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Candle lighting time Friday is 4:35 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 5:39 p.m.



DR. TED LYONS (at left), Jewish Federation of Winnipeg president, and Rabbi Avrohom Altein flank Dave Rich, as they sing "Maoz Tsur", a traditional Chanukah song. Rich had just "turned on" the light marking the start of Chanukah on the electric menorah behind him, dedicated to his father, Abe Rich's memory.

'Harmony', 'peace' and 'light' invoked at annual Chanukah menorahlighting

'Chase away the darkness,' Federation president urges crowd

Winnipeg's Jewish community ushered in an unseasonably late and warm Chanukah Sunday night, December 25 at the entrance to the Asper Jewish Community Campus.

Dr. Ted Lyons, new president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, noted another highly unusual event for the crowd of more than 100 - the start of the Jewish Festival of Lights and Christmas day coinciding for "the first time in memory".

Then, Lyons, like speakers to come, talked about current events contrasting with the brightness of the holiday.

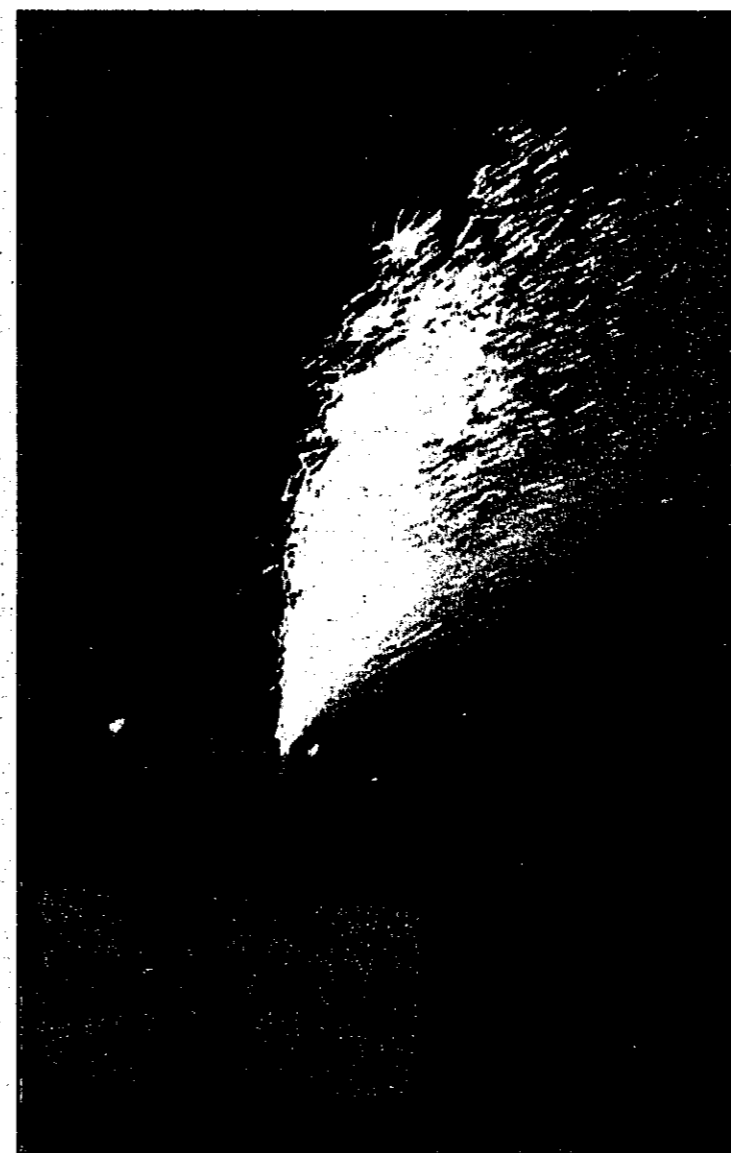
"A few weeks ago, the Iranian president called for the destruction of the State of Israel," Lyons told everyone, as he stood in front of the giant community Chanukah menorah. "A week later, he denied the Holocaust. While he may not represent the views of the Iranian people, what kind of crazy world do we live in - where the leader of a country can call for the destruction of another?"

"It seems we're living in a world where violent anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism rages," Lyons added.

Chanukah commemorates the Maccabees' rededication (Cont. on page 4. See "Community celebrates Chanukah".)



Orthodox children dance to the music of Three Times Chai on the Asper Campus Main Street.



Some of the fireworks, courtesy of Chabad Lubavitch.



An Israeli soldier prays for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's health, at Jerusalem's Western Wall, Jan. 8, 2006. Sharon suffered a major stroke Jan. 4. Credit: Brian Hender/JTA

Israel begins preparations for politics after Ariel Sharon

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) - Israel is resigning itself to politics without Ariel Sharon.

Shock gripped the Jewish state last week when Sharon was hospitalized with a massive stroke, turning to fears for the worst when he underwent repeated surgery under deep sedation. Doctors began bringing the prime minister out of his induced coma Monday.

Sharon reportedly was able to breathe on his own and showed slight movement in his right arm and leg in response to stimuli. "This was a clear reaction to pain, not a reflex," said Dr. Felix Umansky, head of the team that has operated on Sharon three times to stem bleeding in his brain since his December 4 stroke. Doctors said it would be several days before it was clear whether Sharon had suffered any cognitive damage or paralysis on the left side of his body.

Still, a prognosis took shape whereby Sharon could survive, but in a form of forced retirement. Sharon's chief surgeon, Dr. Jose Cohen, said Sharon had a "very high" chance of surviving. "He is a very strong man, and he is getting the best care," the Jerusalem Post quoted Cohen as saying. "He will not continue to be prime minister, but maybe he will be able to understand and to speak."

As the prime minister lay in a post-operative coma Sunday, his temporary replacement, acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, chaired the weekly cabinet meeting. "We hope that the prime minister will recover, gain strength, and with God's help, will return to run the government of Israel and lead the State of Israel," Olmert said.

While noting that doctors' reports from Jerusalem's Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center at Ein Kerem had given a "glimmer of hope" as to Sharon's chances of recuperating, Olmert said matters of state were as robust as ever. "We will continue to fulfill Arik's will, and to run things as he wished," he said, using Sharon's nickname. "Israeli democracy is strong, and all of the systems are working in a stable, serious and responsible manner. This is just as it should be, and how it shall continue."

With general elections looming on March 28, Olmert has his hands full. But he received an early show of support with a weekend phone call from U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. There was also an internal reprieve from the Likud, which decided against resigning from the government, reversing a decision made before (Cont. on page 16. See "Israeli politics continue without Sharon".)

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