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Find us on



Be sure to join the
Camp Ben Frankel and
Federation pages to keep up
with the latest news!

GIVING BACK TO MOTHER NATURE

BY ASSAF GRUMBERG

It seems that all over the world something is happening, a strange phenomenon occurs—and on everybody’s mouth the same sentence keeps coming back—the weather has gone crazy!

Some people may call that global warming. I guess they are correct, but I wish to be a little more spiritual—I like to call that strange phenomenon an urgent message from Mother Nature, calling us to stop our insanely busy lifestyles and have a look around the world in which we live. The last several weeks in Israel are a great example—at first the rain was not coming, and the country was suffering from a terrible drought. Then a frightening fire was raging on Mt. Carmel, destroying that beautiful unique reservation. And then, just as they succeeded on controlling the flames, and not a minute earlier, the rain came. In one day, three month’s worth of rain and snow fell, leaving Mt. Hermon with almost 4 feet of snow in one day. So if you’re planning a ski trip, you should consider Israel as your destination.

But all that brings me to the incredible Jewish tradition of Tu Bishvat (celebrated this year on

January 20)—the new year of the trees. It is one day a year in which we forget all about us and concentrate on giving back to the earth. We concentrate on enjoying nature’s fruits responsibly, planting new trees and making sure the ones that we have are safe and protected. We stop talking about our everyday worries and instead we sit as family together—singing songs about our land and the fruits of the land, tasting the fruits of Israel and enjoying that special day. This is called a Tu Bishvat Seder (just like a Passover Seder) and it’s just one of many beautiful traditions I love about this holiday. I wish our planet a happy new year and to everyone, I hope you had a happy and sweet Tu Bishvat.



Mount Carmel

HOW ISRAELI CHILDREN VIEW AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

BY MARK PEARLMAN

As an English teacher in Tel Aviv, I often teach as much about American culture as the language. Over the last few months, I've taught my students (from 1st-9th grade) about Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and now Christmas. It's always interesting to ask them at the beginning of the lesson "What holiday is this week?" First, they always shout "Christmas?" To them, they know that Christmas is in the fall/winter, and that it's a great holiday. When we finally nail down which holiday is coming, I love asking what they already know about it. They know a fair amount about Halloween, next to nothing about Thanksgiving, I think American Jews know more about the story of Hanukkah, but they know a lot about Christmas. They think all American holidays are religious holidays, probably because all of the holidays here are, so I have to explain that everybody celebrates Halloween and Thanksgiving, but Christmas is really boring for me. Many are confused at first that I can be American AND Jewish.

One of the first things my students have said when I ask them what they know about Christmas is "snow." I remember many Christmases in Carbondale when it would snow on Christmas Day, but I am careful to explain that it doesn't snow everywhere on Christmas. Can you imagine being Australian and connecting Christmas and Hanukkah to being summer holidays? The kids also know about presents and Santa Claus, but have no idea what the origins of the holiday are, despite the Hebrew name of the holiday being "Birth Holiday." When I remind them of this, many of them guess that it was Jesus. It shocks many of them to hear that Jesus was born in Israel. They know about the tree and Santa's reindeer. They even know about Santa entering through the chimney, despite none of their homes having a chimney. Overall, I've been quite shocked with how much these children know about Christmas. They all want to celebrate, especially when they hear about the two week (or longer) school vacation.

GO GROCERY SHOPPING AND HELP YOUR SYNAGOGUE!

Feel like giving more to Congregation Beth Jacob? Now you can give donations to the Temple without doing anything extra...

all you have to do is go shopping!

1. Go to Schnucks and request a Schnucks eScrip Customer Card
2. Activate your card by calling 1-800-931-6258 or visit www.escrip.com/schnucks.jsp (Congregation Beth Jacob: Group # 500020058)
3. Present your card to the cashier every time you shop at Schnucks
4. The more you shop, the higher the contribution! (up to 3% of your purchase amount)

IT'S THAT EASY!



JEWISH FEDERATION FACT OF THE MONTH

Thanks to assistance from Jewish Federations, JDC-supported Ariel Job Centers are helping young Jewish families in Central and Eastern Europe battle high unemployment and economic hardship. Based on a proven model developed in Buenos Aires, Ariel Centers are now active in Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, and Venezuela. The centers provide resources and computer skills to help struggling community members find jobs.

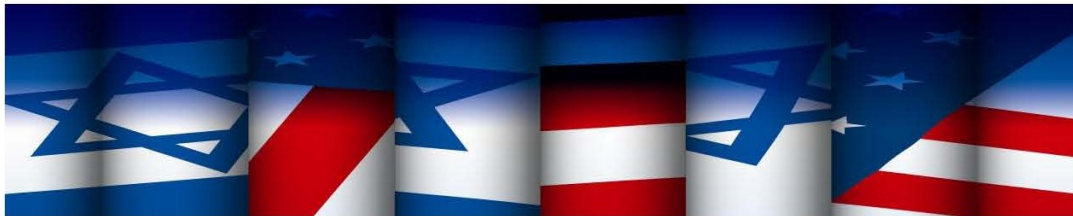
For more Jewish Federation Facts, check out their website at www.jewishfederations.org.

PLEASE JOIN HOSTS, REV. JOHN AITKEN AND MIKE SMITH, FOR AN EXCLUSIVE AIPAC BRIEFING

Major Elliot Chodoff



Elliot Chodoff is an Israeli
Military & Political Analyst



“Israel: On the Front Lines of Freedom”

Thursday, February 10
7:00 P.M.
Mike Smith Toyota
3941 Mike Smith Drive
Paducah, Kentucky

We invite members of the Christian and Jewish communities to join us for a timely, expert briefing on Israel's indispensable value to the United States, not only militarily, but across all sectors of discovery and achievement. Major Chodoff will take you to the "front lines of freedom" with his gripping stories about the importance of the US-Israel relationship on the world's stage. Learn how you as an American can make a difference by educating your Members of Congress on the US-Israel relationship. With enemies on all sides, hear first-hand about Israel's contributions to their own security and how their expertise makes the United States safer and more secure. A lively Q & A will follow.



www.aipac.org

Mark Kleinman, SE Region Director
Arlene Bridges Samuels, SE Region Outreach Director
Jeremy Becker, SE Region Political Director
Joshua Karsh, SE Synagogue Initiative Director

FEBRUARY 4 IS WORLD CANCER DAY

In memory of those we have lost and in honor of those still in the fight, please light a candle and say a prayer to show your support for bringing an end to cancer.



A Candle Loses Nothing by
Lighting Another Candle.

For more information or
resources on cancer, please
visit the American Cancer
Society at www.cancer.org.

CAMP BEN FRANKEL

Even though the temperatures have been cold and undesirable, Camp Ben Frankel senior staff have been hard at work on the upcoming camp season. Mark Pearlman is working from Israel, Fraya Andich is working from London and now Eastern Kentucky, and myself here in St. Louis and Belleville. Thanks to modern technology we communicate by Skype, email and Facebook. This has allowed the three of us to work on staffing, programming and logistics of the camp.

So far I have been recruiting in Iowa City, Champagne-Urbana, Bloomington, CBF Camp Reunion, and the St. Louis Jewish Camp Fair. Coming up as of this writing I have Carbondale, Quad Cities, Springfield, Skokie and Columbia. To date it looks like I have picked up several new families and several siblings of current campers. This should translate into another successful year for Camp Ben Frankel.

I appeal to all of you within the reach of this newsletter to help us with Camp Ben Frankel.

How can I help? You ask. Many ways: 1) Help us recruit campers (we pay \$50.00 for every camper someone recruits to the camp). 2) Sponsor a camper who otherwise could not afford to go to camp. 3) Provide scholarship funds for the general scholarship pool. 4) Help get me a face to face recruitment presentation at your local religious school or Jewish Community Center. And finally, 5) Talk up the camp to all the people you know within your community.

Camp Ben Frankel has been in existence for 62 years, giving campers a sense of Jewish pride and Jewish identity all within a safe and friendly environment. It is run by your Federation of Southern Illinois. Please help us keep a Jewish Camp in Southern Illinois available for our kids for future generations. Thank you to all that have helped are helping and will be helping us in the future.

B'Shalom
Ricky Kodner

RICK RECHT IN CONCERT FEBRUARY 23 AT 7:30 PM MARYVILLE UNIVERSITY

Renowned Jewish music artist Rick Recht brings his "Tear Down the Walls" community concert to the campus of Maryville University at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, February 23, in the University Auditorium. This interfaith, interactive musical experience utilizes the power of popular rock music to inspire and educate youth about ways to break down bias and prejudice in their communities. Tear Down the Walls also strives to educate the public about the social action organizations existing in their communities and specific ways to support them and get involved.

The concert is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Steve DiSalvo, director of Maryville's Office of Campus Ministry and Community Service; 314.529.9521.

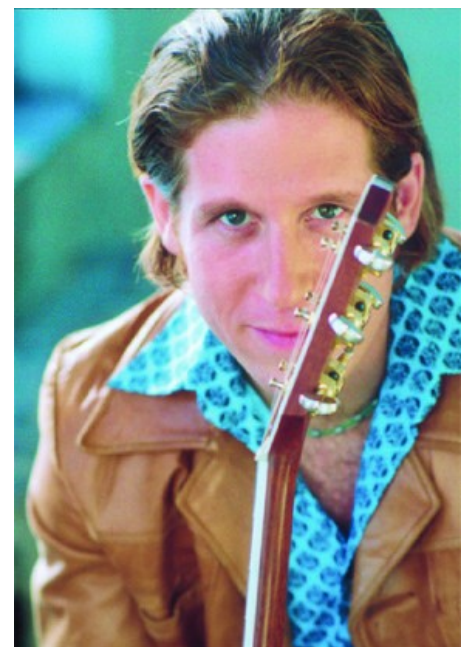


Photo by Suzy Gorman

FEDERATION DIRECTORY UPDATE

Fellow Community Members,

As the Federation prepares for 2011 activities we have begun reviewing our directory and e-mail list. We would like to give everyone the opportunity to either add or remove themselves. You will soon be receiving the postcard below in the mail.

To be removed please fill in your name and mark the remove box on the postage paid postcard and return it. Alternatively please feel free to either call the Federation office at 618-235-1614 or email debra@simokyfed.com.

In order to be listed and receive a copy of the directory and in order to receive federation updates including the newsletter please complete and return the postage paid postcard including your e-mail address.

As we conducted this process we found that many of those receiving our directory have not recently contributed to the Federation. The

Federation provides activities aimed at fostering a strong Jewish community, provides needed social service, and provides an important connection to the Jewish community abroad including Israel. I hope that everyone will consider making some contribution regardless of size.

To make your contribution by credit card, call Debbie at the Federation office (618-235-1614) or email debra@simokyfed.com. Otherwise

mail your contribution to the Federation at 3419 West Main Street / Belleville, IL 62226.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Burton Zwick
President Jewish Federation
Southern Illinois, Southeast
Missouri, and Western Kentucky

We are currently in the process of updating our directory. Please take a moment to respond with your current information.

Update Listing

Remove from Listing

Name as you wish it to appear in listing:

Last _____ First _____ Title ie. Mr, Mrs., Ms., Dr. _____

Email Address:

Family Member Names:

Contact Information:

Street Address _____ Apt. No. _____ P.O. Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Cellular _____

FUN FACTS

Did you know....?

- Colin Powell speaks Yiddish (he worked at a Jewish-owned baby store in New York as a teenager)
- Chanukah is the only Jewish Holiday not mentioned in the Tanach (the Jewish Bible)
- Cary Grant's mother was Jewish
- The Jewish Valentine's Day is Tu B'Av (the 15th of the month of Av), which occurs in the summer

Know a Jewish-themed fun fact that you want to share?
E-mail it to simokynews@gmail.com

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send us your news,
accomplishments,
recipes, etc.

Submissions can be sent to
simokynews@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!

UPCOMING SERVICE TIMES

ALTON

Friday, February 18 at 7 pm
Shabbat Services conducted by Rabbi Jay Goldberg

Friday, March 18 at 7 pm
Shabbat Services conducted by Rabbi Elizabeth Kleinlehrer Hersch

Friday, April 1 at 7 pm
Discussion w/Assaf Grumberg, Community Shaiach and meat potluck
Please call Gail Lipe to let her know what you will bring to the potluck

PADUCAH

Friday, February 25 at 7 pm
Services led by Rabbi Jonathan Cohen

Saturday, February 26 at 10 am
Adult Education facilitated by Rabbi Jonathan Cohen

**The Jewish Federation of
Southern Illinois, Southeast
Missouri and Western
Kentucky**
3419 West Main Street
Belleville, IL 62226
Phone 618-235-1614
877-714-6103
Website:
www.simokyfed.com

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday
9 am-5 pm
Friday
9 am-4 pm

Visit us
on the Web!
www.simokyfed.com



A BELATED HAPPY CHANUKAH
FROM
DOUG MCEWEN
IN FLORIDA!

Burton Zwick.....*President*
Bill Bruns.....*Secretary*
Bill Flarsheim.....*Treasurer*
Debra Vahlkamp.....*Office Manager*
Rick Kodner.....*Camp Director*
Assaf Grumberg.....*Shaiach*
Ann Lesley Rosen.....*Newsletter Editor*