

Sports news

'Athlete of Year' award 'all-time high' for Jill Swirsky

Garden City Collegiate grad excelled in 8 sports

Remember the days when downtown and neighborhood movie theaters thrived, many with lavish marquees that trumpeted that "The Jolson Story" with Larry Parks and Evelyn Keyes was playing for a seventh consecutive week.

SPORTING TOUCH

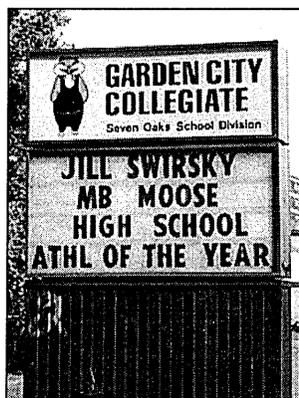


By HARVEY ROSEN

Coming soon were other flicks starring Humphrey Bogart, Loretta Young, and Betty Grable in some high-stepping musical with a cast of thousands. Well, at



JILL SWIRSKY with Athlete of the Year trophy: "You've got to have good time-management skill," explains the straight-A student.



Garden City Collegiate sign.

least a couple of hundred. Most of those marquees are history. As a matter of fact, just weeks ago, the former Hyland Theater

near Landsdowne and Main St. which is now the location of the Talmud Torah, had its old relic removed forever.

That's show business, folks. And it's exactly what today's educational institutions are into in a big way. Drive down

Jefferson Avenue past Garden City Collegiate, for example, and you'll spy a fancy marquee-like lettering on a sign that announces "JILL SWIRSKY MB MOOSE HIGH SCHOOL ATHL OF THE YEAR."

Just as parents have, since time immemorial, been justifiably proud of their offspring, schools also "shep naches" from students who have excelled both academically and at inter-school sports.

Being voted the top female athlete was an all-time high for 18-year-old Jill, who excelled for the most part in eight different sports at Garden City Collegiate. "At first it was overwhelming; I really felt proud," she said in an aw shucks sort of way.

She was a participant in track and field (indoor and outdoor), basketball, volleyball, cross-country, badminton and soccer (indoor and outdoor).

The 5', 4" daughter of Elaine and Neil Swirsky of 159 Ambassador in W.K. was the leading scorer for the Fighting Gophers basketball team, and was also voted a Kildonan Conference all-star. Jill was, in addition, an all-star setter for the school volleyball team, won three bronze medals at the provincial track and field championships, helped lead her high school to a berth in the provincial championships and along with her girls' doubles partner, placed second in the conference badminton championships.

Makes you wonder, doesn't it, how one individual can do so much? Reminds me of my late dad's saying: "If you want something done, give it to a busy person."

Jill's secret? "What I tell people is, you've got to have good time-management skills." She explains that due to a love of sports and when you enjoy what you're doing, it makes it a lot easier. There were, of course, times she had to make a choice, but she relates that it all works out in the end.

Swirsky agreed that it didn't strike her as unusual that so many fewer females participated in sports several decades ago. Today is much different. She added that another Jewish athlete at GCC is Nicole Shell, who plays basketball and soccer, and does track and field.

Sports do not detract from Jill's academic achievements. She is a straight-A student who, naturally, is pursuing a degree in Phys Ed at the University of Manitoba. "I plan to go into teaching or physiotherapy," she explained.

At the U of M, she plans to maintain her sporting prowess by participating in track and field. She knows that the competition is that much fiercer on the larger campus.

Jill appears to have alternative options. She has been contacted by a couple of college track programs, including Valley City State in North Dakota and Wesleyan College in West Virginia.

Being close to her parents, she has opted to remain in Friendly Manitoba. "It would take a lot to leave my family and friends and everything," she said.

Leaving her high school days behind will be difficult for Swirsky. (Cont. on page 11. See "Harvey Rosen".)

U.S. Jewish news

American Jewish leaders worry violence could break out in Israel

By JULIE WIENER

NEW YORK (JTA) -

Most American Jewish leaders say they fear the failure of the Camp David summit could lead to outbreaks of violence. But those who opposed the talks in the first place are relieved to see them end without an agreement. In an official statement, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee urged the Palestinians to "avoid unilateral actions that might lead to violence."

The AIPAC statement added that it was "gravely disappointed" and blamed the failure on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of American Jewish Organizations, told



MALCOLM HOENLEIN: Arafat escalated his demands, despite far-reaching concessions.

JTA, "Arafat has once again failed to demonstrate that he is a true partner for peace. He escalated the demands in the face of far-reaching Israeli concessions." But while disappointed, many leaders tried to put a positive spin on things.

The American Jewish Congress issued a news

release with the headline, "Camp David's failure may convince both sides that compromise is necessary." Americans for Peace Now and the Israel Policy Forum, which have consistently backed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's peace policies, emphasized that the discussions may pave the way for future talks. "The upside is that the taboos against even considering compromise are broken, and both sides have begun the difficult process of climbing down the rhetorical trees they have climbed up," said Tom Smerling, director of IPF's Washington Center.

He said Barak has disclosed his willingness to make certain concessions on Palestinian sover-

eighty in eastern Jerusalem, and Arafat has recognized that Israel will not go back to exact pre-1967 borders and that most Palestinian refugees will not be able to return. "In one form or another, they're going to have to come back and talk because they don't have the option, there's no place else to go," Smerling said. Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, which has also been a vocal advocate of Barak and closely monitored the summit at the site, described the peace talks' failure as a "tragedy," but did not expect it to be the end of the peace process.

"The question is will they come back before a renewal of tensions or will they allow tensions and violence to force them back?" he asked. "To get so close and now to walk away would be a disaster." Everyone interviewed expressed concern about potential outbreaks of violence following the summit failure.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said his he had faxed a letter to President Clinton asking him to state forcefully that the United States will not tolerate Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

"Two weeks ago, he said he's worried about violence if no agreement is reached," said Klein, whose group strongly opposes Barak's peace efforts, asserting he is conceding far too much.

Behind the headlines
Republicans to emphasize unity in convention outreach to Jews

By SHARON SAMBER

WASHINGTON (JTA) -

Jewish delegates attending this week's Republican National Convention in Philadelphia may have to scramble from one event to another if they want to catch all the outreach to Jews. The Republican Party is interested in being more inclusive, says Matt Brooks, the executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, and is actively reaching out to the Jewish community.

Brooks' group, which in the past has co-sponsored events with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is branching out on its own this year, hosting three events that will feature prominent Republican candidates, party leaders and member of Congress. AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, instead is teaming with the United Jewish Communities for its own events, including one on July 23 that overlaps with the RJC event.

The American Jewish Committee has slated its own series of programs. In contrast to past Republican conventions, when delegates and party leaders feuded over divisive issues such as abortion and school prayer, this convention is being touted as a unifying event for Republicans of all stripes.

The Republican platform, which will not be released until this week, is expected to express support for Israel, but will also likely include the issues promoted by religious conservatives that have alienated Jewish voters in previous years.

Republicans this time around are focusing on their candidate, Texas Gov. George W. Bush, and on such issues as education and foreign policy. On social issues, Brooks said, the party will strive to portray itself as a big tent that can appeal to socially moderate Jews. For decades, Republicans have faced an uphill battle drawing Jewish support. Republican presidential candidates typically receive around 15 to 20 percent of the Jewish vote.

President Reagan received one of the highest percentages in 1980, with 39 percent. President Bush received one of the lowest in 1992, garnering only 11 percent in his race against Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. Bush is working very hard for the Jewish vote and is making inroads, Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, told JTA. There is "no one issue that makes Jews vote Democratic," Fleischer said, adding that Bush has "a sensitivity to Jewish concerns." When asked about potentially divisive social issues, Fleischer said the Texas governor works to be inclusive and would focus on those areas that unite voters.



GEORGE W. BUSH, presidential candidate: He'll try to portray party as moderate on social issues, spokesperson says.

U.S. Congress warns Palestinians against any unilateral declarations

By SHARON SAMBER

WASHINGTON (JTA) -

If Yasser Arafat unilaterally declares a Palestinian state, the U.S. Congress will have something to say about it. Lawmakers introduced legislation July 26 that would block all U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority if Arafat follows up on his promise to declare statehood on September 13. The congressional move comes just one day after the peace talks between

Israelis and Palestinians collapsed after 15 days of negotiations at Camp David.

The trilateral agreement that came out of the summit stipulated that both parties should refrain from unilateral acts. In addition to blocking the annual aid of \$100 million U.S. that goes to the Palestinians, the bill, the Middle East Peace Process Support Act, would preclude the use of any funds to extend Ameri-

can recognition of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state, including money for diplomatic personnel or to establish an embassy. It also calls on the United States to oppose admission or recognition of any such state to the United Nations.

The bipartisan legislation is intended as "a warning" to Arafat, said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who co-sponsored the bill in the House of Representatives with Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-N.Y.).

Similar legislation was expected to be introduced in the Senate. "To enjoy financial assistance from the United States, Arafat must continue a dialogue with Israel," Nadler said at a news conference outside the Capitol on July 26.

Currently, Palestinians receive approximately \$100 million U.S. in U.S. aid annually through programs administered by non-governmental organizations monitored by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Since U.S. funds are only a small percentage of the international assistance the Palestinians receive, lawmakers also said they want the administration to pressure European countries not to recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

Harvey Rosen

(Cont. from page 10.)

"I felt sad when the GC experience ended," she confided. "I'm really going to miss it. I really didn't want to leave."

No doubt the institution will miss her for her leadership skills, too. She was the captain or co-captain of every varsity team she played on. "I try to lead by example, and I get along really well with all my teachers," she noted matter-of-factly.

As for her next stage of life on campus, Jill added "I'm trying to prepare myself. It'll be hard to accept at first, and there will be a kind of a letdown. Now I'll have just track and field to focus on. I can improve a lot more since it's only one sport."

This summer Swirsky is in another leadership role. "I work at a day camp which is run through the Rady (Jewish Community) Center," she explained. "I work with kids mainly from nine to 12. It's held at Camp Manitou."

Sounds to me as if the multi-talented Swirsky, who has always been an honor roll student, ought to have her moniker up on the U of M marquee as "Coming soon to this campus in the fall."

The writer, a Jewish Winniepegger, is a former school teacher, and covers football and hockey for Canadian Press and Broadcast News.

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