the second part of their journey.

"It was such an educational trip for all of us," said Allan Latts. "We gained so much from stops at Independence Hall, Caesarea and Sfad, and from exploring the Old City and the Tower of David. Jake and Lindsey really loved the archaeological dig, rafting on the Jordan River and swimming in the Dead Sea. Jake particularly enjoyed the ruins and captured everything he saw on Instagram play by play while we were there."

"We learned a lot about the Jewish people's biblical and political history," Kate added, "and gained a better understanding of modern day Israel and the lives of the different types of people who live there. Observing everyday life

Community

Advertising Really Works!

Community readers are ready, willing & able to shop today!

Reach customers across Louisville with targeted, effective ads.

Put **Community** to work for you. Contact Aaron Leibson at (502) 418-5845 or aleibson@jewishlouisville.org.



The **Community** is one of the largest specialty newspapers serving the Louisville Jewish community. Don't just take our word on the benefits. Listen to what our clients have to say...



"We have advertised our shows in the **Community** newspaper for many years and have found that they reach an audience that we don't reach with other publications."

– Bekki Jo Schneider
Derby Dinner Playhouse

Saving the Stones offers insights into history and heritage



The sun sets over the Old City of Acre.

by Cynthia Canada
Special to Community

If you're thinking about a trip to Israel and you're looking for a new perspective, the Old City of Acre may be the place to start.

Old Acre is the location of the International Conservation Center, which offers programs that can open up new views on life in Israel over the centuries. Director Shelley-Anne Peleg, who visited Louisville in April with a Partnership 2Gether delegation from Western Galilee, shared information about exciting opportunities to experience the region and even the country differently.

The Old City of Acre was designated in 2001 as a UNESCO World Heritage site. According to the program guide of the International Conservation Center, the city has more than 50,000 residents, "all contributing to the cultural mosaic where Jews, Muslims, Christians, Armenians, Druze and Bahai, live in exemplary coexistence." Acre is a Mediterranean port city, home to millennia of world cultures, from Hellenistic to the British Mandate.

The Center offers a range of historic conservation and preservation programs that provide insight into life in historic Israel from a very real and concrete vantage point. And while the programs are based in Old Acre, they take participants all over the country, from Tiberias and Cesarea to Jerusalem, and into active archaeological digs as well as labs such as those where the Dead Sea Scrolls are kept.

As Peleg said in April, when she spoke with Community editor Shiela Steinman Wallace and Jewish Community of Louisville Marketing Director Ben Goldenberg, "The entire country is my playground." She encourages Louisvillians to consider coming to Israel to take advantage of these opportunities by enrolling in the "Saving the Stones" program.

"Saving the Stones" is an academic program geared toward young adults – students and professionals, particularly those in the fields of preservation and conservation, anthropology and history, urban planning and design, and related disciplines. Three months of foundational study in research documentation, survey methods and treatment planning cover both theoretical and practical aspects of archaeological research and conservation fieldwork. An optional two-month advanced practicum allows participants to apply their newfound knowledge to personal research.

For those with less time to devote to such studies, the Center offers a five-week summer intensive that introduces participants to historic preservation, heritage conservation and conservation techniques. The summer intensive is open to all adults – the only requirement is a compelling concern for historic preservation.

It combines practical and theoretical training with hands-on experience at ongoing national conservation projects, including the medieval castle ruins of Yehaiam and the Western Wall Tunnels in Jerusalem's Old City, and study of historic building technologies dating to the

Ottoman era in Old Acre, among other projects.

And then there's summer camp! Camp Conservation is a 14-day workshop – perfect "vacation-length" – open to all interested adults, from novices to those with more research experience. Its primary focus is preservation of the historic Ottoman Governor's Mansion in Old Acre, and it also includes tours of sites in the Western Galilee, such as the Rosh Hanikra Grottos, Achziv Beach and nature reserve, the Kabri Aqueduct, and the Sea of Galilee and surrounding area.

The Center also has openings for volunteers who want to live and work in this fascinating historic venue.

Visiting Israel often has the effect of helping belief to find its taproot, nourishing believers' faith and understanding and contributing to growth and a sense of unity among even those who consider themselves secular Jews. Involvement in historic preservation can take the experience to the next level, creating very real ties to centuries past and breathing life into what previously were simply stories or topics for discussion. To delve into one's historic and religious heritage in such a concrete way is to step into and participate in history – to bring it to life for others to see and experience.

Historic preservation studies also can build on one's knowledge base in other, more pragmatic ways. The Center's website includes the experiences of a law school student focusing on real estate and land use law, who took home an expanded understanding of architecture that has helped her with related questions, and a graduate student in Geographic Information Systems, who gained insight into integrating cultures, as well as building valuable experience in repurposing historic structures.

The cost of all programs covers meals, accommodation, workshops and lectures, and exclusive access to historic sites throughout Israel. It also includes the cost of transportation during the programs. Transportation to and from Old Acre is not included, nor are personal expenses. Scholarships are available for "Saving the Stones." (Accommodations are not provided for volunteers.)

For more information, visit the Center's website, conservationcenter.org.il, or on Facebook ("Saving the Stones").

Kentucky group provides bulletproof backpacks to Israelis

by Shiela Steinman Wallace

While most of the time, Israel is a safe place to visit, and residents in most of Israel are secure in their homes, Israel is located in a difficult neighborhood. Since its establishment 65 years ago, Israel has fought several wars for its survival, and even when there is no major combat, it must constantly be on guard against terrorist attacks.

The IDF has been fairly effective against suicide bombers and other devices within its borders, it has been unable to stop the almost daily barrage of rockets from Gaza. The southern cities of S'derot and, more recently, Ashkelon are regular targets of these attacks. When hostilities break out with Hezbollah, some northern Israeli cities are also in jeopardy.

Wherever you turn in S'derot, there are bomb shelters and reinforced concrete structures that offer some protection from the Hamas rockets. Ashkelon is a bigger city within three miles of a major hydroelectric plant and other strategic targets, and it is only recently that Hamas acquired rockets that can reach it. When the "tzeva adom" – code red – is sounded, residents know they have just 14 seconds to seek shelter before an incoming rocket hits.



The Shield of David distributing ballistic and bullet-proof backpacks to school children living in Ashkelon, Israel. Just seven miles from Gaza, Ashkelon is the often target of rockets fired into this region by Hamas.

But what happens if someone is more than 14 seconds from a shelter? What about little children, the disabled, the elderly?

Bart Britt, the executive director of Shield of David in Bowling Green, decided to do something about it. In 2009, he established a non-profit organization to distribute bulletproof backpacks made of a lightweight material that can shield people from many munitions as well as the deadly shards of glass, ball bearings, nails, screws and shrapnel that often fill the air when a Kassam rocket hits.

When incorporated into backpacks that weigh only four pounds, that material can shield the wearer's vital organs and save lives. The backpack is made in sizes for both adults and children and is designed to accommodate school supplies, laptop computers and other things people commonly carry.

Since each backpack costs \$250, it is an expensive proposition to supply backpacks to all Israelis who live under this threat of attack.

Shield of David, an Evangelical Christian organization that interprets Ezekiel 33:7 as an instruction that everyone needs to be watchful for Israel, has established as its mission the goal of providing protective backpacks to those who are at risk of rocket attacks in Israel.

Britt said, "We're really new as a non-profit and we're continuing to strive to build our base of donors. ... We've barely been in existence for year. We shipped the first 500 backpacks last October. see **BACKPACKS** page 12

Today's news updates from Israel

Women of the Wall, shielded by police, raises Torah scroll and blows shofar



Women of the Wall member raises a Torah scroll to cheers at the gate of the Western Wall Plaza during the group's monthly Rosh Chodesh service, Aug. 7, 2013. (Miriam Alster)



Women of the Wall members blow the shofar at the back of the Western Wall Plaza during its monthly Rosh Chodesh service, Aug. 7, 2013. (Miriam Alster)

5773 Year in Review: Fighting over Jewish pluralism

by Uriel Heilman

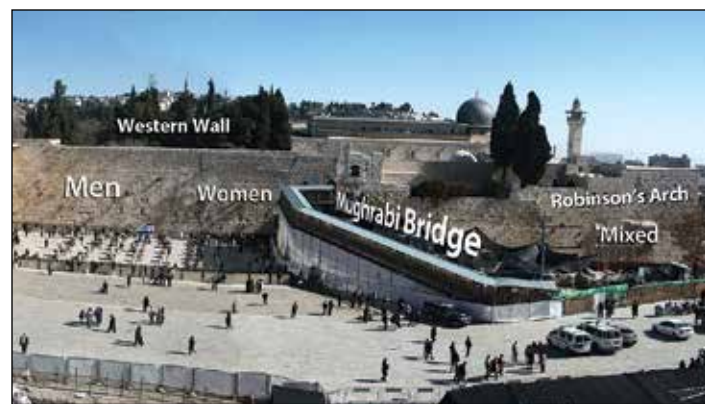
NEW YORK (JTA) – In 5773, the religious wars just would not go away.

In Israel, elections that extended Benjamin Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister delivered big wins to two anti-Orthodox-establishment upstarts, Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett. For the first time in nearly two decades, Israel's coalition government included no hard-edged Orthodox parties.



Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid hugging Jewish Home party chief Naftali Bennett following Lapid's first speech at the Knesset, Feb. 11, 2013. (Miriam Alster/Flash90/JTA)

The Israel Defense Forces took concrete steps toward ending the draft exemption for haredi men. Israel's Ministry of Religious Services agreed for the first time to allow non-Orthodox rabbis to serve in communal positions with state-funded salaries.



An illustration of Natan Sharansky's proposal, which will expand the Western Wall and create a permanent egalitarian space in the Robinson's Arch area. (Creative Commons/Graphics by Uri Flinty)

And the Reform and Conservative movements finally broke through years of apathy to get the Israeli government to consider changes to the Orthodox monopoly over ritual and prayer at the Western Wall – but there's been no movement beyond proposals.

In the United States, Yeshivat Maharat, a New York school for women founded four years ago to train Orthodox female rabbinic authorities, graduated its first class of Orthodox clergy, known as maharats. The Supreme Court granted federal benefits to same-sex couples and struck down a California law banning gay marriage in the state.



Yeshivat Maharat graduates at their ordination ceremony in NYC, June 16, 2013 (Joe Winkler)

While Jewish liberals seemed to have a good year, Orthodox leaders and institutions found themselves on the defensive.

Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Yona Metzger, was arrested on suspicion of fraud and money laundering.

Yeshiva University, the flagship institution of Modern Orthodoxy, became the subject of a \$380 million lawsuit by former students alleging that two rabbis

who used to teach at the Y.U. high school for boys in the 1970's and '80's committed hundreds of acts of sex abuse. When Y.U.'s chancellor, Rabbi Norman Lamm, announced he was stepping down, he apologized for mishandling the allegations when he was university president.

The Satmar hasidic community in New York became embroiled in its own sex scandal when it lined up to support an unlicensed therapist from Brooklyn charged with the repeated sexual assault of a female teenager in his care.

Even after Nechemya Weberman was found guilty and sentenced to 103 years in prison, the community's support did not waver. Rather, Satmar leaders inveighed against the victim and her supporters. A few days after the trial, a hasidic assailant threw bleach in the face of a community rabbi, Nuchem Rosenberg, who advocates for victims of sex abuse.

But to extrapolate a storyline or trend from these disparate events could be folly.

For one thing, the Orthodox sex scandals might be more about the dawning of a new age of reckoning on sex abuse than the prevalence of sexual misdeeds among Orthodox Jews.

And for all the triumphs that Jewish liberals saw this year, demographic trends suggest that the Jewish communities in the United States and Israel are growing less liberal.

Data released in January from the 2011 Jewish population study of New York showed that two-thirds of the metropolitan region's Jewish population growth over the last decade occurred in two haredi neighborhoods in Brooklyn. While there hasn't been a national Jewish population study in more than a decade,



Two Chasidic men walk in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Along with Borough Park, the neighborhood accounts for two-thirds of overall Jewish population growth in the New York area, according to new details from a 2012 study. (Gedalya Gottdenger via Creative Commons)

the data from America's largest Jewish community suggest that Orthodox Jews, with their high birthrates, will represent an ever-larger proportion of the American Jewish community.

"The traditional population of American Jews has high fertility and the non-Orthodox population as a group is well below replacement level," New York



Haredi Orthodox Jews watching the victory speech of President Obama at the American Center in Jerusalem, Nov. 7, 2012. (Miriam Alster/Flash90/JTA)

University sociologist Steven M. Cohen, one of the researchers who conducted the study, told JTA. "So American Jewry, with no other change, will become increasingly traditional in the years to come."

While fertility rates among non-Orthodox Israelis are not as low as those of American Jews, they lag far behind those of Orthodox Israelis. The relative size of Israel's haredi community as a share of Israel's total population is expected to double by 2020, to 16 percent.

In Israel, the culture wars between haredi and non-haredi have focused on the haredi draft exemption and the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate's monopoly over marriage.

The haredi establishment has mostly succeeded in protecting the status quo on both those counts, notwithstanding changes in the draft law. And when the 150 or so electors charged with choosing new Ashkenazi and Sephardic chief rabbis went to the polls in July, they rejected the reformist favorite David Stav and instead elected two haredim, David Lau and Yitzhak Yosef, the sons of former chief rabbis.

In the American Jewish community, the battle has not been between denominations but over Jewish values.

Is it a Jewish value to support the right of gays to marry or does the practice contravene Jewish ethics? Should Jews be advocating for greater government funding for private religious schools or fighting the use of taxpayer money in non-public schools? Should Jews press Washington to make a concerted push for Israeli-Palestinian peace or is such pressure right now not in Israel's best interests?

The divisions among American Jews on these issues do not fall neatly along denominational lines.

Meanwhile, the American Jewish political divide appears slowly to be widening. Though Jews as a whole still skew heavily Democratic, in last November's election President Obama dropped at least 6 points among Jews from 2008, winning an estimated 68 percent of the Jewish vote. The 2012 election also ushered in a Congress with fewer Jewish members than at any time since the 1990s.



President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama embrace Vice President Joe Biden and Jill Biden just after the election was called in their favor, at the Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park in Chicago, Nov. 6, 2012. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

The divides over politics and religion stood in sharp contrast to the relative consensus that held up through much of the year on international issues.

There was practical unanimity on concern that Syria's civil war not spill over the border, that instability in Egypt not turn the Sinai Peninsula into a breeding ground for Islamic militants, that Iran be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons capability, that the European Union enforce its decision to designate Hezbollah's military wing as a terrorist organization.

But external threats did not dominate communal discourse in 5773. There wasn't the same public urgency on Iran as in past years. The Egyptian coup in July was less concerning for Israel than the 2011 revolution that overthrew long-



Egyptian protesters holding an anti-Morsi poster in Tahrir Square in Cairo shortly before the military's ouster of President Mohamed Morsi, July 3, 2013. (Spencer Platt/Getty)

time ally Hosni Mubarak.

The Israeli-Palestinian relationship was marked more by the absence of progress than anything else – until U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry managed to coax both sides back to the negotiating table in July. There was a mini-war in Gaza in November 2012 that lasted eight days and resulted in the deaths of some 150 Palestinians and six Israelis, but after that Israel's border with Gaza was mostly quiet.



A ZAKA volunteer going through the wrecked apartment in Kiryat Malachi of the three people killed by a rocket fired by terrorists from the Gaza Strip, Nov. 15, 2012. (Yossi Zeligier/Flash90/JTA)

It was tragedy in the United States that left the community with lasting scars. Late last October, a massive storm surge generated by Hurricane Sandy battered communities, synagogues and Jewish schools up and down the Northeast coast. UJA-Federation of New York convened an emergency meeting to authorize \$10 million for rebuilding efforts, many of which continue today.



At Mazel Academy in Brooklyn, Torah scrolls were unrolled to dry after being damaged by the floodwaters from Hurricane Sandy, Oct. 31, 2012. (Ben Harris)

Outside of the United States and Israel, the big Jewish stories included the banning of Jewish ritual slaughter in Poland and a new German law regulating ritual circumcision; a controversial exhibit at Berlin's Jewish museum dubbed "Jew in a box" and a new Jewish museum in Warsaw; a much-criticized deal between the Argentinean and Iranian governments to investigate the 1994 AMIA Jewish community center bombing; sex abuse scandals in Australia; concerns about far-right movements in Hungary and Greece, and the appointment of a new chief rabbi in England.

There was some good news here: None of these stories were about major Jewish calamities.

To be sure, the Jewish people suffered tragedies in 5773 – from natural disasters, from Gaza rocket fire. But for a people obsessed with survival and accustomed to attacks, the absence of mass casualty events in 5773 made it a remarkable year as much for what did not happen as for what did.

This week’s news briefs from JTA

The following is JTA’s weekly column of Middle East Briefs for Aug. 20, 2013.

Israelis and Palestinians reportedly talk again

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiators reportedly met for a second round of peace talks.

The French news agency AFP, citing an unnamed Palestinian official, reported that talks were held Tuesday in Jerusalem, with a second meeting scheduled for the evening.

The Associated Press in reporting the talks cited a “senior Palestinian official” who is “close to the negotiations.”

The first round of talks was held last week in Jerusalem. The talks have been held under a near-complete media blackout at the request of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who visited the region a half dozen times in order to bring the two sides to the negotiating table.

Prior to the first round of talks, the negotiators met in July in Washington with Kerry and with President Obama.

The Israeli negotiators are Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and the prime minister’s representative, attorney Isaac Molho. The Palestinian negotiators are Saeb Erekat and Dr. Mohammed Shtayyeh, a senior Fatah official.

Livni wants constitutional proposal balancing Israel’s Jewish, democratic identities

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni appointed Israel Prize winner Ruth Gavison to draft a constitutional proposal that would reconcile the country’s democratic and Jewish characters.

The proposal would be an alternative to the Jewish State Law, a bill proposed recently by the Likud-Beiteinu and Habayit Hayehudi parties that would give Israel’s Jewish identity supremacy over its democratic one, Haaretz reported.

“I believe that the time has arrived to draft a constitutional framework that deals with the character of the State of Israel as Jewish and democratic, and anchors the components of the identity in a balanced way, integrating these values, the Jewish and the democratic,” Livni said in announcing the appointment of Gavison, a Hebrew University law professor, which was reported Tuesday in the Israeli media.

Haaretz reported that Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu does not support the Gavison initiative.

The Jewish State Law bill’s sponsors, Likud’s Yariv Levin and Habayit Hayehudi’s Ayelet Shaked, have called on Netanyahu to support their proposed legislation, which states that the State of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people and that the right of national self-determination within Israel belongs exclusively to the Jewish people.

The bill commits to upholding the civil rights of all Israeli citizens.

Palestinian killed during Israeli mission at refugee camp

JERUSALEM (JTA) – A Palestinian man was shot and killed during an Israeli army mission to arrest a purported terrorist at a West Bank refugee camp.

Soldiers from the haredi Orthodox battalion Netzah Yehuda entered the Jenin camp on Tuesday night to arrest Basam a-Asadi, a senior Islamic Jihad terrorist, according to the IDF.

During a search of Asadi’s home, hundreds of Jenin residents surrounded the area and shot live bullets and threw fire-bombs at the soldiers, the IDF said.

The Palestinian Maan news agency said the residents threw empty bottles and stones at the soldiers.

Majd Mohammad Anis Lahlouh, 22, was shot in the chest during the clashes and killed.

Two Israeli soldiers and two other Palestinians were injured in the incident, which the IDF said it was investigating.

Israel lobbying U.S., EU to support Egypt’s military government

JERUSALEM (JTA) – The Israeli government is pressing its efforts to convince the United States and the European Union to support the military-backed government in Egypt.

The New York Times reported late Sunday that Israeli ambassadors in Washington and the European capitals will lobby foreign ministers, and that Israeli leaders will urge diplomats to see the Israeli viewpoint that the Egyptian military will prevent a further deterioration of the situation in Cairo.

The newspaper cited an unnamed “senior Israeli official involved in the effort.”

“If you insist on big principles, then you will miss the essential – the essential being putting Egypt back on track at whatever cost,” the official told the *Times*. “First, save what you can, and

then deal with democracy and freedom and so on. At this point it’s army or anarchy.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered government officials to refrain from publicly discussing the situation in Egypt.

Israel reportedly has been lobbying American officials hard to sustain the annual \$1.5 billion in U.S. aid to Egypt. President Obama has threatened to withhold the aid over a violent government crackdown on demonstrations in support of ousted President Mohamed Morsi that has resulted in more than 800 deaths since last week.

Last week, Obama canceled a planned joint military exercise with Egypt over the bloodshed.

Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who led the military coup that ousted Morsi, developed close ties with Israel when he headed Egypt’s military intelligence, according to the *Times*, and has remained in close contact with Israel throughout the recent violence and bloodshed.

Palestinian hacker posts on Marc Zuckerberg’s Facebook wall

JERUSALEM (JTA) – A Palestinian hacker posted a message on Facebook founder Marc Zuckerberg’s wall to show there is a bug in the social network’s security settings.

Khalil Shreateh of Hebron posted information about the bug on Zuckerberg’s wall late last week following unsuccessful attempts to report the bug to Facebook security. The bug allowed Shreateh to post on the walls of other members despite security settings.

“Sorry for breaking your privacy ... I had no other choice ... after all the reports I sent to Facebook team,” Shreateh wrote on Zuckerberg’s wall.

Facebook security had denied that the flaw was a bug.

Shreateh, who is unemployed, had hoped to win a \$500 reward paid out to hackers who discover bugs on Facebook. Instead, his Facebook account was frozen, since he violated Facebook’s terms of service by posting illegally on Zuckerberg’s page. His account has since been reinstated.

Israel in retaliatory attacks slams Gaza rocket launchers

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israeli airstrikes destroyed concealed rocket launchers in northern Gaza in retaliation for attacks on southern Israel.

as soon as possible. Even though everyone here is trying to help, you can see that they sense our embrace but they do not feel at home,” explains Barhoum. “If he has to come back for future surgeries, we will bring him back.”

Amir Yarchi, CEO of Friends of the Western Galilee Hospital, tells ISRAEL21c that the organization kick-started a fundraising campaign upon hearing of the boy’s plight a few weeks ago and is still raising funds to cover the necessary treatments, transportation and housing arrangements.

The Western Galilee Hospital is one of the largest medical centers in northern Israel. It serves nearly half a million residents of the region, as well as Israeli soldiers and UN personnel.

“We help everyone regardless of who they are,” Barhoum says noting the hospital also treated a 13-year-old Syrian girl injured in her country’s civil war.

“The doctors treat everyone equally. It’s our pride that we can treat each patient for being a person,” he says. “I hope we will be a partner in future humanitarian missions. This is not our first and we consider it a huge honor to be able to help where we can.”

The attacks early August 14 were in response to rockets launched at Israel the previous evening as Palestinian prisoners being released by Israel were being transported to the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

“This is an absurd situation that would not be tolerated anywhere else in the world,” Israel Defense Forces spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner said in a statement issued August 14. “The IDF is charged with and will continue to operate in order to safeguard Israel’s civilians, and combat terror and its infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.”

One rocket fired August 13 at S’derot fell short of its target and is believed to have landed inside Gaza. A second rocket landed in the nearby Sha’ar Hanegev region in an open area. A jihadist group linked to al-Qaida took responsibility for the attacks.

A day earlier, a long-range Grad rocket was fired at Eilat by a jihadist terror group in the Sinai and intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system.

In the prisoner release, 26 Palestinians were transported in vans to crossings into the West Bank and Gaza. They crossed the border at midnight. Israel agreed to release the prisoners in order to bring the Palestinians back to the peace negotiating table.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas greeted the 11 prisoners freed to the West Bank at a celebration in Ramallah at the site of the Mukata, the presidential palace.

“We welcome our brothers who have left the darkness of prison into the light of freedom and tell them they are the first, but that there are other brothers who too will leave soon. We shall not rest until they are all with us,” Abbas said at the ceremony.

Inscribed pottery shard found from First Temple

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Archaeologists have discovered a pottery fragment in Jerusalem believed to be from the First Temple period that contains the name of a biblical figure.

The fragment was found near the City of David in the village of Silwan, believed to be the site of the ancient city of Jerusalem, according to the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The words on the fragment are believed to be the name of Zechariah son of Benaiah, the father of the seventh century BCE prophet Jahaziel. The writing is in ancient Hebrew script; the first letter is missing.

Jahaziel is found in the second book of Chronicles, when he prophesizes for King Jehoshaphat.

The fragment was found among other shards of pottery, candles, ceramics and figurines also believed to be from the end of the First Temple period.

IBM to pay as much as \$1 billion for Israeli data security firm

JERUSALEM (JTA) – IBM has agreed to acquire the Israeli data security firm Trusteer for an undisclosed sum that is believed to be up to \$1 billion.

Trusteer, which has locations in Tel Aviv and Boston, develops software to help businesses protect themselves against financial fraud and security threats. Upon the official closing of the deal, Trusteer will join the IBM Security Systems organization, IBM announced August 15.

IBM, an American multinational technology and consulting corporation, is forming a cybersecurity software lab in Israel where Trusteer and IBM researchers will work on advanced software to address more complicated cyber threats.

This would be IBM’s largest ever acquisition in Israel, according to the Israeli business daily Globes. The purchase price is believed to be between \$800 million and \$1 billion.

BACKPACKS

Continued from page 10

They were distributed through the mayor’s office in Ashkelon where children have no access to shelters” even though the city is often targeted.

Britt was there for the distribution, and “right after we left in October, Hamas fired over 200 rockets at Ashkelon.”

Britt is reaching out to the Jewish community at this time, he said, because “we need funding in order to put a backpack on a child. We want the Jewish community to know the Christian community stands with the Jewish community.”

Although there are differences in our beliefs, he explained, they come from the same roots. And while Shield of David was founded because of his Evangelical faith, Britt maintains that “We’re not just Evangelical Christian. We have Jewish members too. This is a Christian and Jewish organization. We stand together, united, and we want the Jewish community to know there is an organization on their back door which is doing this, with administrative costs of less than three percent.”

For more information, go to www.theshieldofdavid.org.

ETHIOPIAN

Continued from page 9

arrived in Israel, doctors performed eye surgery on the young patient. Barhoum says that as soon as it became clear that his right eye could not be saved, doctors raised the idea for a prosthetic.

“But it turned out that a prosthetic is socially unacceptable in his village,” says Barhoum, stressing the importance of respecting the family’s traditions. “We closed the eye with skin so there will be no chance of future infections.”

Abdulrazak is scheduled to undergo a series of other procedures at the Western Galilee Hospital including plastic surgeries, skin grafting on large parts of his head, and a bone graft to reconstruct his jaw “so that he can eat properly,” says Barhoum, the first Arab-Israeli to direct a government hospital in Israel.

The medical costs, bringing Abdulrazak and his father to Israel and supporting them financially while they’re here are expected to run between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

“The boy will likely stay here for about a month and then return to his village. We want him to return to his way of life