



Inside
This Issue

- Campaign Information 1
- News from Israel 2
- Camp Ben Frankel 3
- Shlichah Report 4
- Plus much more!**

Upcoming
Events

- Rosh Chodesh Tammuz
..... **June 13**
- Fast of the 17th of Tammuz
..... **June 29**

**THE SIMOKY FEDERATION AND THE
ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Over the past year we have seen our Federation tested like never before. Like all Jewish federations over the past few years, we have witnessed endowment funds shrink and membership pledges decrease. Conversely, during this same challenging period, we have watched the need for our services dramatically increase. Routinely, our office phone rings with people needing money for groceries, the electric bill, or some other critical social service. During this economic downturn our commitment to providing local service to the Jewish Community has remained steadfast.

The services provided by our Federation include full operations of our premier Jewish residential summer camp, Camp Ben Frankel, religious holiday programming, and leading services at various Temples and Synagogues.

It is difficult to list all the services our Federation provides locally. Likewise, it is critical to remember how important the Federation's support is to Israel, and how critical it is for us to have a personal connection to Israel. Towards that end, our Federation sponsors a Shlichah ("Israeli Representative") so that our members and their children can come to know and love an

Israeli. We are especially proud of this program because it brings Israel to our region in a real and tangible way. A portion of every dollar that you give goes to support Israel and our commitments to our global Jewish Community.

Again, this year has been one of transition for our Federation. As the need for services increases you can rely on your Federation to actively look for ways to reduce administrative costs and ensure that your gift reaches those who need it the most. As I and my family have, I urge each of you pledge to increase your continued support to a community that comes together in good times as well as bad to take care of each other and to celebrate Jewish life together.

Donations can be made with a credit card by calling Debbie (our Office Manager) at 877-714-6103 or by sending a check to:

The Jewish Federation
3419 W Main Street
Belleville IL 62226

Thank you,
Burton Zwick and Bill Bruns

NOTES FROM ISRAEL BY MARK PEARLMAN

September 3, 2007 is a proud day for me. I'm now officially a citizen of the State of Israel. Many younger people in Israel are surprised, even shocked, that I would want to live here when I could live in America. I can confidently say that for now, this is where I want to live. When speaking with a friend a few weeks ago, I was talking about making Aliyah and I said, "I've built a good life for myself." After I said this, it hit me that I really do have a life over here. I have an apartment, I have friends, and I have a job that is very rewarding financially and mentally.

The historian in me wants to look back at how I got here. I first came to Israel for a 30 day group trip when I was 17. I came to a country that I knew was the Jewish country, but I didn't know a lot more about it. I had heard some stories, but I didn't feel such a strong connection at this time. I had a great time on the trip, but I didn't feel a strong desire to return. However, I continued to work at Camp Ben Frankel, a month-long overnight Jewish summer camp. I really believe that it's the camp that brought me back to Israel. I would not have become good friends with Israelis if it weren't for CBF and the Israel Scouts who spent a summer working with me.

Throughout college I became more and more interested in Israel and Israeli history. This was probably due to becoming friends with two more Israelis each summer. Before my senior year of college, I received a \$1,000 scholarship. I almost immediately bought a plane ticket to Israel for later that summer. I spent

two weeks moving from one friend's house to another. I wanted a glimpse of real Israeli life, not a tour with a bunch of Americans. I had a feeling on this trip that I might want to come and try living here after my college

graduation. I had this view of Israel being an amazing country. Surviving against all odds to create a sort of paradise in an area of violence and hardship.

In November of my last year in college, I decided that I didn't want to start a career teaching History at the age of 22. I wanted to know what it was like to actually live in Israel, not be a tourist. I started to look for Master's Degree programs at all of the big universities. I thought about a degree in Jewish studies even though I'm not religious, but when I saw TASP (Teach and Study Program), I knew this was for me. In this program, I had university classes two days a week and I actually got to teach English three days a week. Hebrew classes were also paid for two nights a week. Sounds perfect, right? For me, it was. I applied, was accepted fairly quickly, and started making plans to move to Israel in August, 2005. I was very excited for what the future was going to bring to me.

I joined a group of 19 North Americans to start this program. Throughout the two years, we helped each other get through everything, good and bad. I was placed at an elementary school in the wealthiest part of Tel Aviv. I found many students eager to learn English with a nice,



young American guy. Again, this couldn't be any better for me. Soon, families who wanted private lessons in English started to contact me. The first year I taught 3 children privately. The second year 9. Now that the program is finished, I am teaching private lessons full time and I have more students than I can handle.

Because of TASP, I was able to gradually build a life for myself. I found an apartment on my own while moving from one friend's house to another, trying not to overstay my welcome. I made some great friendships. I found my niche here. In America, I would be just another history teacher. Here, I know I'm doing a great job teaching a subject that is greatly desired. I can see how far some of my students have come and it's very rewarding.

Looking back on all of it, I truly believe that I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Camp Ben Frankel and the Israeli Scouts who became great friends of mine while working with me during the summer.

When I tell people in Israel I am going to America for a few weeks, I say, "I'm going home." When I tell people in America that I am going back to Israel, I say, "I'm going home." It's a good feeling.

Camp Ben Frankel is Alive and Well

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

to make your summer plans

Camp has spots open for campers entering 1st-10th grade

New and Exciting Programming

June 13 - July 5, 2010

We are happy to introduce a new program to Camp Ben Frankel, *Club Frankel*. This 45-minute program will run for every camper each weekday after Hebrew lessons and before morning activities. Campers will have the opportunity to participate in one full-camp Club Frankel or two half-camp Club Frankels.



Project Green Light – This full-camp club will ultimately create a movie to be shown at the end of camp. The goal of this club is to teach the process of filmmaking and use the creativity of the campers to produce a film.

Rock Band – This full-camp club utilizes our campers' unique music skills and brings them together to either write and perform their own music or enjoy playing popular music.



Kempō – This full-camp club teaches body control within the framework of Hawaiian martial arts. The focus is on open-handed striking and stand-up grappling. Campers will learn this form of karate in a safe environment from a certified instructor.

Writer's Block – This half-camp club is for our campers who like to share. This club will write a camp newsletter, post stories on Bunk1.com, write articles or poems for the camp yearbook, as well as take and post pictures online.



So You Think You Can Dance? – This half-camp club is for dancers of all abilities. In this club, members will learn and perform a dance as a group.

The Great Outdoors – This half-camp club will teach campers about their surroundings. They will learn about nature, orienteering, fire-building, and other survival skills.



Director, Rick Kodner

618-975-2416 in Illinois / 314-495-7089 in Missouri

campbenfrankel@gmail.com

www.campbenfrankel.com/CBF/welcometoCBF.html

SHLICHA REPORT: SHAVUOT

BY LILACH RISH

Shavuot is one of the main holidays celebrated in Israel. It is one of the Shalosh Regalim, the three Biblical pilgrimage festivals, during which thousands of people go to Jerusalem to celebrate the acceptance of the Torah.

WHAT IS SHAVUOT?

The Torah was given by G-d to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai more than 3300 years ago. Every year on the holiday of Shavuot we renew our acceptance of G-d's gift and G-d "re-gives" the Torah. The word Shavuot means "weeks." It marks the completion of the seven week counting period between Passover and Shavuot.

The giving of the Torah was a far-reaching spiritual event, one that touched the essence of the Jewish soul for all times. It is compared to a wedding between G-d and the Jewish people. Shavuot also means "oath" and on this day G-d swore eternal devotion to us, and we in turn pledged everlasting loyalty to Him.

The holiday of Shavuot is a two-day holiday, beginning at sundown of the 5th of Sivan (this year it was Tues-



day night, May 18, 2010) and lasting until nightfall of the 7th of Sivan.

Shavuot Customs

- Women and girls light holiday candles to usher in the holiday.
- It is customary to stay up all night learning Torah on the first night of Shavuot.
- All men, women and children should go to the synagogue on the first day of Shavuot to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments.
- As on other holidays, special meals are eaten, and no "work" may be performed.
- On the second day of Shavuot, the Yizkor memorial service is recited.
- In many synagogues the Book of Ruth is read on the second day of Shavuot: Shavuot is the birthday and yahrtzeit (anniversary of passing) of King David, and the Book of Ruth records his ancestry. Ruth and her husband Boaz were King David's great-grandparents. Another reason for that custom is that the scenes of harvesting described in the book of Ruth are appropriate to the Festival of Harvest. Ruth was a sincere convert who embraced Judaism with all her heart. On Shavuot all Jews were converts, having accepted the Torah and all of its precepts.
- It is customary to eat dairy foods on the first day of Shavuot. There are a number of reasons for this custom: On the holiday of Shavuot, a two-loaf bread offering was brought in the Temple. To commemorate this, we eat two meals on Shavuot—



שבועות

first a dairy meal. With the giving of the Torah the Jews now became obligated to observe the laws of kashrut. As the Torah was given on Shabbat no cattle could be slaughtered nor could utensils be koshered, and thus on that day they ate dairy. The Torah is likened to nourishing milk. Also, the Hebrew word for milk is "chalav." When the numerical value of each of the letters in the word chalav are added together—8, 30, 2—the total is forty. Forty is the number of days Moses spent on Mount Sinai when receiving the Torah.

- Shavuot is also called the "Harvest Festival." It is customary to adorn the home and synagogue with fruits, flowers and greens. Shavuot was the first day on which individuals could bring the Bikkurim (first fruits) to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Bikkurim were brought from the Seven Species for which the Land of Israel is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. At the time of harvest, the fruits would be cut
- (continued on next page)

FROM THE EDITOR

There's something special about a Jewish community. We may have different levels of observance, different traditions, different political views, even different geographic locations, but there's that one thing that keeps us all connected—we're Jewish. The fact that we even choose to identify ourselves as Jewish gives us that common denominator so that even if we can't agree on anything else, we have that same root.

The great thing about the Jewish community in general, and this community in particular, is that it is so varied. This community covers such a large area, and while that may seem hard at times, there is actually great potential for collaboration and exploration.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

(An excerpt from Chaplain Andrew Cohen's commentary on Parshat Bamidbar)

Perhaps the most overt reference to the hand of G-d turning the battle fray is the verse: "*HaShem Ish Milchama, HaShem Shmo*"—"G-d is Master of War, His Name is HaShem" (Ex. 15:3). Here, in the "Song at the Sea," after G-d drowned the Egyptians at the splitting of the sea, the Children of Israel proclaimed that HaShem is Master of War in every generation, showing His strength and power to His People. He fights His wars not with weapons, but rather through His Name alone. He makes known His greatness amidst those who love and cleave to Him, in their struggles against their enemies. Rabbeinu Bechayeh comments: "Moses said (Ex. 14:14) 'G-d will fight for you.' And thus did they proclaim,

Not too far away from the community this Federation serves is another busy Jewish community—St. Louis, Missouri. With a bigger population, St. Louis holds many opportunities to participate in all aspects of Jewish life. One big event happening soon is the St. Louis Jewish Film Festival, which will occur June 13-17 at the Landmark Plaza Frontenac Cinema. The festival screens several films per day with a wide range of subjects and is an event that people look forward to every year. You can check out the Festival website at www.stljewishfilmfestival.org to see trailers and descriptions of the films, as well as a schedule. So, take a trip over the river (or up the river) and check out some wonderful Jewish films.

Ann Lesley Rosen

'HaShem is Master of War'—so that if one should say that His wars depend of weapons, the verse adds, 'His Name is HaShem.' It is not purely through toil and tactics [that one emerges victorious in battle], but through His Holy Name." More than any human endeavor, except the conception of life itself, warfare involves the open manifestation of G-d's intervention in worldly affairs. As anybody who has ever seen combat can attest: one is almost never more acutely aware of G-d than in such a fray where life and death are so clearly in the balance... These things do not just happen. Rather, G-d actively orchestrates every detail of war; and therefore it is solely the strength of our Torah learning, the sanctity of our conduct, and our connection with HaShem that determines our military success.

SHLICHA (CONT.)

and placed in baskets which were led to Jerusalem. As the farmer and his entourage passed through cities and towns, they were accompanied by music and parades. At the Temple, each farmer would present his Bikkurim to a Cohen in a ceremony. The ceremony of Bikkurim conveys the Jews' gratitude to God both for the first fruits of the field and for His guidance throughout Jewish history.

If you are in Israel during Shavuot you'll see people wearing white and festive clothes. There are ceremonies and celebrations at schools and kindergarten and kids walk around with a "crown" of flowers. You have lots of discounts on dairy products at the supermarkets and they give away free samples and recipes for cheesecakes. There are big Israeli folk dancing festivals all over the land, and Bikkurim festivals in the Kibbutzim and Jerusalem.



Am Yisrael is a nation like no other. Willingly or not, we often stand at center stage of world civilization, and sometimes need to employ force of arms in self-defense. ...Jewish greatness is not dependent upon our superior military skills or defense industry. Our strength is our Torah, mitzvah observance, and being a reflection of Divine Will. As important as it is to defend our people, and take up arms in a just cause, ...all that pales in comparison to the importance of serving the Creator as one people, with one heart, and with unified purpose.



THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER
 SO WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
 NEXT DEADLINE: JUNE 8

If you have something that you would like to see published in the newsletter—news, accomplishments, recipes, etc—send it to us! The deadline will be the 8th of each month and submissions can be sent to simokynews@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!

Burton Zwick.....*President*
 Bill Bruns.....*Secretary*
 Bill Flarshheim.....*Treasurer*
 Debra Vahlkamp.....*Office Manager*
 Rick Kodner.....*Camp Director*
 Llach Rish.....*Shlichah*
 Ann Lesley Rosen.....*Newsletter Editor*

**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