

Israeli news

Rady JCC announces new Jewish choral group

The Rose and Max Rady Jewish Community Centre is pleased to announce the formation of a Jewish Musical Chorale. The Rady JCC is inviting expressions of interest from vocalists interested in joining this new choral group. This top-level performance group will be under the direction of well-known choir director and cantor, Richard Yaffe.

Richard has been active in both the Jewish and general communities for many years. He was President and Chair of the Board of Governors of the Winnipeg Art Gallery from 1998-2005 and also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Winnipeg Humane Society, Groundswell Inc. and the Winnipeg Music Competition Festival Inc.

Formerly the cantor at Temple Shalom, Richard remains involved with Jewish choral groups, having directed the L.L. Peretz Folk School Reunion Choir, and he currently leads the High Holiday Choir for the Sharon Home.

The Rady Jewish Community Centre is committed to offer programming that reaches individuals of all backgrounds and affiliations and gives people the opportunity to enjoy Jewish culture. As a key provider of cultural programs for the Jewish community, the opportunity to present diverse, meaningful and enriched programming such as the Jewish Musical Chorale is a reflection of the Centre's commitment to a renaissance of Jewish culture.

Participants will be accepted by audition only. Expressions of interest should be directed to the Rose and Max Rady Jewish Community Centre. The Jewish Musical Chorale is generously supported by the I.L. Peretz Folk School Endowment Trust and the Tikkun Group.

Like many from his group, this was his first trip outside India. For many Indian Jews on the trip, birthright offered a first glimpse of life in a place where Jews make up the majority. This was the second time a group of Jews from India has come on birthright.

For Indian Jews, birthright gives glimpse of life as majority group

By DINA KRAFT

JAFFA, Israel - Zohar Reuben, 24, of Mumbai explores the narrow alleyways and stalls of Jaffa's outdoor flea market with fellow young Jews from India after a long journey that has taken them from the Galilee to Jerusalem. It's on this birthright tour of Israel, thousands of miles from home, that Reuben has found, for the first time, close Jewish friends his own age from India. In Mumbai, he explains, Jews live spread out across the vast city.

Although he comes from a kosher home and goes to synagogue regularly, he does not have a group of young Jewish friends. Most of his friends are Hindu or Muslim. "When I tell them I'm a Jew they say, 'Huh? What's a Jew?'" said Reuben, who works in marketing. He said he has been excited to see life in the Jewish state. "It's good to be one of the crowd. I want to rediscover my Jewish roots," said Reuben, who visited Israel for the first time through birthright.

Like many from his group, this was his first trip outside India. For many Indian Jews on the trip, birthright offered a first glimpse of life in a place where Jews make up the majority. This was the second time a group of Jews from India has come on birthright.

The group of 40 is mostly from the Bene Israel community centered in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Ahmadabad. The community, which is ethnically Indian, claims descent from Jews from the Galilee who fled persecution in the 2nd century BCE and landed in India after a shipwreck. Today the community of Indian Jews numbers about 5,500. Aside from the Bene Yisrael, there are Cochin Jews from southern India and Baghdadi Jews who are descended from former Iraqi Jews, as well as Jews from Syria, Yemenite and Iran.

Sharon Galsurkar, 30, a Jewish educator from Mumbai, said bringing the young adults on a trip like birthright gives a huge boost to the community, which struggles as a tiny minority to keep younger members involved. "They relate more intensely here. It's like quick," he said, snapping his fingers. "As a Jewish educator, I feel this is what is making our community strong."

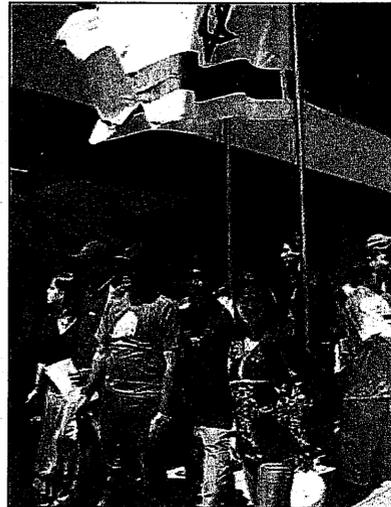
Seeing Israel and visiting sites helps deepen the participants' connection to their heritage and history, Galsurkar said. Visiting a place like Yad Vashem encourages their curiosity about the Holocaust, he said, something about which many in India's Jewish community know little.

Birthright provides free 10-day trips for Jews between the ages of 18 to 26 who have never come to Israel on an organized tour. The goal is to strengthen their sense of Jewish identity and connection to Israel.

Nisha Namia, 26, the one Cochin Jew on the trip, found Jerusalem and the sight of a country with so many Jews deeply moving. She comes from a village in the Emakulam district that has only 52 Jews. Her family is the only Jewish one in the village. "We don't have a community life there. There are many synagogues in the region but only one that functions, because of the lack of people," Namia said. Most of the Jews in her region immigrated to Israel, she said, but she plans to stay in India.

Sitting next to Namia on the tour bus as it snaked its way through Tel Aviv's clogged streets was Oshri David Gadkar, 19. Unlike Namia, she does see her future in Israel. Being in Israel, her first time outside India, "makes me feel strongly that I need to make aliyah," she said. Gadkar hopes to come with her entire family - but only after she finishes a master's degree in architecture. She explains that she'd rather study in her native language and come to Israel with a profession in hand.

Like many others on the trip, Gadkar has many relatives in Israel. Hers have settled in Beersheba, Jerusalem and Ashdod.



A birthright israel group from India tours Tel Aviv on June 13, 2006. Credit: Dina Kraft/JTA.

THE JEWISH POST & NEWS

Vol. 19 No. 46 WINNIPEG, WEDNESDAY, June 28, 2006 2 Days in Tammuz, 5766

Candle lighting time Friday is 9:23 p.m. Shabbat ends at 10:33 p.m.

Simkin Centre of The Sharon Home expanding

Winnipeg Jewish nursing home facilities to be centralized there by spring, 2008

By MATT BELLAN

Planning for centralization of Winnipeg's Jewish nursing home in one South End complex is in high gear.

The Sharon Home's board April 1 embarked on a 60-day capital campaign to raise \$5 million of the \$27 million cost of the project. The provincial Health Department and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority are jointly paying 90 per cent of that cost.

So far, the capital campaign has drawn about \$3 million in

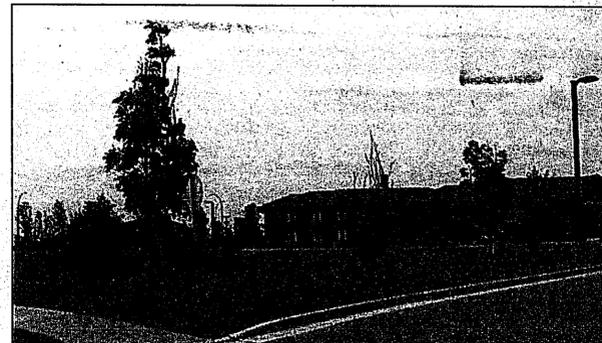


SANDRA DELORME, Sharon Home chief executive officer: "It's really an exciting time."

per cent single rooms. No one will have to share a room." That's in contrast to the North End Kanee



LEONARD ASPER, chair, Sharon Home capital campaign: Centralizing Winnipeg's Jewish nursing home facilities in one south Winnipeg complex will complete "unfinished business".



Lawn in the southwest corner of the Simkin Centre where a three-story building will be added to the complex.

pledges, Sandra Delorme, the home's chief executive officer, said last week.

"We're about 60 per cent of the way there. The asks have been made. It's a matter of finalizing that now with one-on-one return calls."

When finished in spring, 2008, centralization at the Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre of the Sharon Home will increase the number of beds there from the present 72 to 200.

"It's really an exciting time," Delorme added. "Exciting to be planning for one site that will provide care for the Jewish elderly."

"The best benefit will be providing 100

Centre of the Sharon Home, where 32 of 157 beds are in shared rooms.

Some adjoining rooms at the centralized facility will also be available for married couples, with each "linked by a door."

The architect's drawings won't be available until next month, Delorme said of the project, with construction expected to start in early 2007. It will add a three-story building to the southwest corner of the complex, near Kenaston and McGillivray boulevards in the city's Fort Garry-River Heights Ward.

That new building will be attached to the Simkin Centre's exist-

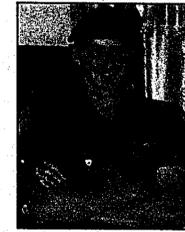
ing two-story residential wings and central area.

The changes and additions will include expansion of the home's existing kosher kitchen from 5400 to 6000 square feet.

Among other things, the expansion will also see creation of bigger laundry facilities, a bigger hair-dressing salon, more office and recreation space, and a "very nice café inside the front entrance."

The project will see a reduction by 29 of the total number of "beds" now available in the Kanee Centre and the Simkin

(Cont. on page 7. See "Sharon Home to centralize".)



ST. SGT. PAVEL SLUTSKER, 20, from Dimona. Credit: IDF



LT. HANAN BARAK, 21, from Arad. Credit: IDF

Deadly raid, abduction at IDF post scuttle Abbas-Olmert peace summit

By DAN BARON

TEL AVIV (JTA) - Days away from a planned summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, a deadly clash on the Gaza Strip border has raised the specter of major escalation.

In their first successful raid out of Gaza since Israel quit the coastal strip last year, Palestinians on Sunday tunneled under the border fence and stormed an Israeli military position near Kibbutz Kerem Shalom. Two soldiers, Lt. Hanan Barak, 21, from Arad, and St. Sgt. Pavel Slutsker, 20, from Dimona, were killed and Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, was taken captive.

The soldiers returned fire, killing three attackers, and the rest retreated to Gaza. Shalit, from Mitzpeh Hila in the Galilee, was wounded at the time of his capture and was said to be in stable condition. Palestinian sources said Shalit had stomach and chest wounds. "This situation is extremely grave," said Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, Israel's military chief.

Armed groups historically have used captured Israeli soldiers as bargaining chips for the release of Palestinian prisoners. However, Olmert ruled out negotiations over Shalit's release. In a Sunday night meeting, the government's political-security Cabinet decided that the army would begin planning a military operation to rescue Shalit, an operation that Olmert was quoted as saying "will last more than a day or two."

Sunday's predawn raid was carried out jointly by the Popular Resistance Committees terrorist coalition, Islamic Jihad and Hamas. The groups called it revenge for the death of Palestinian civilians in recent Israeli airstrikes against Gaza rocket crews.

(Cont. on page 30. See "Deadly raid, abduction at IDF post".)

This is last Jewish Post

& News until July 26

The next issue of *The Jewish Post & News* will be published

July 26, 2006. Deadline

for that issue:

Friday, July 21, 2006.

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